

INSPECTION REPORT

Stocksbridge Junior School

Stocksbridge, Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107055

Headteacher: Mr D. E. Foster

Reporting inspector: Mr P. M. Allen
17531

Dates of inspection: 20th – 21st May 2002

Inspection number: 198779

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cedar Road Stocksbridge Sheffield
Postcode:	S36 1AS
Telephone number:	0114 288 2221
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. Booth
Date of previous inspection:	10 th November 1997

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 – 9
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10 – 17
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	17 – 18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20 – 23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stocksbridge Junior School is a large primary school situated to the north west of Sheffield, serving the small town of Stocksbridge. Most of the pupils come from one of the three nearby local authority housing estates. Virtually all the children have attended the nearby infant school. Of the 374 pupils on roll, there are approximately 20 more girls than boys. Virtually all the pupils are of white ethnic origin. There are no children with English as an additional language. There are 12 classes, three for each year group. There is a relatively high turnover of staff with a significant number of teachers moving on to promotion. Seventy-four pupils are on the special educational needs register, this proportion being broadly in line with the national average, with five pupils having Statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but overall is broadly above what could be expected. The school is beginning to make plans to take into account the lower number of pupils transferring from the infant school at the start of Year 3. In January 2000 the school was designated a 'Beacon' school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school which provides a very good standard of education. Standards at the end of Year 6 are very good and well above national averages. This continues a trend of very creditable results. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. The school's success comes about partly as a consequence of its excellent leadership. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very well supported by a committed and enthusiastic staff and by an effective governing body. The school caters for and serves its pupils well, is inclusive for all in its practices and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ There is a pattern of very good standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.
- ◆ There is very effective leadership and management of the school.
- ◆ The good quality teaching is inclusive for all pupils and impacts very positively on the quality of learning and the standards achieved.
- ◆ The school's self-evaluation of its performance contributes significantly to its effectiveness.
- ◆ The school's very strong community ethos is implicit in the very good provision for the pupils' personal development, including that for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- ◆ * Standards in information and communication technology and its use across the curriculum.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

* Information and communication technology is highlighted as a very clear priority in the school improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good improvement since its previous inspection in November 1997. The issues from the previous inspection report have been addressed, as a consequence of which the curriculum has been significantly developed, as have the procedures for assessment, including those for the foundation subjects. Since that inspection, many improvements have taken place, including the quality of teaching. The school's main focus has been on self-evaluation and the setting of challenging targets aimed at and being successful in raising achievement. There is a clear and shared will and capacity to continue to move forward in maintaining and improving the quality of education and the standards achieved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A*	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards at the end of Year 6 are very good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. These judgements reflect the very good results over recent years, when standards have been particularly creditable in science; for example, in 2001 the school's performance was in the highest five per cent nationally. Since 1997 the National Curriculum results have gradually improved, most notably in science. Over this period, the trend in improvement in the results for all core subjects has been above the national trend. Standards in information and communication technology are sound overall and improving across the school. In religious education, pupils achieve standards which are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school is setting challenging but realistic targets to maintain and improve standards, ensuring that all pupils continue to achieve well relative to their abilities.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes. They are keen to participate, answer questions and contribute their ideas. They appreciate what the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is usually very good both in and out of the classrooms and during assembly time. Sometimes the behaviour is exemplary.

Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. The very positive relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and the adults are strong features. The school prepares the pupils well to be responsible future citizens.
Attendance	Attendance over recent years has been good overall. The school promotes good attendance very strongly. Pupils are happy to come to school.

The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development make a very positive contribution to the quality of learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	good overall

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The teaching observed during this short inspection was at least satisfactory with a high proportion being good or better. The teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils, including those who are higher attainers. The teaching provides very well for pupils with special educational needs who are well supported by the quality of support given by the classroom assistants. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, with an appropriate weighting towards literacy and numeracy. The arts are well emphasised across the curriculum, which is extended by a good range of visits, visitors and other activities. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Work is carefully planned in all classes for pupils with special educational needs. They are provided with effective support from teachers and classroom assistants, enabling them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision is very good. There is a strong moral code. Pupils are given good opportunities for thought and reflection. There is a strong emphasis on the school as a community and in the understanding and valuing of different cultures and faiths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The level of pastoral care is very high; the ethos of care is implicit in all that is done. The arrangements for assessing, monitoring and target setting for pupils' attainment and progress are very thorough and used well to set targets.

Just prior to the inspection the school was awarded the 'Quality Arts Mark' in recognition of the work done in creative arts. The school works effectively with parents who appreciate the caring and happy atmosphere in which each individual is valued.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher results in very clear, effective and purposeful leadership. The curriculum co-ordinators make very valuable contributions as part of a team approach.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the work of the school and fulfils its responsibilities with care and commitment. Governors are enthusiastic and well involved in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's self evaluation is one of its most significant strengths. Performance is monitored and reviewed in a very systematic way, securing continued improvement through clear and appropriate targets.
The strategic use of resources	There is very good strategic use of resources. Most of the surplus income from the financial year to April 2001 has been spent on staffing and improvements to the accommodation.

The school benefits from excellent leadership. There is an adequate number of staff. Although good improvements have been made to the accommodation, its condition necessitates ongoing, expensive refurbishment. The classrooms are an adequate size. The play spaces are appropriate and there are good sized grassed areas. There are a number of attractive display features, reflecting the school's focus on the creative arts. The school is well resourced. Very good consideration is given to the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children like school and are making good progress. ◆ Standards of behaviour. ◆ The quality of teaching and the approachability of the school. ◆ Being well informed about progress. ◆ The leadership and management. ◆ The expectation that children will work hard and become responsible. ◆ The school's partnership with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Other than a few individual concerns, there were no identified areas for improvement.

The parents' questionnaire responses and the comments made at the meeting and during the inspection indicate very strong support for the school. Parents view Stocksbridge Junior School as a very good school and inspectors endorse this view.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

There is a pattern of very good standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6

1. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced with a very strong focus on literacy and numeracy which are well taught across the school. Science is also given a high profile and taught well. Pupils are enabled to attain very well in these areas of learning across the school. The judgement of the inspection team is that standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are very good and well above national averages. This reflects the school's very high results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science in 2001 when the results in each subject were well above average for all schools nationally and well above average for those of similar schools. The results in science were, very creditably, in the highest five per cent of all schools nationally and in the highest five per cent of all similar schools. Teacher assessments undertaken at the same time, confirm this picture of high attainment. A key feature of the 2001 results was that, although the vast majority of pupils achieved level 4, the expected standard for a typical 11 year old, a relatively high proportion achieved the higher level 5. This was most notable in science, where, not only did three quarters achieve level 5, but also a small number of pupils achieved the very high level 6 standard.
2. Although cohorts of pupils can, and do, vary from year to year, national performance data over a period of five years gives a picture of consistently high attainment. This data indicates that, taking the five years from 1997 to 2001 together, the performance of pupils in English and mathematics exceeded the national averages for their age group by a significant margin. In science, the performance over five years exceeded the national average by a very significant margin. National performance data clearly shows that since the previous inspection the National Curriculum results have gradually improved, most notably in science. Over this period, the trend of improvement in results for all core subjects has been above the national trend.
3. A key feature of the school's performance is the standards achieved by boys. In 2001 there was a well above average performance of boys in all subjects, most notably in writing. The trend of underachievement by boys nationally is not reflected in the school's data. The performance of boys over the three years from 1999 in English, mathematics and science exceeded the national average for their age group by more significant margins than the girls exceeded the national average for their age group.
4. Although the results are very creditable, the school is not complacent. As a consequence, results are carefully analysed and targets for improvement are set. These targets include the further raising of standards of writing for Year 3 pupils and improving standards in mathematics for the current Year 4 and 5 cohorts. The new school improvement plan identifies strategies for raising standards in non-narrative writing and also in handwriting and presentation; also identified is the aim of improving attainment for gifted and talented pupils in mathematics and science.
5. Reading is given a high priority in the school. Pupils arrive at the school with very good standards and these are nurtured and developed. Progress is monitored closely with the careful identification of pupils to be targeted for extra help. During the time of the inspection,

Year 5 pupils were gaining much benefit from work in reading 'booster' groups. The high standards in reading have a very positive impact across most curricular areas.

6. During the inspection, a number of literacy, numeracy and science lessons were observed and a work scrutiny was undertaken which focused on English, mathematics and science, most notably at Year 6. The high quality and amounts of work of the pupils reflect their aspirations to do well. The evidence collected indicates that the high standards are being maintained and that the current Year 6 pupils are in line to continue the very creditable results which have been achieved. All pupils are enabled to achieve well relative to their abilities. A lot of good and very good teaching was observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching has a clear and positive impact on both the progress the pupils make and the standards achieved. There is a shared commitment and capacity on the part of the staff, to continue the process of maintaining and raising standards. This pattern of very good progress in the core subjects is one of the school's many strengths.

There is very effective leadership and management of the school

7. The headteacher provides excellent and effective leadership in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and together they are an excellent team. They lead by their very good example, focusing and steering the work of the staff and governors to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. There is a shared sense of purpose in the management of the school which has created a learning community. The time and skills of staff are used effectively to achieve the goals stated in the mission statement and aims of the school. Raising standards has been the main focus for development and they are continually re-appraising and evaluating the impact of the many initiatives that have been introduced since the last inspection. The personal commitment of the headteacher and his staff to the needs of the pupils is excellent. There is a clear agenda for continuing improvement based on very effective self-evaluation involving systematic monitoring of teaching quality and performance data.

8. The headteacher and senior staff have a thorough grasp and understanding of how well the pupils are doing to enable them to measure the impact that the curriculum, planning and teaching are having on standards. The school has Beacon School status, has twice been awarded national recognition for excellent achievement by the Department for Education and Skills, has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and was recently awarded a national Arts Mark. These are clear recognition of the excellent management which reflects the work of the school and its commitment to pupils' achievements. The school is at an advanced stage in leading the formation of a Network Learning Community with a group of schools with an aim of developing collaborative methods for improving teaching and learning and aspects of leadership. Such involvement will have a positive impact on the teachers and pupils of the school. The school's commitment to improvement and its capacity to succeed are very strong.

9. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, including teaching and learning, are very good. Classroom observations have focused appropriately on the quality of teaching and learning outcomes and have involved the senior management, the curriculum co-ordinators, the local education authority's advisory service and the governors. Individual feedback is given to staff, general issues are raised at staff meetings and effectively addressed at whole school level and inform the school improvement plan. Effective action is taken to raise the quality of teaching and learning as a result of the monitoring. This includes such strategies as the involvement of a number of teachers in action research based on

classroom practice and regular meetings between co-ordinators and the senior management team to decide on how best to address areas for development. Such strategies have contributed effectively to improved teaching and learning.

10. The governors are very involved in the life of the school and in the school improvement planning process. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school as they are effectively involved in decision making, in supporting school improvement and in monitoring the work of the school and the standards it achieves. The school improvement plan is an excellent working document which reflects the aims and values of the school. It provides a shared sense of purpose in the management of the school and ensures that the time and skills of the staff are used effectively. The school improvement plan drives the budget and is closely linked to staff development priorities. So that it is clear what is needed and what priorities need to be established before committing resources, all staff prepare and negotiate planned action areas with the senior management team and the specific budget they would like allocated. The quality and detail of the school improvement plan positively impacts on raising achievement and standards across the curriculum.

11. Financial planning is excellent. Governors have a clear commitment and a determination to ensuring that the school receives best value from all of its spending. The new information and communication technology room, for example, is very well equipped and this is having an impact on raising standards in information and communication technology across the school. The governors set a prudent budget each year, based on a range of spending plans submitted to them by the headteacher. Due to the school attracting substantial amounts of extra funding through Beacon and Network, a bursar is employed to prepare monthly accounts and governors monitor carefully the school's spending through the budget statements they receive from the school. Day-to-day financial administration and control are effective with good use made of a financial software package. All school routines are well established and the administrative officer provides very good support for all teachers, including the headteacher.

12. The management and administration of special educational needs are good. Teaching and support staff work closely with the co-ordinator to ensure that appropriate work is planned for the pupils. The funding for pupils with special educational needs is used wisely to meet their needs and a level of support staffing is maintained to enable the pupils to receive a good level of individualised help that enables them to learn and achieve well as they move through the school.

13. Staffing levels are adequate and both teaching and support staff are well deployed to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and religious education. The current staffing of the school shows a good balance between experienced and well-established staff and those comparatively new to the school. All staff have clear job descriptions which refer to their subject and managerial responsibilities. There is a very effective staff development policy which is closely linked to the school improvement plan. Six members of staff are currently studying for Masters' Degrees based on research undertaken in school. All teaching and support staff are involved in professional appraisal as part of the school's performance management plan.

14. Very good working relationships exist between staff, with teachers in each year group planning their work together and jointly monitoring how well the pupils are doing. The school has a very good induction policy and programme for all new members of staff, including newly qualified teachers. The documentation and strategies provided effectively prepare and support new members of staff. Teachers are well supported by a number of classroom

assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and progress, especially to those pupils with special educational needs. The very effective leadership and management of the school ensure that all the adults work together as a team for the good of the children. The quality of the leadership and management is a very strong factor in the school's success. **The good quality teaching is inclusive for all pupils and impacts very positively on the quality of learning and the standards achieved**

15. In the relatively small number of observations it is possible to make during a short inspection, the quality of teaching observed was good overall. While it was judged to be satisfactory in a quarter of the lessons seen, in the other three quarters it was good or very good in equal proportions. Most of the teaching observed was in literacy and numeracy where the mainly good and sometimes very good teaching is underpinned by teachers' very good knowledge and expertise; very effective use is made of the national strategies which have been adapted to the needs of the school. Very good teaching was also observed in art and design, information and communication technology, geography and physical education. The work scrutiny undertaken clearly evidenced a high standard of work which reflects very well on the quality of teaching. This creditable quality of teaching with its high expectations influences the quality of what pupils produce, how productive they are and the levels of progress they make. The teaching has a positive impact on the high standards being achieved by the pupils.

16. The teaching across the school is inclusive for all pupils; it meets the needs of all the pupils, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, capability, special educational need and for those who are gifted and talented. A feature of all the teaching is the very effective and detailed planning, which sets clear objectives which are shared with and understood by the pupils. These objectives are always displayed prominently at the outset of each lesson. The teaching is consistently and effectively followed up with homework, tailored to the age and needs of the pupils, which reinforces and extends what is learnt in school.

17. Pupils are usually very well managed and organised, thus enabling them to achieve well relative to their abilities. This was the case in a very good numeracy session in the Year 6 'bridging' (lower) set on the 'input' and 'function' and 'output' of numbers. The session opened with mental work in the form of 'Mathematical Bingo'; this was fun and fully engaged the pupils. Topically, all the calculations were based on a 'World Cup Theme'. The teacher gave excellent explanations which helped the pupils' understanding; very good use was made of a huge homemade 'function machine' which was 'worn' by the pupils. The teacher promoted the enthusiasm of the pupils; the teacher involved every individual. "Who thinks they are going to do well on this?" asked the teacher. The worksheets subsequently used to practise the appropriate skills were carefully matched to the pupils' capabilities and one group of lower attainers was very effectively supported by the classroom assistant. Information and communication technology was well used, enabling one group to use the software to reinforce learning on a 'Function Machine Program'. A very good plenary session brought the whole lesson to a very good conclusion.

18. This very successful teaching involves very good pace, clear explanations and instruction, imaginative activities and a great deal of enthusiasm. This was the case in a very good Year 6 literacy session observed with the higher attaining set. The very good teaching enabled the pupils to very effectively investigate the use of formal English in speech writing and to compare and contrast formal and informal speech. The teacher drove the lesson forward in a very dynamic way; this led to well motivated pupils who responded well to the high expectations made of them. The teacher inspired the pupils to write. 'You've got to catch your audience', she said, 'think about powerful and emotive speech.' There were clear targets;

‘Just ten minutes left,’ said the teacher, thus ensuring maximum productivity. No time was wasted. This teaching promotes very good learning. The pupils are enthusiastic and on task, often supporting one another with a clear desire to do well. Learning becomes fun.

19. The school has a comprehensive system of ‘booster’ classes which offer extra support, normally at 8.30 a.m. and at lunchtimes. The inspection coincided with the conclusion of the National Curriculum tests, when the main support was immediately switched from Year 6 to Year 5 pupils. The very good quality of the classroom support staff has a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Across the school the very good relationships, the close knowledge of individual pupils and their needs and the praise and encouragement all have an impact on the quality of learning. High teacher expectations are met so that pupils know they are expected to work hard and give of their best. They behave well. The ethos of the classrooms encourages pupils to co-operate together and support one another and to work with care. The teaching promotes self-esteem amongst the pupils; ‘I’m very proud of you,’ ‘You’ve worked very hard’ and ‘You are so good at this’ are the sort of comments frequently made. The teachers assess work thoroughly and use assessments to help and encourage pupils to overcome difficulties. The pupils understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve. The teaching and learning are interlinked. The efforts and contributions of each individual pupil are valued.

20. Fundamental to the quality of education provided is the quality of teaching, it being the most important influence of the school on the pupils’ attainment, progress and quality of learning. The effectiveness of the teaching impacts very clearly on the rate, breadth, depth and consolidation of pupils’ learning helping them to gain the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic and effective way. This is one of the school’s many strengths and the main reason why standards are as high as they are.

The school’s self-evaluation of its performance contributes significantly to its effectiveness

21. Although the school is very successful, it is very committed to continued improvement. It has high expectations of pupils’ attainment and progress and appreciates the necessity for continual self-evaluation of all aspects of school life in its objective of raising standards.

22. The headteacher and deputy head provide a clear vision of the way to move the school forward. All staff, pupils and the governing body share this vision. An enthusiastic team of teachers and support staff are committed to creating an ethos which strongly supports learning and both staff and pupils have high expectations of success. The clear agenda for continuing improvement is set out in the self-evaluation reports.

23. The school recognises the importance of effective assessment and recording in helping to achieve high standards. Procedures for assessment and recording are very thorough and these, together with the high quality analysis of test results, are a strength of the school. Performance is analysed on regular basis. Procedures are clearly set out in the Pupil Achievement System document which stresses the need for good communication, but acknowledges the difficulties which can arise in ensuring that all relevant parties are kept well informed. Assessment is divided into the three strands of assessment to inform teaching and learning, feedback to pupils and parents and tracking and monitoring standardised assessment information. Everything is carefully documented and systems are constantly under

review. Future needs and plans are highlighted in the annual action plan. The use of Beacon criteria for success has helped to lift expectations.

24. Regular assessment and very detailed record keeping procedures are consistent across school. Each pupil has useful target booklets for reading, writing, mathematics and science. Year 6 pupils are involved in tracking their own progress and setting themselves realistic targets throughout the year. Appropriate attention is paid to ensuring procedures are equal for all pupils. Assessments for pupils with special educational needs are very thorough. Improving the assessment procedures for gifted and talented pupils is a current school focus. Useful assessments are made of behaviour, attitude and conduct. Teachers use day-to-day assessment effectively to plan future lessons. All teachers have a detailed assessment file which is passed on to the next teacher at the end of the year to ensure continuity and progression.

25. Great emphasis is placed on encouragement. Pupils' targets are aimed at 'bridging the gap'. Care is taken when recording achievement to highlight strengths and not to penalise pupils unnecessarily for weaknesses in reading and writing. Tracking documents are used well to celebrate achievement and to inform teachers of any underachievement. Teachers keep pupils well informed of their progress. Consequently pupils work hard and seek ways to improve their performance.

26. The analysis of test results is an integral part of the assessment process. All teachers are well versed in this work and the results give them useful information for setting appropriate targets and monitoring individual pupils. All co-ordinators produce an annual action plan for the development of their particular subject based on the information gained from assessment results and monitoring of teaching and learning. An important focus is the impact the plans will have on learning. Success criteria for both the quality and amount of work to be done are included. Performance in English, mathematics and science is analysed by both co-ordinators and class teachers using the results of national and standardised tests. Results are used to improve teaching and learning. Co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science assess diagnostically the results of national assessment results of Year 2 pupils so that appropriate teaching can be established as soon as pupils join the school. Where possible the school makes use of information and communication technology systems to lessen the administrative burden.

27. Monitoring of teaching and learning is also an integral part of the school's self-evaluation. Monitoring is done by senior staff, co-ordinators and other outside agencies, some on a formal basis and some on an informal basis. The most useful records of monitoring identify very clear targets set for the improvement of teaching skills. Very good induction procedures for new staff help to maintain the high quality of teaching. Training is provided for support staff who play an integral part in teaching and learning. They are given areas of responsibility and this helps to strengthen the corporate way the school works. Consequently the school has a confident and well motivated workforce.

28. Monitoring work also evaluates the effectiveness of teaching styles. A recent initiative examined the effect of building self-esteem and the setting of goals, which has proved particularly successful with boys who have benefited from knowing what their particular learning strengths are.

29. The governing body is an important partner in the school's evaluation. After consultation with the senior management team, members set the targets for improvement in the school

development plan. The school is fortunate to have a governor with considerable experience of monitoring teaching and learning and the school values the contribution he makes to the process.

30. The high quality of self assessment is having a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and, together with the high expectations set, is making a good contribution to the high standards found in the school. The work reflects the commitment to continued improvement. The school is rewarded for its work through its Beacon status. It is regarded as an important centre for support and innovation contributing directly to improved performance in schools who are part of the Beacon Network.

The school's very strong community ethos is implicit in the very good provision for pupils' personal development, including that for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development

31. The school provides a happy, caring environment. The school has explicit aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all, which is reflected in all its work. The staff know the pupils well and cater appropriately for their individual needs. The pupils like coming to school and they participate enthusiastically in the lessons and the other activities. The parents are very supportive of the school and praised its strong family ethos. The school extends a very warm welcome to its pupils, to parents and to visitors. Staff give pupils' welfare a high priority and pastoral matters are dealt with promptly. Academic support is very good for all the pupils, including the gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and those who take part in the booster sessions. The school has high expectations of the pupils and they respond well to these expectations.

32. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' ideas are valued and they are encouraged to respect the values and beliefs of others. They are given opportunities to reflect on their own lives and to appreciate the wonders of the world in which they live. In a well-planned class assembly, pupils learnt about Martin Luther King and were asked to contemplate whether his dream had been fulfilled. The assembly used a candle as a focal point for the pupils' thoughts. Collective worship meets the statutory requirements, the pupils participating with due reverence. The school has its own prayer which affirms its values.

33. Pupils' moral development is promoted through the good examples set by the adults in the school. The school has a very good behaviour policy backed up by a code of conduct and the 'Five Golden Rules'. The pupils know the rules and respond accordingly. They know, for example, that they need to move into the school in orderly lines along the narrow corridors and that they must walk up and down the stairs with suitable care and attention. Staff constantly reinforce the importance of good conduct and the principles that distinguish right and wrong. The school's assembly plan lists the subject matter for each week, focussing on themes such as honesty. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults. It was particularly noticeable during the inspection that pupils were very polite, well mannered and welcoming to their visitors.

34. The school is proud of its pupils and of their work. Celebrating good work and achievements is given a high priority. The 'Ladder of Success' opposite the main entrance is an attractive, colourful celebration of the curricular work. The SJS Special Mentions (Gold) Book records pupils as being 'very helpful' and 'setting a very good example'. The Celebration of Success, Awards and Achievements (Blue) Book congratulates pupils; for example, a

‘Special Award from the Dyslexia Institution’ and ‘passing the beginner's clarinet exam with flying colours’.

35. Pupils' social development is very good. There are many initiatives within Stocksbridge which make significant contributions to the life of the community and in particular to the life of the school. Pupils are involved with environmental work with organisations such as The Stocksbridge Steel Valley Project. Community links involve many sporting activities, especially ones with the Stocksbridge rugby and football clubs. There is regular contact with local churches, including the church in the adjacent community of Bolsterstone. The pupils perform songs to entertain the elderly citizens at the local residential home. Responsibilities are readily accepted by the pupils, such as the lunchtime duties. Pupils have their own school council and their discussions have led to improvements around the school; for example, the trees planted to give a shaded area within the playground. Pupils undertake a lot of charity work raising funds for those less fortunate. Charities supported have included Red Nose Day, Children in Need and, at a local level, support for the Sheffield Children's Hospital. Pupils' own health, safety and welfare is well promoted, including special activities during ‘Healthy Week’ and ‘Citizenship Week’.

36. The school places a high emphasis on pupils' cultural development. There is a strong emphasis on the school as a community and in the understanding and valuing of different cultures and faiths. Many religious festivals are celebrated and the pupils participate in a wide variety of curricular work which incorporates their local heritage and cultures from around the world. Educational visits are made to the Kelham Island Museum to learn about Sheffield's industrial past. Local cultural work includes the Fingerprint Project, where Year 6 pupils work with local artists, writers and craftspeople to make a lasting impression enhancing the school's environment. The ‘Millennium Mural’ was created in the hall, the ‘Oriental and Environmental Gardens’ have been constructed in the quadrangles and a large wooden sculptured hand forms a seat alongside one of the playground areas. A display of Chinese symbols adorns the corridor adjacent to the Oriental Garden. The school sponsors a child in Kenya and has developed connections with France through the French Club.

37. At the time of the inspection, many of the displays around the school, including the pupils' work, celebrated the arts, with particular emphasis on paintings and artists such as Picasso. Curricular work had been based on the theme of ‘Art around the world’; examples of pupils' work include drawings and paintings in the style of native African and Australian art. The Year 6 pupils had been working on Impressionist styles, creating the new form of ‘Impressionist Stocksbridge’. Sculptures have also played an important role within the school in recent years; for example, in the works reflecting local myths and cultures

38. The motto of ‘Learning Together’ and the mission statement relating to value and respect, underpin the school's very good ethos. It meets its aims with considerable success. The school's previous report highlighted the very good provision for pupils' personal development, including the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This continues to be the case and this provision is a major strength of the school, making a significant contribution to the quality of education and to the standards that are achieved.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information and communication technology and its use across the curriculum

39. The school continually strives for high standards and has highlighted information and communication technology as a very clear priority for further development in its school improvement plan. Although pupils receive their entitlement and standards are broadly in line with national averages, achievement is not as high as that found in the core subjects. This is particularly so for the oldest pupils. Currently younger pupils are achieving relatively higher standards than the older ones. Information and communication technology is a rapidly developing subject and some experiences which younger pupils have were not available to older ones at the same age and consequently they have not progressed at the same rate.

40. The school's main aim is to increase the use of information and communication technology as a tool to support learning in all areas of the curriculum and also to ensure maximum use of resources available. Clear action plans show how the school intends to address the issues in information and communication technology. Nationally prescribed guidelines have recently been introduced and are helping to ensure continuity and progression. Subject co-ordinators have been given a brief to identify suitable learning opportunities in their particular subjects and all class teachers are aware of the need to include the use of information and communication technology in their lesson plans. Currently there is a particular emphasis on the use of information and communication technology in literacy and numeracy lessons. Effective assessment procedures have recently been introduced.

41. In-service training and support, together with regular staff meetings to discuss problems have helped to improve staff confidence in all aspects of information and communication technology and this has resulted in increased use of information and communication technology by all pupils. Teachers are working hard to raise standards. Much good teaching and learning takes place. In lessons seen during the inspection, teachers showed good understanding of the subject, their instruction was clear and they gave effective support when pupils were working on their individual or group tasks. Work recorded in 'pupils' logs' shows that they have received a variety of experiences and have made good progress through the year. There is a need to ensure a consistent approach to the use of the logs across the school. Effective planning and good guidance from support staff enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.

42. The high quality of monitoring done in information and communication technology is helping to ensure that good progress is made in developing the curriculum. The co-ordinator scrutinises teachers' planning each term. Teachers in each year group monitor the scheme on a regular basis to check that its use is consistent between classes and relevant to the pupils' needs. The co-ordinator and senior staff observe lessons and identify useful points for development.

43. The school receives valuable support from the local education authority advisory service, which provides termly briefing meetings for the co-ordinator on new developments. The governing body is actively involved in work on information and communication technology and members are kept well informed of the developments and needs. One governor has useful expertise and has carried out valuable reviews of standards. The co-ordinator has produced clear plans of how the school intends to follow up points for development and a very positive start has been made.

44. Audits are being carried out to ensure that there are adequate resources to cover the enhanced curriculum. There are plans to increase the space available in the information and communication technology suite, so that more computers are available. There is a need to monitor the use of the information and communication technology room and also equipment

available in classrooms to ensure that maximum use is being made of it. The approach being taken to the development of information and communication technology is very effective and there is evidence of the good progress already made towards meeting the school's aim of raising standards in this vital area of the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed.

In order to build on the school's many strengths and the quality of education provided and to maintain and further raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ Further raise standards in information and communication technology and further develop its use across the curriculum by continuing to follow the very clear plans for development, including those identified in the school improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	9	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	37.5	37.5	25	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	374
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	74

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	44	35	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	40	40	43
	Girls	30	30	33
	Total	70	70	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (81)	89 (84)	96 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	40	42
	Girls	29	29	32
	Total	68	69	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (83)	87 (86)	94 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	367
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.7 : 1
Average class size	31.2

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	103

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	748,163
Total expenditure	747,841
Expenditure per pupil	2,000
Balance brought forward from previous year	73,071
Balance carried forward to next year	*73,393

*The balance carried forward from the previous year has been very significantly reduced through the creation of a teaching post designated to provide cover for Beacon commitments, together with significant areas of refurbishment including the heating system.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	380
Number of questionnaires returned	241

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	38	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	33	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	41	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	47	8	1	1
The teaching is good.	67	30	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	36	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	25	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	44	5	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	68	30	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	41	8	1	8