

INSPECTION REPORT

DARLEY DALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Matlock

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112591

Headteacher: Mr S Clements

Reporting inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy
23158

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th September 2000

Inspection number: 224947

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greenaway Lane Hackney Matlock Derbyshire
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Telephone number:	(01629) 732226
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Davison
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized primary school catering for 236 boys and girls aged between four and eleven. Since the last inspection the school has increased in size, growing from six classes to nine. All pupils attend the school on a full-time basis and almost all are of white ethnic origin; none have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the proportion with special educational needs. Children start in the reception class at two points in the year (September and January). At the time of the inspection, there were 21 reception children, who were all being taught in one class, with other children of the same age. Before starting school, almost all children have benefited from some form of pre-school education. Children's overall level of attainment on entry to the reception class is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective overall with some significant strengths. However, there are also some weaknesses in important areas. By age 11, pupils have high standards in English, mathematics and science, but standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are below average in both the infants and the juniors. Recently there has been a significant improvement in the standards achieved by seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics, but the trend over the past three years has been one of underachievement in reading and mathematics. Almost all of the teaching at the school is at least satisfactory and much is good; however, there is some poor teaching in one class. Although there are some weaknesses in the way the school is led and managed, effective systems have been developed to check on the quality of teaching and learning. Over the past two years, these have helped the school improve the standards achieved by seven-year-olds. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Eleven-year-olds achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- There are good systems to check on quality of teaching and learning.
- Children enjoy school, behave well and are keen to learn.
- Children with special educational needs make good progress.
- The school has good links with the community and uses them to enhance children's education.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards in information and communications technology are below average because teaching is weak, parts of the curriculum are not covered and resources are unsatisfactory.
- There are weaknesses in the way the school is led and managed.
- Parents lack confidence in the effectiveness of the school's leadership to ensure the best quality learning for their children.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The previous inspection, in January 1997, found that more-able pupils were not being sufficiently challenged. It also identified weaknesses in the way the school was led and managed, including the quality of communication with parents and some aspects of health and safety. Since then, standards have risen in the juniors and more-able pupils in this department have continually made good progress. Soon after the last inspection, the school was faced with tackling significant problems of underachievement and weak teaching in the infant department. The process of improvement has been lengthy due to staffing difficulties but the school has not been complacent. The standards of seven-year-olds, including the more-able pupils, are now much improved, as is the quality of teaching in this department. However, some work still needs to be done to address weaknesses in teaching and learning in one class. Most of the leadership and management issues have been satisfactorily addressed, but some are outstanding and others are evident. Particularly successful, however, has been the improvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Parents receive more information than they did in 1997, but significant discontent still

exists and improvement towards this key issue has not been effective enough. Health and safety issues have been satisfactorily addressed. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	E	A	B
mathematics	A	D	A	A
science	B	C	A*	A

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

The standards achieved by 11-year-olds in 1999 were well above average in English and mathematics and very high in science. The most recent tests (2000) indicate a similarly positive picture and, over time, these standards have been maintained. The exception was in 1998, but this was due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Analysis of a sample of work from the previous group of Year 6 pupils confirms the high results of the 1999 tests. The current group of Year 6 pupils began the juniors with standards that were well below average in literacy and numeracy, but have made very good progress and are now achieving average standards. In view of their low prior attainment, these standards are high enough and the school is rightly setting challenging targets for the pupils to achieve in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. Seven-year-olds are currently achieving average standards in reading and above average standards in writing and mathematics. Although there has been significant underachievement of many infant pupils over the past three years, the most recent tests (2000) show a significant rise in standards, particularly in mathematics, and in the proportion of pupils achieving above the level expected for seven-year-olds. However, at both key stages, standards in ICT are below average. Children under five are achieving above average standards in all areas of their work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and try hard with their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils show respect for their teachers, each other and school property.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on well with each other, collaborate well on tasks and discuss their work maturely. They work independently when there is a need. Pupils think about the feelings of others and accept responsibility well.
Attendance	Good. Better than in most schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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.

In 95 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory or better; 17 per cent was very good, but 5 per cent was poor. The table gives the overall judgements for teaching, but it masks some significant variations within the key stages. For example, all of the very good teaching was seen at Key Stage 1 (aged 5-7 years), which amounted to 50 per cent of what was seen at this key stage. However, the poor teaching was located here too, which amounted to 17 per cent within the key stage. At Key Stage 2 (aged 7-11 years) none of the teaching was less than satisfactory and 67 per cent was good. During the inspection, many of the lessons seen were in English and mathematics so the judgements in the table also reflect the quality of teaching in these subjects and in literacy and numeracy, with the same sort of variation within the key stages. Teaching of the youngest children is consistently good and meets their needs well. At both key stages, the needs of pupils in mixed age classes are being met effectively because teaching is good or better in these classes. In most classes, teachers are successful in matching work well to pupils' different abilities so that they are well challenged and make good progress. In one class, pupils' needs are not being met effectively because the work they are given is too easy. Most teachers have very good relationships with pupils and are successful in making lessons interesting and fun; this supports pupils' learning well. In many classes throughout the school, the teaching of ICT is weak.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Overall, there is an adequate range of learning opportunities, but parts of the National Curriculum for ICT are not being met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils' needs are clearly identified and they are well supported in lessons, which helps them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. All the elements are well promoted. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, mix well together and respect people's differences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Assessment is generally good although there are weaknesses in the assessment of ICT. The school is in the process of improving its security measures.

Extra-curricular activities are provided at lunchtime for junior pupils, but very few take place after school and there are no extra curricular activities for infant children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory overall. The headteacher does not have a clear enough view of the school's strengths and weaknesses or what it needs to do to improve. Subject managers for English, mathematics, science and ICT are better informed about standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects, because good procedures to check on this have been established. Nevertheless, their insight is limited to one key stage because whole-school co-ordination is only just being established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors are not sufficiently involved in formulating the priorities to help the school improve and are still insufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They have not ensured that pupils receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum for ICT. Governors have worked hard and successfully to address an issue of low staff morale, but have not been vigilant enough in monitoring and promoting improvements between parents and the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall, but there is a lack of rigour that leaves the school's management insufficiently informed about strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements. The school's development plan is insufficiently focused upon the most significant issues the school needs to address in order to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Good use is made of support staff to enhance the learning of pupils with special educational needs. The budget is managed well although there has not been enough spending to support learning in ICT. Computers are under-used in many lessons.

Overall, the school satisfactorily applies the principles of 'best value' in the way it manages and uses resources. However, computers are not used efficiently to support pupils' learning and methods of consulting parents and pupils could be improved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching in most classes. • That their children like coming to school. • Children's good behaviour. • The way the school helps their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school is led and managed, in particular the way their problems or concerns are dealt with by the headteacher. • The high turnover of teaching staff and staff morale. • More consistency in homework. • A greater range of activities outside of lessons. • More information about their children's learning. • Parents feel children in mixed-age classes are at a disadvantage in terms of learning. • More sport and competitive games.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views and are sympathetic to their concerns, a number of which are well founded. Parents' dissatisfaction with the way their concerns are dealt with by the headteacher is sufficient evidence that this is an area that could be improved. The high turnover of staff needs to be stabilised though not by retaining ineffective teachers. Staff morale has been low in the past, but teachers say this has recently improved and is not now an issue. The quality of learning for all pupils in

the two mixed-age classes is good. Inspectors agree that more after school activities could be provided, particularly for infant pupils. Reports on pupils' progress are comprehensive in English, mathematics and science, but limited in other subjects; reporting on ICT is particularly weak. Homework was being used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. A good amount of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of physical education and inspectors did not find any evidence that competitive sport is discouraged.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Eleven-year-olds achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.

1. Since the last inspection, the standards achieved by 11 year-olds have risen significantly and the quality of learning for all pupils at this key stage has been very good. In the past, many pupils have begun Key Stage 2 with standards that were below average and significantly below their capability. However, by age 11 most, including many that have special educational needs, achieve the expected levels for 11 year-olds in English, mathematics and science and a very high proportion achieve beyond this. This clearly shows that at Key Stage 2 the school has successfully addressed the previous inspection's key issue about providing more challenge for higher attainers.
2. To illustrate; the 1999 National Curriculum test results show pupils achieving standards in English, mathematics and science that were well above the national average, with science standards being in the top five per cent nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was also well above the national average in English and very high (again in the top five per cent nationally) in mathematics and science. When compared with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was above average in English and well above in mathematics and science. The school's results in the most recent National Curriculum tests (2000) show a similarly favourable picture in all three subjects, at both the expected and the higher levels. Although there is currently no national data available to compare these results with national averages, inspectors' analysis of a sample of work from the previous group of Year 6 pupils confirms that they were achieving above average standards.
3. Observations of the work of pupils currently in Year 6 show most are achieving average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards for this year group are not as high as for the previous two Year 6 groups, but they have only just started Year 6 and, more significantly, they began the key stage with well below average standards in literacy and numeracy. Taking these factors into account, their progress during Key Stage 2 has been very good. The school has set challenging targets for them to achieve in the 2001 National Curriculum tests and the good quality teaching they are receiving stands most in good stead to reach these.
4. The high standards and good learning of pupils at Key Stage 2 during the past few years are undoubtedly the result of good teaching. For the last three years, pupils at this key stage have enjoyed a relatively stable, and effective, teaching staff, which has supported their progress. Although there have been major changes to the make-up of teaching staff at Key Stage 2 this year, teaching has nevertheless remained good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching. The school is aware of the need to maintain the good standards of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 that, in previous years, have led to pupils achieving high standards.

There are good systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning.

5. The school has responded well to the previous inspection's key issue about monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Successful systems have been devised and implemented that allow the headteacher and deputy to regularly monitor the effectiveness of teaching in terms of its impact on pupils' learning. The subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science and ICT have also been given time to monitor how their subjects are taught within the key stage for which they are responsible. Where performance data from tests has been available, co-ordinators have, to varying degrees, made overall satisfactory use of this to support their knowledge of how well pupils are achieving. All of this has helped them gain a sound insight into strengths and weaknesses in standards, learning and teaching. From this, they have been able to plan appropriate action to secure improvements.
6. There are a number of good examples of the effectiveness of this aspect. For instance,

weaknesses in infant pupils' numeracy skills and reading comprehension skills were successfully identified and became a specific focus for intensive teaching last year. The most recent test results (2000) show a significant improvement to standards in numeracy and, though to a lesser extent, in reading. Similarly, the ICT co-ordinators have produced clear and accurate statements, which reflect the current weaknesses in standards, teaching, learning and resources.

7. The good systems for checking on the effectiveness of teaching and learning are obvious in the school's work during the last two and a half years in tackling the significant underachievement of many infant pupils. This action has been successful, although the process took time because it was hampered by a series of complex staffing problems. The deputy headteacher, whose task upon appointment was to lead the infant department and improve its effectiveness, had to tackle ineffective teaching in some classes along with significant resistance to change. This resulted in high levels of staff turnover and absence and, understandably, contributed to low staff morale and parental discontent. Inspectors can understand why many parents became frustrated and felt the school's management was not doing enough to minimise the effects of this situation on their children's education or providing them, as parents, with more information. However, inspection evidence shows that the school was not unaware that there were problems at Key Stage 1 or complacent about tackling them. The school was sympathetic to parents' concerns, but was restricted in the amount of confidential information they could divulge to parents about teachers' competence.
8. The most recent National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds (2000) shows a significant improvement over previous years and indicates that most of the underachievement has been eliminated. The school knows that there is still more work needed to improve pupils' reading comprehension skills. Pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving well. For example, although they are only at the beginning of the academic year, many have already reached the standards expected of seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics.
9. The standard of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, with much that is good or better. However, there is evidence of poor teaching and underachievement in one class. The school recognises the need to prioritise tackling this weakness as a matter of urgency and has a good support system and procedures in place to deal with it.

Children enjoy school, behave well and are keen to learn.

10. By the time they leave the school pupils are hardworking, mature and sensible. They enjoy learning and have gained good work habits that have the potential to serve them well in the future. Throughout the school, pupils work hard, concentrate and take time and trouble to ensure that their work is accurate and neatly presented. Pupils are confident and articulate; they talk happily about their work in a friendly and relaxed manner with each other, their teachers and with visitors to school. Most are enthusiastic about their work, take it seriously and show pride in their successes.
11. Learning takes place in an orderly way. Behaviour in all parts of the school, both inside and outside lessons, is good. Pupils move around classrooms and the school sensibly. They are polite, patient and considerate and there is a good sense of companionship. They understand the reasons for school and classroom rules and try hard to keep them. Pupils of all ages play constructively together. Games are sometimes vigorous, but are played in good spirit with very little pushing or shoving. Pupils are friendly and caring to each other. For example, at playtimes older infant pupils showed initiative and a mature attitude in beginning conversations with reception children, who had only been in school for a week, and included them in their games.
12. Pupils identify easily with members of staff. This gives a very harmonious atmosphere to learning in most classes. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' capacity to work together to solve problems, find information or make and test predictions are well rewarded. Pupils' mature attitudes allow them to rise successfully to these challenges and, even when no adult is nearby, they

maintain their good concentration and effort. They work happily together, helping each other and collaborating in a variety of contexts to support their learning. Good examples were seen in many year groups. For instance, reception children, working independently in the sand, suggested different ways to make a bridge for toy cars to go over and under; they listened well to each other's comments, responded sensibly and worked collaboratively to try various solutions to the problem. Similarly, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils worked effectively in pairs, using magnifying glasses to carefully identify and discuss various parts of plants. In the research work that accompanied the task, pupils maturely shared information with their partner and friends.

13. The school is keen to recognise pupils' successes, both in and out of school, and uses praise well to get the best out of pupils and increase their self-esteem. This is evident in almost all classes and is particularly successful for those pupils who have special educational needs. Some teachers, at both key stages, actively involve pupils in evaluating what they have learned in lessons, including what they found easy or difficult. This works very well, giving pupils a good insight into their own learning and opportunity to reflect upon how successfully they are meeting their individual or group targets.

Children with special educational needs make good progress.

14. The school provides a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs, which enables them to make good strides in their learning and achieve well.
15. All adults in school, whether teachers, support staff or visiting specialists, show great concern for those who, for whatever reason, find learning more difficult. The relationships between pupils with special needs and the adults who teach them are very good and are pivotal in supporting effective learning and giving pupils' confidence in their ability to succeed. For example, many develop confidence in answering questions or trying something new because they know their efforts are always valued.
16. Another strength of the school's work in this area is the clear identification of each pupil's specific needs which results in the formulation of individual work programmes for each pupil. An effective blend of in-class support and withdrawal for closely targeted work is then planned by the special needs co-ordinator and successfully undertaken by competent support staff and, within the constrictions of her part-time hours, the school's co-ordinator. Class teachers are knowledgeable about pupils' individual needs and work hard to ensure that these pupils are fully involved in lessons, for example, by encouraging them to answer questions and explain their work in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers refer to pupils' individual work programmes to ensure that the tasks they set for them are well matched to their needs.
17. There is very good liaison with external support agencies who work closely with the school in identifying pupils' needs and discussing the best provision to support their learning; visiting specialist teachers also make a good contribution to pupils' good progress. Liaison between the co-ordinator, support staff and teachers is also good, though less formal because much of the management role of the co-ordinator is undertaken in her own time. With this reservation, the school invests significantly in its support provision for pupils with special educational needs and it pays off. The effectiveness of the school's provision is evident in that after well-targeted support, many pupils eventually achieve the levels expected for their age in literacy and numeracy. Many parents expressed satisfaction with the quality of support given to their children. Most parents of pupils with special needs felt that communication with teachers and the school was good.

The school has good links with the community and uses them to enhance children's education.

18. The school has successfully forged many links with the community and exploits these well to support pupils' learning, both academically and personally. There are many examples of the school's effectiveness in this area. Sharing the school's site, for example, is a workshop for disabled adults. Pupils have been given opportunities to visit the workshop and help with a variety

of making activities, supporting the development of art and design skills as well as giving them an insight into the challenges faced by individuals who are less fortunate than themselves.

19. Many of the youngest children in the school have attended the Darley Dale Nursery, which is housed in one of the infant classrooms. This has served to enhance communication between the nursery staff and the reception teacher and supported the youngest children's confidence in beginning full-time schooling.
20. Older pupils have had opportunities to take part in competitions, such as the 'Design Challenge' run by Rolls Royce, and gain first-hand experience of aspects of hotel management through links with the nearby New Bath Hotel. In the former, pupils had to follow a specific design brief whilst working within a limited budget, whilst in the latter they made cakes, designed non-alcoholic cocktails and learned what is involved in preparing rooms for guests. All of this provides pupils with an early and useful insight into the world of work, helping them understand how the work they complete in school is relevant in 'real-life'.
21. The Community Police are involved in supporting pupils' moral education, providing education programmes about the dangers of drug misuse. Pupils' moral and social development are also enhanced when they learn about the work of different charities and engage in activities to support their causes. For example, a minute of noise was held following an assembly from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to reinforce the importance of listening to children. Performances of the school choir and orchestra at a range of community functions and for a variety of audiences also provide very good support for pupils' social development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils' standards in information and communications technology are below average because teaching is weak, parts of the curriculum are not covered and resources are unsatisfactory.

22. By ages seven and 11, pupils do not achieve the standards expected in ICT. The achievement of pupils at Key Stage 1 is adversely affected by weaknesses in resources as well as weaknesses in teaching. For example, old and outdated computer systems are often not working correctly, and this limits pupils' access and experiences. However, even when systems are working, teachers often miss opportunities to incorporate ICT into lessons. Although to a slightly lesser extent, this teaching weakness is also evident at Key Stage 2. Where teachers have expertise or are more confident they try hard to include ICT activities to support lessons. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils made satisfactory use of word processing skills to change a passage written in the first person to the third person, whilst in a Year 5 history lesson, pupils used the Internet to undertake research about the Romans. However, in too many lessons, throughout the school, computers stand idle when there is good potential for their use.
23. Most 11-year-olds are competent in using the keyboard to write stories and accounts. To varying degrees, pupils are sufficiently skilled in amending and organising texts to improve the end product. Year 5 and 6 pupils are developing good skills in using the Internet to find information and are learning that they must think carefully about the key words to include in a search to ensure they get the information they want. For instance, some Year 5 pupils, learned that simply typing in the word 'Romans' provided superfluous information such as estate agents named 'Roman'. Discussions with Key Stage 2 pupils and analysis of their work showed that, whilst some had experienced using computer programs to collect and store data, many could not remember completing work of this nature. Pupils underachieve in the elements of control and monitoring because the school does not have the resources to teach these strands of the curriculum. Many pupils have access to computers at home and this is supporting their learning, but weaknesses in teaching and the school's resources are not helping pupils build on what they already know. There is no assessment structure to support teachers in matching work to pupils' prior attainment.
24. The varying standards of teaching and learning, as well as the inadequacies in resources, are

known by the co-ordinators and are well documented in their recent 'position statements', as is the school's inability to provide aspects of the statutory curriculum.

There are weaknesses in the way the school is led and managed.

25. The headteacher is committed to the school, but does not have a clear enough view of its strengths and weaknesses or the most important areas that need to be addressed to help it improve. There are also weaknesses in the headteacher's organisational skills and these have provoked parents' dissatisfaction about the way in which their concerns are dealt with.
26. The analysis of performance data lacks rigour. For example, the headteacher and governors know that 11-year-olds are achieving well and that seven-year-olds have been underachieving, but in both cases are unaware of the extent of achievement or lack of it. Teachers who co-ordinate English, mathematics and science have a clearer idea about standards, but even here there is room for improvement as some of the analyses they conduct are not entirely accurate. The lack of clear insight is evident in the school's development plan. For example, the current plan does not prioritise the need to raise standards in ICT at Key Stage 2. Nor does it identify the need to sustain the recent rise in standards at Key Stage 1, after an extended period (three years) of significant underachievement in reading and mathematics. Similarly, although the school has identified as a priority its aim to achieve aspects of Investors in People Recognition, nowhere is there any specific reference as to how the school intends to stabilise its volatile staffing situation, maintain improved staff morale or deal with the significant amount of parental dissatisfaction. Moreover, including, as a priority, the need to improve learning and achievement in science is somewhat at odds with pupils' very high standards in this subject.
27. Some areas of weakness from the last inspection have not been dealt with effectively enough. For example, the previous inspection's criticism that having separate key stage co-ordinators for the same subject had a negative impact on the continuity of pupils' learning, was not addressed until last year and then only for certain subjects. The core subjects of English and mathematics continued to be co-ordinated separately until this term, despite clear evidence of significant differences between the standards being achieved by pupils at the end of each key stage. The core subjects of science and ICT still have separate co-ordinators for each key stage. As at the time of the last inspection, effective communication with parents remains a significant weakness. Similarly, the school's aims are still not prominently publicised so that everyone, particularly parents, is clear about what the school considers to be the most important aspects of its work.
28. Governors are hardworking and have the school's best interest at heart, but despite some recent improvements, governors' role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work and shaping its direction has not developed sufficiently since the last inspection. Governors are beginning to recognise that they should expect more in terms of measurable evidence of improvement and are aware of the need to review key management personnel's performance in relation to specific targets for improvement. Recently the governors have intervened successfully to tackle problems with low staff morale and address some weaknesses in management. However, action to address the latter has come rather late in the day and governors have not been vigilant enough in checking that the previous inspection's key issue about communication with parents has been successfully addressed. Governors have not ensured that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for information and communications technology are implemented. Some governors have attended training for their roles and some have made informal visits to classrooms to gain an insight into the school's work. However, the information gained on these visits is not formally recorded or fed back to the full governing body.

Parents lack confidence in the effectiveness of the school's leadership, particularly in ensuring the best quality learning for their children.

29. A significant proportion of parents is dissatisfied with the way the school is led and managed. This is depicted on the data table at the end of the report, showing parents' response to a questionnaire circulated prior to the inspection. Many of the questionnaire returns were accompanied by lengthy letters or included written comment explaining the reasons for parents' discontent. The most

significant areas of dissatisfaction centred on the high turnover of teaching staff, most notably in the infants, and the impact of this on children's learning and emotional wellbeing. Some parents also felt able to comment that staff morale was low. A high proportion expressed dissatisfaction over the manner in which their concerns are dealt with by the headteacher; specifically, that the head is reluctant to spend time hearing them out and/or that their concerns are not taken seriously enough, because little or no action occurs. Many parents say they are not happy with the way the school organises pupils into mixed age classes and a good number feel that the school does not make enough provision for after-school activities. Some parents say that the headteacher discourages competitive sport and two parents said that they had not been informed that their children had special educational needs.

30. A good number of parents' concerns are well founded and it is easy to see how they link these to leadership and consequently find it impossible to agree that the school is well led and managed. The underachievement of infant pupils in some basic literacy and numeracy skills over the last few years has its roots in weaknesses in leadership and management. However, as explained in paragraphs 7-9 above, monitoring systems introduced after the last inspection allowed the school to recognise these weaknesses and implement successful action that has significantly improved the situation. Parents are correct in saying that staff turnover has been high, particularly in the infants, where, as a result, the youngest children have been taught by a series of temporary teachers. This has disrupted their learning and not provided the stability needed by young children beginning school. Inspectors are convinced, however, that the school endeavours to provide the best possible teachers for pupils, though it has encountered situations where staff absences or resignations at short notice left them with little scope to do anything but employ relief or temporary teachers. The school is keen to retain good teachers and some good use has been made of incentives to do this, but the school cannot impede those teachers who want to leave to gain promotion and, rightly, will not retain teachers who are not effective.
31. The organisation of some pupils into mixed-age classes is not a weakness in leadership. The number of pupils in each year group means that it is impossible for the school to employ enough teachers to have single age classes within its budget allocation. Inspection evidence shows that in the two classes containing mixed-age groups, pupils of different ages and abilities are all learning effectively and making good progress as a result of good or better teaching.
32. The headteacher does not feel that he is anything less than vigilant in addressing parents' concerns. However, the school does not have a system for formally registering concerns expressed by parents or tracking the action taken to address them. Consequently it is difficult to support the headteacher's view that this is done effectively when significant parental dissatisfaction provides strong evidence that it is not.
33. There is no evidence to support the views of those parents who felt the headteacher discourages competitive sport. The views expressed by parents on this matter came as a complete surprise to the school's management, which reinforces the judgement that communication between the school and parents is still unsatisfactory.
34. After-school activities are rarely provided for pupils, although Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from taking part in sports and musical activities at lunchtime. The school is aware that it could do more to improve provision in this area, particularly for pupils at Key Stage 1 where no extra-curricular activities are provided. It is unclear why some parents say they were not told about their children's special educational needs because there are appropriate systems to inform parents of this at an early stage.
35. Parents' views of the school, in particular the way it is led and managed, have declined since the last inspection. Some efforts to improve communication, such as newsletters and meetings about changes to the curriculum, have been successful and are appreciated by parents. However, much work needs to be done to restore parents' confidence in the quality of the school's leadership and management, particularly in relation to ensuring their children are well taught, make good progress and that parental concerns are taken seriously and acted upon.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. To improve further, the governors, headteacher and staff should prioritise the following three key issues.

i. Raise standards in information and communication technology by:

- providing necessary training for teachers and support staff, at both key stages, to ensure they are confident and competent to teach ICT⁺;
- ensuring that all strands of the subject are taught and that ICT skills are developed within other subjects;
- developing an assessment scheme to measure, record and track pupils' standards and progress;
- maintaining regular monitoring by the co-ordinator, which specifically focuses upon evaluating pupils' standards and the effectiveness of teaching, learning and use of resources; and
- improving resources.

(Paragraphs 22-24)

ii. Improve leadership and management by:

- ensuring there is rigorous analyses of performance data, particularly baseline assessments and end of key stage National Curriculum test and assessment results, to gain a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in standards, and determine the extent of pupil achievement (i.e. the value added);
- sharpening development planning. Specifically, reduce the number of priorities for development and use the above analyses, together with information from co-ordinators' monitoring, to determine the most important areas that will help the school improve, in terms of raising pupils' standards and achievement and the quality of teaching;
- immediately initiating whole-school co-ordination of all subjects to ensure continuity and progression of learning between the key stages and continuity of management;
- increasing governors' involvement in checking on the effectiveness of the school's work, specifically in relation to pupils' standards and achievement, the quality of provision (particularly teaching) and the effectiveness of key management personnel in tackling the key issues for improvement and maintaining high standards of teaching and learning;
- maintaining the recently improved staff morale. (The governors and headteacher should monitor this regularly);
- raising parents' confidence in the effectiveness of the leadership and management by implementing the points identified in issue 3 below; and
- involving staff, governors, pupils and parents in a review of the aims of the school, which should then be publicised prominently and reviewed regularly in terms of the school's effectiveness in meeting them.

(Paragraphs 25-28)

** This element has already been identified on the staff development plan.*

iii. Raise parents' confidence in the effectiveness of the school's leadership by:

- ensuring all pupils receive good quality teaching that allows them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment;
- stabilising the high turnover of teaching staff, though not by retaining ineffective teachers;
- implementing a workable system that registers parents' concerns and records the school's action and progress in addressing them; and
- regularly canvassing parents' views on the effectiveness of different aspects of the school's provision so that communication and action can be targeted to areas where there is significant parental discontent.

(Paragraphs 29-35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	61	17	0	5	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	236
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34

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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
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 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	25	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	22
	Girls	17	17	16
	Total	37	38	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (82)	88 (86)	88 (85)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	20
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	37	38	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (85)	88 (90)	86 (90)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	17	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	16
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	25	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (56)	81 (59)	90 (74)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	16
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	26	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (67)	81 (70)	90 (86)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	235
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	347,928
Total expenditure	331,622
Expenditure per pupil	1,306
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,275
Balance carried forward to next year	18,581

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 34%

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	39	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	40	12	4	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	50	8	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	45	17	13	0
The teaching is good.	44	37	6	10	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	44	18	12	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	30	17	10	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	40	13	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	39	25	11	1
The school is well led and managed.	18	30	26	23	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	45	6	8	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	19	24	19	18