

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sutton Coldfield

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103388

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Attack

Reporting inspector: Mrs Joyce Cox
25074

Dates of inspection: 8th - 9th April 2003

Inspection number: 246290

Short 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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Worcester Lane Sutton Coldfield Birmingham
Postcode:	B75 5NL
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Christine Guest
Date of previous inspection:	10 th -13 th November 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Little Sutton is a relatively large primary school situated in a residential district in the north-east of Sutton Coldfield. Most pupils who attend the school live locally and a significant number join the school in the juniors. There are 388 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. Seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average when compared to other primary schools. Thirty-nine pupils have special educational needs, which is below average. Seven pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. Almost five per cent of pupils do not have English as their mother tongue, which is higher than in most schools, but all these pupils are bilingual and understand and use English well. Children's attainment on entry in the reception classes is above the expected levels. The school has been awarded Investors in People Status and has also received four National Primary Centre Awards during the past three years. It is also a 'Quality Mark' school and was recently awarded an 'Artsmark' for high quality work in art and music. In addition it has been awarded a School Achievement Award for sustained academic achievement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Little Sutton is a very good and popular school with many outstanding features, for instance the very high quality of teaching and pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to their work. Pupils enjoy school and find learning interesting and exciting. The school gives pupils of all abilities a high quality of education. They consistently achieve high standards in national tests at seven and eleven years of age. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school is always looking for ways to improve its work. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- It helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress and to achieve results that are very high in national tests.
- It provides high standards of teaching. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give lots of praise to encourage them to do well. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to their work and enjoy school very much.
- The school provides a very rich and varied curriculum, which contributes significantly to the high quality of pupils' education.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership.
- The school has very good relationships and links with its parents.

What could be improved

There are no key issues for the school to address.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in November 1997. All the key issues identified at that time have been fully addressed. For example, junior pupils are given many opportunities to use their initiative and work independently. The school has introduced very effective systems to find out what pupils can do and sets challenging targets for them to do even better. Development planning has improved considerably. Since then, the school has achieved the difficult task of maintaining high standards in tests for pupils at seven and eleven years of age. The school is very keen to improve in as many ways as possible and often seizes the initiative to do so. For instance, in collaboration with other local schools it successfully organised its own information and communication technology (ICT) training, which meant that staff received exactly what they needed in order to improve their skills. Considerable and well considered improvements have taken place to the

accommodation, which have greatly enhanced the learning environment. The school still provides very good value for money and is in a very strong position to continue to improve its work.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	A	A*	B	C

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

Children start the reception year with above average levels of attainment. They make good progress in the reception classes and all attain the Early Learning Goals (the nationally expected standards) in all areas of learning. Most of the children achieve above the expected levels. The school has achieved the difficult task of maintaining high standards over a lengthy period of time at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Results for seven-year-old pupils, in comparison with those in all schools in the country have never been lower than 'well above average' since 1998. Results in mathematics in 2000 were in the top five per cent of results in the country. At the end of Year 6 the picture is very similar. Year 6 pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' results were very slightly lower in science in 2002 because the school did not get its usual high number of Level 5s. The school acted very quickly to rectify this by setting pupils according to ability and the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science by the current Year 6 are well above average.

All pupils achieve well. Higher attaining pupils reach very high standards. Most pupils with learning difficulties attain or exceed the expected standards for their age. These results show that the school helps pupils of all abilities to achieve their best.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils look forward to their lessons and work extremely hard. They admire, trust and respect the adults who work with them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are polite, friendly and courteous to each other and to adults. They are very well behaved in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate extremely well to each other, celebrating each other's successes. They are confident to express their ideas and opinions. They carry out responsibilities, such as supervising the library at lunchtime, willingly and sensibly.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is much better than for many primary schools nationally. Punctuality is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very 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.

The quality of teaching is very high and has a major impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and the progress that they make. In the reception classes, staff teach the early skills of reading and writing very well and skilfully and sensitively encourage children's personal and social skills. Infant and junior teachers continue to teach basic skills very well, which results in well above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Because pupils are constantly encouraged to read, write and use their mathematical knowledge in all lessons, these skills are reinforced even further. Throughout the school, teachers' high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, together with the very good relationships between the teachers and the pupils, contribute significantly to positive and purposeful lessons. Teachers work extremely hard to create a highly stimulating environment in their classrooms, producing imaginative displays and well produced resources, which hold pupils' interest and help them understand new concepts. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to use their own initiatives and to work independently. Pupils with special educational needs are expertly supported and achieve well as a result. All support staff provide invaluable support in lessons. Major strengths in pupils' learning, which contribute significantly to their well above average standards, are their interest and concentration in lessons, their productivity and motivation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is rich and varied and provides pupils with a wide range of experiences in and out of the classroom, which enhance their personal, creative and intellectual development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' special needs are identified early. The school is very effective in helping pupils reach the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes very good provision for the pupils whose mother tongue is not English, as it does for all its pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual development in assemblies and lessons. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to mature and everyone's talents are valued. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' cultural development; visitors to the school and trips to places of interest help develop pupils' appreciation of music and the arts.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for pupils. It places great importance on creating a calm and caring atmosphere. It has very good systems for assessing and monitoring how well pupils do in their work.

Parents think very highly of the school. There are very good links between parents and the school and parental expertise is used to enhance the curriculum and the environment. The hard-working parents' association raises impressive amounts of money annually for the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is an outstanding leader who has diligently promoted high standards throughout the school. The deputy headteacher gives very good support and her teaching provides an outstanding example to others. The senior management team, subject co-ordinators' and indeed all staff, work very hard to improve all aspects of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. They closely monitor standards and the work of the school and act as rigorous, critical friends. They are very keen to support the school in introducing new ideas and facilities that will help to improve pupils' education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The rigorous procedures for analysing test data, monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and tracking pupils' progress, contribute significantly to the high standards achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. As well as highly effective budget monitoring and prudent financial planning the school uses extra and specific funding extremely well to support priorities in the school improvement plan and to support pupils with special educational needs.

The school's application of the principles of best value is very good. Stringent criteria are used to ensure that value for money is obtained when purchasing resources and services. The school rigorously compares pupils' performance in national tests with local, national and similar schools. Parents' views of the work of the school are frequently sought and pupils are consulted through the pupil council. Despite achieving high standards the school constantly challenges itself to do even better.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school and behave well. • The school demands high standards and ensures that their children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed, and parents felt comfortable talking over issues and concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents would like less homework for younger children.

Inspectors agree fully with the very positive views of parents. They also found that the school's homework provision supports younger children's learning of basic skills well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

It helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress and to achieve results that are very high in national tests.

1 Children's attainment when they start school is above average in all areas of learning. The school recognises that it admits a significant number of children who are relatively 'advantaged' in terms of vocabulary, general knowledge and a wide experience of books. However, this is not a complacent school that relies on what children already know to carry them through. It sets out to make the most of pupils' interests, talents and abilities and compensates for those who find learning difficult. In order to avoid the charge that its very good results at the ages of seven and eleven are 'easy' because of the pupils' backgrounds, it uses assessment information very effectively to show what difference the school makes. Many schools now refer to this process as 'value added'. It indicates how influential the school has been in furthering the pupils' progress. There is very good evidence that work at Little Sutton builds quickly, logically and progressively from year to year on what pupils know and can do. For instance in a Year 5 music lesson, pupils demonstrated that they have learnt, successfully retained and can skilfully use information regarding the elements of composition.

2 The school's targeting and monitoring systems ensure that pupils' rates of progress are maintained from the time they start in the reception classes until they leave. The school also succeeds in ensuring that the relatively large number of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual starting time make good progress.

3 Work sampling reveals that by the end of the reception classes, higher attaining children write legibly at some length and make good progress. For instance, from copying teachers' writing at the beginning of the year, many of the higher attaining children write several sentences using capital letters, full stops and words spelt accurately. Year 1 pupils build on this good foundation and use their skills well in all subjects. For instance, they produced interesting, well-written sentences comparing school life now and in the past after their visit to the Black Country Museum.

4 In national tests in 2002, Year 2 pupils attained standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were well above those expected for their age, both nationally and when compared to results of pupils in similar schools. These impressive results have been achieved in national tests for the last four years. Year 6 pupils also achieve well and in 2002 attained well above the national average in English and mathematics and above the national average in science. Results dipped very slightly in science because fewer pupils than normal achieved the higher Level 5. The school has taken immediate action to rectify this and Year 6 pupils are placed in ability sets to ensure maximum progress for all pupils.

5 The school has developed very good systems that help it to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and then plan work which is challenging, as well as using a wealth of data extremely effectively in tracking the progress of groups of pupils and of individual pupils. It sets targets for them that are achievable yet challenging, in order to maintain the high standards that have been apparent at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 over the past few years.

6 The school is very good at carrying out assessments in a wide range of subjects to monitor pupils' progress as they get older and to predict their attainment at the ages of seven and eleven, correctly identifying when attainment might not be as high as in previous years. Results from rigorous analysis of pupils' assessments are used to successfully target

areas for improvement. For instance, strategies were introduced to improve boys' reading when it was noted that girls were achieving higher results in tests.

7 As well as using national levels against which to track and measure pupils' progress, the school provides pupils with individual targets that are appropriate to their particular level of attainment and ability. Targets for improvement are also shared with parents in pupils' end of year reports. Although this is good practice, some of these targets are not precise enough to be really useful. The samples of work that the school collects in portfolios allow comparisons to be made with pupils of the same age and also provide very clear evidence of the development of pupils' work as they move through the school. For example, in writing there is a clear progression in terms of style, maturity, length, content and punctuation as pupils get older. The way pupils present their work improves too. However, some pupils, whilst having really interesting ideas and very good knowledge, do not always present their work neatly enough. This is surprising since the quality of the teachers' presentation of their rooms and displays is of a very high calibre. Work has recently been started to improve the quality of pupils' presentation.

8 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is also very good. The school recognises that there are some pupils who experience a degree of difficulty with some areas of learning. Its highly effective assessment systems help to identify these pupils at an early age. From Year 1, the school supports pupils with additional help that is targeted on the basis of informal class assignments and the results from statutory and non-statutory tests. Pupils receive very good help from teachers and support staff. For instance in a very good Year 6 literacy lesson, the learning support staff listened carefully, rephrased and recorded pupils' views, thereby enabling pupils with special educational needs to participate fully in a 'persuasive debate' about homework. As well as identifying those with learning difficulties, the school also monitors the progress of those pupils who are gifted and talented and makes good provision for them in its activities. The 'setting' arrangements in English and mathematics from Year 2 to Year 6 and the placing of Year 6 pupils into ability groups for science, allows work to be set for all pupils that stretches them to the full.

It provides high standards of teaching. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give lots of praise to encourage them to do well. As a result pupils have very good attitudes to their work and enjoy school very much.

9 In the pre-inspection questionnaires 96 per cent of the parents indicated that they felt teaching is good at Little Sutton. All teachers are very hard working and totally committed to the success of the school. The quality of teaching is high and reflects the hard work that the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have put into monitoring teaching and improving its quality. Pupils clearly like and respect their teachers and know that the feeling is mutual. It is one of the reasons why they like coming to school.

10 During the inspection teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the 39 lessons observed. Ninety per cent were judged to be good and almost half the lessons seen were considered to be very good. This is teaching of a high quality and its impact upon the progress and attainment of the pupils is clear. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when inspectors felt that teachers did not plan for pupils to make choices in their work or to be independent. This is definitely no longer the case, as pupils in all classes have very good opportunities to be independent and to make choices. For instance, at the end of an excellent Year 2 numeracy lesson, the teacher asked the pupils what they had learnt and what they wanted to learn next. The pupils made very sensible suggestions and clearly demonstrated how involved they were in their own learning about how to programme the roamer (a moveable toy). All teachers encourage pupils to discuss their learning with a partner in order to clarify their thinking and junior pupils complete homework projects based

on their chosen topics. This independent project work is valued by the school and placed in the library to show the standards that can be achieved and to provide a resource for other pupils. Concerns expressed by the previous inspection regarding pupils' completion of homework diaries have all been fully addressed and all pupils complete their diaries conscientiously. In many subjects, pupils are expected to present their findings to the rest of the class using different formats. Year 5 pupils who attend a lunchtime computer club decided that the information the school gives to Year 2 pupils when they enter the juniors was 'boring' and 'dull'. They decided they could improve this information, which they successfully did using their computer skills to devise welcoming colourful booklets written in clear everyday language.

11 Teachers have a positive and enthusiastic approach that really makes pupils sit up and listen. All lessons have a clear start and there is a definite expectation from teachers and pupils that learning will take place. What the teacher expects the pupils to learn is usually written up on the board and shared with them at the start of the lesson. This 'learning objective' is frequently referred to during the course of the lesson to ensure that pupils stay well focused. It also ensures that there is a brisk, lively, focused start and that pupils know what to expect. Teachers are very good at planning work that is interesting and exciting and at just at the right level of difficulty, but challenging enough to make sure that pupils learn and make good progress. Pupils are invariably engrossed during lessons, time passes very quickly and they learn a great deal. For example, Year 5 pupils thoroughly enjoyed writing an encyclopaedia article about the Vikings. They demonstrated that they had learnt to use embedded clauses in non-chronological writing, as when one pupil wrote: 'The Vikings, who raided many monasteries, came from Scandinavia.' Teachers are highly skilled at linking subjects, such as history and English, together, which makes learning relevant and meaningful for the pupils. Year 2 teachers and support staff successfully linked several subjects when they studied life in Mali in Africa. Pupils gave clear and well-expressed presentations based on their research into food, clothes and animals. Pupils also enjoyed playing African games such as 'Clap Ball', learning to work effectively as a team when clapping and stamping whilst throwing an orange. In this interesting and stimulating project, pupils had learnt a good deal and also enjoyed designing and making African garments, clay masks and tasting a variety of fruits.

12 One of the most outstanding features of lessons is the way in which teachers convince pupils, by promoting their self-esteem, that they are capable of achieving high standards. They manage to combine high expectations of what pupils can do with a 'relaxed' and enjoyable attitude to learning. Teachers' use of praise is outstanding and, in addition to their very good relationships with pupils, makes for a climate of acceptance of everyone's ideas. All pupils feel able to offer answers and know that they do not always have to be right. Pupils take risks, offering ideas and suggestions, and are confident and comfortable with their teachers when they do not understand or are not completely sure. In investigative science lessons, pupils are confident to suggest and instigate methods and ideas. Year 4 pupils articulated clearly the notion of a 'fair test' when investigating how the weight of an object contributes to the distance it can travel (a catapult). History and English were once again linked successfully, as this lesson was part of an exciting Roman day with teachers in eye-catching Roman costumes!

13 During the course of lessons, teachers showed how good they are at asking questions to find out whether pupils have understood what has been taught, and to challenge them to extend their thinking whenever possible. This form of on-going assessment by teachers has many benefits. For example, if the pupils' answers indicate that they have understood the lesson, the teacher can quickly move on. If their answers show some misunderstanding, the teacher knows that revision is needed. Pupils cannot sit back

and hope that they will not be involved in answering. As one teacher said to the whole class, during a discussion about Judaism, 'Who hasn't spoken yet?'

14 Teachers use resources extremely well to capture pupils' interest and imagination. This was another strength of their teaching. In many lessons, the use of well designed work sheets, specifically and attractively made for a lesson, has a positive impact on the range of work that pupils do and the progress they make. The way in which teachers use whiteboards for pupils to record their ideas quickly, and often jointly, is extremely effective. Their use of ICT to support their teaching is very good. For example pupils used CD-ROMs very successfully to find information in one lesson and older pupils have made excellent 'Power Point' stories to share with younger pupils.

15 A key issue from the last inspection was for junior teachers to give pupils more opportunities to use their own initiative and work independently. The school has made very good progress with this and infant and junior pupils are given numerous chances to be independent and to use their initiative. In all lessons, there is a very positive atmosphere where learning is valued and pupils are encouraged to work together in pairs and in groups. Year 3 pupils co-operated well when they devised and performed their own 'body machines' in a dance lesson. They also sensitively and constructively evaluated each group's performance, making mature suggestions for improvement, whilst praising the effective sections. Teachers use 'response partners' successfully; for instance in English, literacy partners support each other with ideas for stories and assist each other with spellings.

16 As a result of the mutually trusting relationships developed between teachers and their classes, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are proud of the many different ways they help and quite correctly feel that they play an important role in the smooth running of the school. Pupils are pleased to be elected by their classmates as members of the pupil council. They play an important part in improving the school. Important issues such as pets for all classes, cars parked dangerously outside school, food selection at lunchtimes and the state of pupils' toilets are discussed and acted upon. Council meetings are conducted in a very orderly fashion, with an eloquent chairperson leading the proceedings. All comments are recorded and shared with other classmates. The class representatives express their views clearly and thoughtfully and listen with respect to each other's ideas. In addition, the headteacher personally interviews groups of pupils to assess their experience of the school.

The school provides a very rich and varied curriculum, which contributes significantly to the high quality of pupils' education.

17 The school offers the pupils a very good curriculum. Parents at the parents' meeting stated that the school 'didn't just concentrate on achieving high standards in English, mathematics and science but also did well in all the other subjects.' For instance, parents felt that the music provision was of a very high standard. They said that school productions, class assemblies and Christmas concerts were very impressive and that the standard of singing was very high. Parents appreciated the wide range of visits and visitors, which enriched pupils' lessons. For instance, pupils have visited Sarehole Mill, where they dressed in period costume and learnt about Tudor life. Parents felt that the school provides a relevant and stimulating curriculum for the 'whole ability range.' A parent said that 'the inclusion policy works in practice here.'

18 Inspectors agree with the parents; in line with the school's aims and vision the curriculum is imaginatively structured to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result their personal, intellectual and creative development is very good and they have very positive values and attitudes.

19 The school has very successful strategies for teaching basic skills and pupils are given a thorough grounding in reading, writing and mathematics through the carefully considered implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The emphasis the school places on the teaching of English is appropriate and contributes significantly to the well above average standards many pupils attain in reading and writing and the good achievements of pupils with special educational needs.

20 The curriculum is exceptionally rich and varied. A very clear curriculum outline ensures that the National Curriculum is fully implemented and that religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. Staff in the Foundation Stage have completed recent training to ensure that a rich, interesting and exciting curriculum with very good indoor and outdoor activities is provided to match the needs of the reception children.

21 Since the last inspection, the provision for ICT has become one of the school's many strengths. There is a well above average number of computers available for staff and pupils to use, and the senior management team and the governing body are totally committed to ensuring all pupils and staff have access to the latest technology. The deputy head has worked extremely hard to lead the development of ICT. Together with the assistant co-ordinator she ensures that ICT activities are used to support all subjects. During the inspection, a very impressive Year 6 music lesson took place in the computer suite. Pupils clearly demonstrated that they had learnt to create pieces of music containing syncopation and bass ostinato using the 'Dance e Jay' program. They operated the program with confidence, carefully selecting different sounds, instruments and melodies from the menu, which they used skilfully to create lengthy compositions.

22 The school provides pupils and staff with a very bright and stimulating place in which to work and learn. The wide variety of pupils' work reflects the range of subjects that pupils enjoy and the emphasis the school places on providing a rich and stimulating variety of activities. The exterior and interior of the building are clean and attractive and reflect the care given by the site supervisor. There can be very few schools that have the same visual impact that makes people stand and stare. There is a huge range of pupils' work that covers every spare inch of walls, shelves and even hangs from the ceiling in the case of a superb Viking longboat in a Year 5 class. The impact of the outstanding quality of displays from one end to the other makes the school appear very much like an exciting art gallery. However, work is not displayed for special occasions or visitors; it is very much a celebration of what pupils are capable of achieving. There are many and varied examples of two and three-dimensional work; for example Year 2 pupils have produced stunning cubist pictures using different facial parts in the style of Picasso. Junior and infant pupils have created realistic, life size models of black hounds when working with a local artist. Art work is used extremely well to complement other subjects, for example a breathtaking 'Rainbow Fish' as part of junior pupils' religious education and personal and social work. The 'Jungle Room', which is used for group work has been decorated with 'creepers,' 'branches' and 'leaves' in the style of a rainforest and pupils enjoy working in this exciting and unusual environment. An eye-catching display about India in Year 6 includes imaginatively displayed pupils' work as well as artefacts brought in by teachers and pupils. It is not surprising that the school has been awarded an 'Artsmark' for the very high quality of its work.

23 The range of activities that are displayed capture pupils' imaginations. Older pupils say they enjoy looking at the work of younger pupils. The imaginatively designed and skilfully presented role-play areas and reading corners in the reception classes engage the children's interest and successfully promote communication skills. For instance reception children enjoy ordering and preparing meals in the Italian and French bistros! The artwork in the reception classes is of a high standard; children's carefully observed and expertly sketched charcoal teddy bears are proudly displayed on the school website. Seasonal work,

such as growing sunflower seeds, forms an important part of young children's work. The wide variety of pupils' work reflects the range of subjects that pupils enjoy and the emphasis the school places on providing a rich and stimulating variety of activities.

24 The range of extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a wide range of additional sporting opportunities from football to cross country running and cricket as well as regular opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions in conjunction with other schools. Other activities include choir, orchestra, sewing club, writers/computer, science and a chess club. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument including guitar, keyboard and woodwind instruments. Year 6 pupils take part in a residential visit where outdoor pursuits are promoted and opportunities are provided to enhance pupils' problem solving skills and independence.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership.

25 The high quality of the headteacher's and the deputy's leadership is a major influence on the high standards pupils achieve and the very good quality of their education. The deputy headteacher leads by example with her own high quality teaching and computer expertise. In all aspects of the school's work the headteacher provides an extremely positive and professional example. She is a lead assessor for 'Quality Mark' and this enables her to regularly compare the performance of Little Sutton with other school throughout Birmingham.

26 The impact of the excellent leadership from the headteacher is evident from the school's results in national tests. All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully dealt with. On her appointment in 1999, the headteacher immediately began to share all the assessment and data analysis with all staff so everyone felt they had a part to play in successful school improvement. The headteacher respects and consults all the people working in the school and as a result, everyone feels valued. For instance the learning support assistants devise, cost and implement their own section of the school improvement plan that develops the school's 'Barriers to Learning' programme for those pupils who are underachieving because of emotional difficulties. Midday supervisors also work hard to support all pupils, encouraging those that are lonely, to find a friend.

27 The headteacher and the senior management team promote working practices that reflect the shared beliefs and values of the school. There is thorough and purposeful monitoring of lessons. This has had a positive impact on improving standards of teaching and is now firmly embedded as good practice throughout the school. The headteacher is determined that, despite very good results in national tests over a number of years, the school should continue to improve and has identified areas where this is possible. The school development plan, which was judged to have weaknesses by the previous inspection team, is now very well written and provides a very effective framework for monitoring, evaluation and self-assessment and clearly shows that the school's core purpose is teaching and learning.

28 Throughout the school there is a shared commitment to high achievement and constant improvement. For instance, after examining pupils' books it was decided to write and implement a 'presentation policy' in order to improve some pupils' written work. This has yet to have an impact in the case of some pupils.

29 Co-ordinators are also influential in maintaining high standards of attainment, teaching and resources in their subjects, through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The senior management team is very well deployed to take action to improve aspects of the school's standards and provision. For instance, the science co-ordinators, in conjunction

with the headteacher, introduced 'setting' in Year 6 science lessons to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential in national tests.

30 Governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities very well. The chair of governors is hardworking and dedicated and makes an invaluable personal contribution to the school. Governors act as 'critical friends' to the headteacher, questioning the value of extra staffing or spending on resources. They are well aware of the school's priorities in the school development plan. Governors visit the school regularly on an informal basis and visit formally once a year to observe agreed classroom issues, such as the learning environment. They have implemented a robust performance management for the headteacher and the literacy governor monitors and reviews pupils' writing through visits and by looking at pupils' books.

31 The school makes very good use of its financial and other resources. The governing body has a clear understanding of the day-to-day financial running of the school and works closely with the headteacher on the strategic management of financial resources. The headteacher has given a strong lead to the school in the financial management and, with support from the governors, built up a considerable budget reserve to support the school's £400,000 building and refurbishment project. The tendering process allowed for a very small contingency and due to the headteacher's foresight the school has a cushion against the unexpected expenses which occur in any large building project. The governors recognise and appreciate the fact that the headteacher is extremely adept at identifying and obtaining specific grants and services, which can help the school and the pupils. The headteacher and the governing body are very aware of the principles of best value. In discussion with inspectors the headteacher succinctly and expertly defined best value principles as 'using all resources efficiently and effectively to improve the lot of all children.'

The school has very good relationships and links with its parents.

32 The school is well supported by and benefits from very good relationships with parents and carers. Ninety-six per cent of parents indicated in their questionnaire that the school works closely with them. At the pre-inspection meeting parents agreed that teachers are very approachable. Virtually all parents said they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. Teachers and the headteacher are available to speak to parents informally on a daily basis. It is evident that parents' first contact with the office and administrative staff is helpful, cheerful and welcoming.

33 One way in which the school maintains very good links with parents is through the enthusiastic and hardworking parents' association. Not only does the association raise very large sums of money each year, but it also has a positive role in promoting the school's profile in the local community and in helping all parents to forge links and get to know each other.

34 Parents are invited to and enjoy attending celebration assemblies and one parent was particularly delighted when her child was presented with a certificate for 'being a friend to everyone.' On the whole parents are very happy with end of year reports and their positive style, although a small number of parents found the targets for pupil improvement to be too broad in some cases. Inspectors agree with parents and feel that this is one of the areas for the school to consider for future improvement.

35 Parents find meetings related to the curriculum very helpful. A programme of mathematics 'Inspire' courses has begun, where parents are invited into mathematics lessons to work with their children and then go away with a 'goodie' to use at home. Parents appreciated this chance to learn with their children as they felt out of touch with modern

methods used to teach the subject. Parental expertise is used both in and out of school. Many parents work regularly in school on a voluntary basis, often volunteering a particular skill that enriches the curriculum such as Indian cooking and dancing.

36 The headteacher introduced a yearly parental questionnaire in June 2000, which is based on the OFSTED model, to evaluate the effectiveness of the relationships between home and school. Results from the questionnaire are analysed carefully and action taken to remedy any significant concerns. As the chairman of the governing body said 'This is a listening school that does all it can to provide a high quality education for all its pupils.'

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	49	38	10	0	0	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)		388
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs		YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	73
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
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
		2002	22	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	22	23	22
	Total	42	44	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	98 (100)	96 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	22
	Girls	23	22	23
	Total	44	43	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (98)	96 (96)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
		2002	33	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	29	33
	Girls	26	24	26
	Total	56	53	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (90)	88 (88)	98 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	27	28
	Girls	26	25	26
	Total	53	52	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (80)	87 (88)	90 (80)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
293	1	0
1	0	0
11	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
4	0	0
15	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	246

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	835110
Total expenditure	774649
Expenditure per pupil	2128
Balance brought forward from previous year	59611
Balance carried forward to next year	120072

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	388
Number of questionnaires returned	213
Percentage of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	41	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	50	11	1	1
The teaching is good.	63	33	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	48	4	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	44	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	79	18	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	31	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	38	4	1	3