

INSPECTION REPORT

SITLINGTON MIDDLESTOWN J & I SCHOOL

Middlestown, Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield MDC

Unique reference number: 108157

Headteacher: Mrs J A Howell

Reporting inspector: Mr P M Allen
17531

Dates of inspection: 24th - 25th September 2002

Inspection number: 246763

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:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Wakefield MDC
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Davis
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Middlestown Junior and Infant is an average sized primary school which has a nursery class. It serves an area of mixed housing in a village on the outskirts of Wakefield. A small minority of the pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. Of the 209 pupils on roll, there are a similar number of girls and boys, although there is a gender imbalance in some year groups. The vast majority of pupils are of white UK heritage background, with a very small number from a dual heritage background. There are no children with English as an additional language. As well as the nursery class, which caters for approaching forty children on a part-time basis, there are seven classes. Although at the time of the inspection there was a small mixed Reception/Year1 class, by January there will be a discrete class for each year group. Fifteen pupils are identified as having special educational needs, two having statements of special educational need; these proportions are below the national averages. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below the national average. Virtually all the children have attended the school's own nursery class and joined in the Reception class at the start of the term in which they became five. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, but overall it is broadly in line with what could be expected.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with a capacity to become more effective. Caring leadership from the headteacher creates a learning environment where the achievements of all pupils are celebrated. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are sound and broadly in line with national averages. The staff are hardworking and committed to the school; the quality of the teaching seen was good overall. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. Taking into account its effectiveness and efficiency in relation to its costs, the school gives overall good value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that the children make a very good start to school life.
- The school supports and provides well for lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- There is very good provision for the pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are very good.
- The school provides a very full and interesting range of activities outside lessons for the older children.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The school's self-evaluation of its performance.
- Communication with parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a steady improvement since its previous inspection in October 1997. The issues from that report have largely been addressed. Although information and communication technology is now used more effectively across the curriculum, national expectations have risen and there is still work to do. Pupils' confidence as writers at Key Stage 1 has improved, although standards still need to rise in writing across the school. The school now has an up-to-date policy in design and technology. The school's planning of the curriculum has improved significantly since the previous inspection and the

quality of teaching and learning has improved. The staff recognise the need to continue to improve the quality of education and to continue to raise standards; the school has the capacity to succeed in this.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Virtually all the children in the youngest age group are likely to meet most of the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals and around a half are likely to exceed most of the goals. Standards at the end of Year 2 are sound and in line with national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The 2001 National curriculum tests in reading indicated insufficient progress being made. Standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are also sound and in line with national averages. The trend of improvement in the school's average National Curriculum results is broadly in line with the national trend. There is recognition in the school that standards need to be higher in written work; they can also be higher in reading and mathematics. In these three areas more pupils should be reaching the higher levels in the tests. Although standards in information and communication technology are gradually improving, they are unsatisfactory as pupils do not yet receive their full National Curriculum entitlement across the school. In religious education, pupils achieve standards which are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school is now beginning to set high but achievable targets for improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. They are very enthusiastic and speak highly of the school and its teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very good. Pupils behave well in lessons; sometimes their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils play together well at break times, with all ages mixing together well.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils show respect for one another and appreciate others' contributions. They share and take turns willingly.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, being well above the national average. Pupils arrive promptly ready to make a positive start to the day.

The very good personal development and relationships underpin the school's caring, community ethos.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	very good	good	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 the relatively small amount of teaching and learning observed during this short inspection was good overall, with satisfactory and very good teaching in similar proportions. Most of the very good teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage classes. English and mathematics are generally taught well, with teachers using effective methods to teach the skills of literacy and numeracy. The teaching meets the needs of pupils who are lower attainers, including those with special educational needs. There are times when more could be expected of the higher attaining pupils. The good quality and number of support staff have a very positive impact on the quality of education and in the support for younger pupils who need extra help.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall the curriculum is broad, balanced and imaginative. The school recognises the need to further develop some aspects of information and communication technology to ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement in this area.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good with a very good level of support enabling good progress. The school is only just beginning to identify and develop strategies to support the very high attaining pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good, thoughtful provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which underpins the school's caring ethos. The pupils respond very well in these areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of pastoral care is very high. Staff value all pupils equally as individuals, whatever their needs, and work hard to make sure that pupils get the best from their time at school. The school is moving forward in the monitoring of attainment and progress with plans to further develop target setting for individuals and for groups.

Overall there is a sound partnership between parents and the school, although the school recognises the need to improve communication. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is one of the school's strengths. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities for older pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, well supported by the deputy head, is providing caring and positive leadership. There are clear plans to significantly develop the roles of the subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very loyal and supportive of the school and its headteacher. The governing body intends to raise its profile with parents and also to become more closely involved in monitoring the work of the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has started its self-evaluation processes. There is a need to improve and extend the monitoring and evaluation of its performance by introducing challenging targets aimed at improving the quality of education and raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good strategic use of its resources, including specific grants and additional funding, linking decisions on spending to educational priorities.

The school improvement plan needs to present a longer term picture of future developments than the current year. There is an adequate level of teaching staff, very well supported by the good number of classroom support staff. Overall the school is well resourced. Although the accommodation is clean, attractive and well maintained internally, the exterior of the building and the grounds are generally in poor condition; for example, a lot of the window frames have woodwork which is rotten. This shabby external environment does not reflect the ethos of care within the school. The school gives good consideration to the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children like school and make good progress. The quality of the teaching. The approachability of the school. The way the school expects the children to work hard and is helping them to become responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents do not feel that their children receive the right amount of homework. Some feel they are not sufficiently well informed about their children's progress Although the vast majority feel that the school is approachable, a significant minority indicated that they did not feel the school works closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees that the school's expectations on homework could be clearer and there are firm plans to review homework to make clearer the school's policy and expectations. The number of extra-curricular activities is very good and, like most schools, caters for the older pupils. Communication between the school and parents could be improved; for example, by giving more curricular information and through a closer partnership in supporting children's reading. The vast majority of views expressed by parents were very supportive of this effective school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The very good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that the children make a very good start to school life.

1. Children attend the nursery class on a part-time basis for three to five terms. Subsequent to that, in accordance with the local education authority policy, children start in the Reception class at the start of the term in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, in the early part of the school year, the older Reception children were with a small group of young Year 1 pupils. After Christmas, the Year 1 pupils move on so that the class contains only the Reception children. In this way the nursery and the Reception classes contain all the children who are at the Foundation Stage of their schooling.
2. These children benefit from very good teaching from the teachers, the nursery nurse and the classroom support assistants. Very good teaching and learning enable the children, regardless of ability, to make good and sometimes very good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. The children are enabled to make a very good start to their schooling. Virtually all them are in line to meet most of the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception year), although a small number may not reach the higher levels in the area of communication, language and literacy. Around a half of the children are likely to exceed most of the goals.
3. Children throughout the Foundation Stage benefit from the hard work and sensitivity of the staff. A lot of thought and co-operation goes into planning the work and the outcomes are closely monitored. The staff are warm and caring and value the children as individuals. The supportive relationships enable the children to feel happy during their introduction to the nursery class and to the main school. The parents are very appreciative of this. Self-esteem is promoted all the time, with the words 'Well done' being heard throughout the sessions. This has a strong impact on the children's attitudes to learning.
4. The staff show a good knowledge of the Early Learning Goals and this is reflected in the detailed, coherent planning. A cycle of termly topics, such as 'How we have changed' 'People who help us' and 'Minibeasts' are imaginatively undertaken. There is a very good range of activities and experiences and the effective records kept of these evidence a rich and varied curriculum; for example, nursery class booklets on 'My History' and a Reception class book on looking at the past entitled 'Then and Now' which contains a great deal of photographic evidence. There are good resources for each of the areas of learning, except that the nursery computer needs updating to make use of a wider range of software. The nursery and Reception classes have a very new outdoor play area which has been developed very imaginatively in the 'quadrangle' outside the classroom.
5. One of the strengths of the teaching is in the very effective promotion of speaking and listening. The teaching in 'circle time' makes an important contribution to this area, as do the many opportunities for working in small groups. The children have a growing vocabulary which benefits from taking part in role play. In the nursery class, the children become well engaged in the 'Baby Clinic'. The adults model language and the children respond well. 'How much are baby wipes?' said one of the adults to the children, promoting reflection and a clear answer from one of the children. In the Reception class, the children learn about a time gone by when they take part in role play in a Victorian shop and kitchen, richly resourced with artefacts.
6. During the inspection, children in the nursery class were observed working independently on a wide range of stimulating activities; for example, a group of boys were busy collecting stones to transport on a wide range of lorries, trucks and dumpers. They co-operated very well, accepting each other's suggestions, asking for help. 'I'm stuck - how do I get out?' asked one. Meanwhile the teacher and the nursery nurse worked on two focused activities, helping the children to make a

card and a rattle for a baby. These activities had very clear learning objectives and fully engaged the children. There is very open-ended questioning enabling children to practise and explore language. Children are very welcoming to visitors and happy to engage in conversation. 'My name is April and my birthday's in April,' said one child with a twinkle in her eye.

7. In a lesson observed with Reception children, outdoor play helped them to understand about life in another (Victorian) age. The children played together with a wide range of hoops, diabolos, tops, bubble pipes, hobby horses and whips and tops. The children, wearing Victorian style outfits, were very well supported by the staff who fully entered into the spirit of the activities. Children were clearly gaining insights into times gone by; they co-operated well together and the pleasure in their learning was clear to see. The children enjoyed singing and playing Victorian 'ring games', including 'Poor Victoria sits a-weeping', 'Winding up the clock' and 'Pass the hat on Monday'. The way the lesson was well planned and well researched and resourced contributed very positively to the quality of teaching.
8. The staff, well led by the teachers, focus on particular individuals or groups, but manage at the same time to keep oversight of the whole of the areas, intervening when appropriate. The children's pleasure in learning is clear. There are very high expectations and this means that the children behave very well and co-operate well with one another. The quality of the teaching and learning is enriched by the caring and supportive quality of the relationships and by the way that each child is valued as an individual. Parents value and appreciate the quality of the teaching and the opportunities given to their children. This teaching leads to quality early learning, which lays the foundations for future learning.

The school supports and provides well for lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs.

9. The school makes very good provision for lower attaining pupils and this enables them to make good progress. The school policy details arrangements for ensuring that the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are met. It is currently being updated to reflect the revised code of practice which the school already has in place. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the teachers and the classroom support assistants all work closely together to provide a consistent approach which helps to raise standards achieved by pupils.
10. The school tries to identify pupils with special educational needs as early as possible, partly using a baseline assessment. Teachers then use the school's assessments and standardised tests, to identify pupils who are to be placed on the special educational needs register. The success of the early intervention and effective procedures in meeting the needs of these pupils is seen in the movement on and then off the special educational needs register.
11. Fifteen pupils are identified as having special educational needs and two of those have statements relating to their needs. Every effort is made to ensure that these pupils have their curricular entitlement. Each pupil has an individual education plan which contains appropriate targets for learning. Teachers and support staff monitor progress closely and keep informative records. Although learning targets are appropriate, the school recognises the need to develop them further so that smaller increments of learning can be measured.
12. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a well structured programme of activities. A lesson seen demonstrated how well planned and resourced activities, together with good pace and high expectations of the amount and quality of work produced by the pupils, contributed very well to their progress. Implicit in teaching is the promotion of self-esteem and the fostering of positive attitudes and behaviour. A high level of good quality support from classroom assistants, which has been significantly increased in the past year, makes a very positive contribution to learning. Future funding has been allocated to maintain this level of support. Most of the extra input has so far been with the younger pupils to ensure that these pupils get a good start to their learning; results have been encouraging. The school now feels it is time to review this arrangement to ensure the most efficient use of support staff throughout the school.

13. The school now includes pupils as well as parents in reviews of progress and the setting of new targets. The co-ordinator feels that, for most pupils, this has been a positive step. Being part of the negotiating procedure and having the opportunity to give their views has improved pupils' attitudes to learning. The school is well equipped with good quality resources to support the teaching and learning.
14. The co-ordinator is very experienced. She has built up very good links with appropriate external agencies and values the very good support they give. The special educational needs governor monitored the work of the school well, but she has now left the governing body. The new governor has not yet had sufficient time to become actively involved.
15. The secure learning environment and the caring and sympathetic attitude shown by all adults in the school, combined with the close working partnership of all concerned with lower attaining pupils ensures success in meeting their needs. This has a very positive impact on the way these pupils achieve relative to their abilities.

There is very good provision for the pupils' personal development.

16. The school provides a happy, caring environment for its pupils. The staff know the pupils well and cater well for their individual needs. Every pupil is valued. The parents are supportive of the school, praising its friendly atmosphere and the attitudes and values that it promotes.
17. The school encourages the pupils to become mature, providing a wide range of learning opportunities from the nursery class through to the Year 6 class. In addition to the lessons, there are many extra-curricular activities for the Key Stage 2 pupils. A residential visit is made to Cober Hill and there are a number of educational visits; for example to Oakwell Hall, where the pupils learn about Tudor lifestyles, and to the nearby National Mining Museum. There are good links to the local church, with the vicar regularly taking school assembly. Other religious centres are also visited by the pupils, such as Wakefield Cathedral and a mosque. There is an interesting range of visitors, who come into the school to help broaden the pupils' education. Recent visitors have included fire officers and a circus skills troupe. Good use is made of specialist coaches from local sporting groups.
18. The school's collective acts of worship meet statutory requirements and are well planned; they cover many aspects of religious education and personal, social and health education. One observed during the inspection dealt with the subject of taking responsibility; the deputy headteacher used the example of looking after pets, something which the pupils easily related to. The pupils participated eagerly in answering the questions and clearly understood the 'message' that was being delivered. In an inspirational part of another assembly, pupils sang the headteacher's original 'This is our school' hymn very tunefully and with great enthusiasm. The pupils love the song which affirms the values of the school including as it does, references to 'we are all special in our different ways', 'the fun, the laughter we share every day' and 'caring for everyone and showing respect'.
19. Acts of collective worship include very good opportunities for the pupils to pause and reflect on the world around them. Regular 'circle times' help the pupils to be reflective and consider their own feelings and place in the world. The spiritual aspect of the school is celebrated by the 'We try our hardest every day' display in the main corridor, which includes flowers and candles as a focus for the pupils. Each week on Friday there is a 'Gold Book' assembly, when good work and good deeds are celebrated. An 'Achievement Assembly' is held monthly to celebrate successes both in and out of school.
20. The school supports a number of charities. The pupils have raised funds for the NSPCC and for the Christian African Relief Trust. At the time of the inspection, the African theme was supported by a large display of artefacts, photographs and books outside the hall. During the summer of 2002 the school participated in the celebrations of the Commonwealth Games cheering the baton as it passed through their own village. The pupils' own culture of Middlestown features strongly in

the displays of work by each class on the walls outside their classrooms. Geography work shows maps and drawings of the area and history work has investigated the meanings of phrases in local place names such as '...ford', '...stead' and '...ton'. Other displays within the school include the 'Magic of Music' and a variety of very good artwork based on the theme of the 'Fruits of Autumn'.

21. The pupils' personal development is enhanced by the responsibilities given to them. In the younger classes for example, pupils take turns to be the 'special' child for a day, leading the class and being allowed a number of privileges. The older pupils readily undertake tasks such as assisting in the preparations for assembly. The school is rightly proud of its tradition of productions and musical presentations. There are firm plans to extend the pupils' own input to the school through the formation of a School Council within the current school year. In the last year, pupils have helped to redesign the quadrangle; the development is now an excellent resource, which is beginning to be put to good use, particularly by the Foundation Stage children.
22. The school has many good policies and procedures covering pastoral care, pupils' welfare and social inclusion. The very good provision for personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development impacts positively on all aspects of school life. This provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, makes a significant contribution to the success of the school.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are very good.

23. Throughout the school the pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They respond enthusiastically to the teachers' questions and listen attentively to information. The pupils enjoy coming to school and they maintain a high level of interest in their work; this contributes to the very good level of attendance at the school. They are able to work well independently and show good co-operation when required to work together in groups or in pairs. The pupils in Year 5, for example, were observed entering the classroom in the morning and settling down quickly and quietly to work on the sums that the teacher had already written on the board; this created a pleasant, purposeful start to the school day. Registration is a pleasant, social experience in which the pupils respond politely.
24. Pupils are keen to participate in their lessons and in the extra-curricular activities. During assemblies the pupils sit quietly listening carefully to the teacher's story and respond eagerly with many hands raised when questions are asked. In the Foundation Stage classes, the children are stimulated by the well-planned activities; for example, the Victorian role play, where the children dressed up in old fashioned clothes. They enjoyed learning about the housework of a century ago, undertaking tasks, such as washing clothes, using tubs. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, the pupils contributed well to the discussion on expressive verbs and word patterns; they progressed well in writing their poems, although the higher attaining pupils could have achieved more. All pupils take part in the school's productions and many of the older pupils play in the school orchestra.
25. The behaviour of pupils is very good, both in and out of the classroom. No instances of misbehaviour were observed during the inspection and the parents praised the children's behaviour. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Discussions with all staff, including the mid-day supervisors, confirmed that the pupils behave appropriately and that there is virtually no oppressive behaviour, such as bullying. Sometimes behaviour is exemplary, as it was during the time of the school orchestra's practice. Orderly movement around the school allows the school to function efficiently. In the playground, the pupils stand still on the first whistle and then form into their class lines on the second whistle. The pupils know the school's rules and procedures and they respond accordingly.
26. Relationships are very good between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves. In the playground, pupils of all ages and both genders integrate harmoniously, sharing the equipment provided. The older pupils help care for their younger friends. There is a very high level of respect shown by the pupils for the feelings and opinions of others. The pupils are friendly, trustworthy

and courteous. They have a high level of confidence and maturity. During the inspection, pupils of all ages talked freely about their work and it was noticeable that, when asked about their teachers, many said that they liked all the teachers. There is a great deal of goodwill towards the school.

27. The school has a calm, harmonious atmosphere. Staff value all pupils equally as individuals whatever their needs and work hard to make sure they get the best from their time at school. This helps the pupils gain confidence and self-esteem within the caring, community ethos. Their very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance have a positive impact on the quality of education in the school.

The school provides a very full and interesting range of activities outside lessons for the older children.

28. The parents' questionnaire indicates that a significant minority of parents felt that there could be more extra-curricular activities. These parents were, to a very large extent, parents of the younger pupils. The number of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is very good and, in common with most primary schools, caters for the older pupils.
29. Nevertheless, some younger pupils benefit from a well organised 'Fuzz Buzz Club' which is led by one of the classroom support assistants. Positive support is also given by Year 6 pupils who work closely with their younger friends helping them to improve their reading skills in a way which makes learning fun.
30. One parent expressed the views of a number when she said, "She's in Year 3 now and so it's her time to start enjoying extra-curricular activities. From the list we've helped her to pick two to do on two separate days." The vast majority of Key Stage 2 pupils are involved in the clubs and activities and some are involved in a club on each of the four days (Monday to Thursday) when activities are available.
31. Attendance is very good at the activities which include volleyball, running, football, country dancing, aerobics, computer club, recorder club, sewing, art and drama. The pupils from the drama group often take leading roles in the Christmas and summer productions which involve all the pupils of the school, culminating in public performance. There are plans to arrange a homework club at lunchtime for those pupils who find it difficult to complete homework at home or who need additional support with a particular task. The commitment of the teachers is reflected in the way that all staff are involved in at least one club linked to their own interests and skills.
32. A particular feature of the activities outside lessons are those which are part of the strong musical tradition in the school. All Year 3 pupils are encouraged to learn the recorder and pupils are given the opportunities for peripatetic music lessons in strings, woodwind and brass. Over forty pupils are involved in a weekly meeting of the school orchestra. Such a meeting was observed during the inspection when very high quality teaching brought about a very successful session with pupils playing descant and treble recorder, flute, violin, cello, clarinet, trumpet and percussion instruments (including a full drum kit). Pupils enjoyed playing as an ensemble, responding excellently to the teacher, playing to a very good standard with exemplary behaviour.
33. Pupils value the very full and interesting range of activities outside lessons. The activities enrich the curriculum and add a very significant dimension to the quality of education provided.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.

34. The staff are beginning to address the national agenda for raising standards, but the approach is insufficiently rigorous and more needs to be done. The needs of the lower attainers are usually very well catered for, but there are times when more could be expected of the higher attainers, enabling the pupils to reach higher standards, notably in reading, writing and mathematics.

35. Although children achieve well in the nursery class, making good progress in their early reading, writing and number skills, attainment on entry to the Reception year varies from year to year, but, overall is broadly in line with what could be expected. The 2001 National Curriculum tests in reading indicate insufficient progress. The results were slightly below the national average and slightly below those of similar schools.
36. Although results can and do vary from year to year, national performance data enable a consideration of performance over time. Taking the years 1999 to 2001 together, the figures show that the performance of the pupils in reading was exactly in line with the national average for their age group. The 2002 results follow this pattern. A reasonable number of pupils reached the Level 2 which is the expectation for most pupils, but too few reached the higher Level 3. In 2001 and 2002 the numbers reaching the higher level were below the national averages. Improvements should be carefully targeted to enable more of the pupils to achieve Level 3.
37. Reading progress for many pupils at Key Stage 2 follows the pattern of Key Stage 1. Reading is insufficiently well promoted. Although some older pupils are enthusiastic and making good progress, a number of them are less enthusiastic, making insufficient progress. Most pupils take a library book home every other week and, once a week, are given the opportunity to select a book at the same level as their reading scheme book which they are allowed to take home. Parents do not have access to the reading scheme books. Because of these factors, some parents are unclear as to how well their children are progressing in reading. It is possible for pupils to do little or no reading outside school. Useful internal records of reading are kept, including details of when pupils are heard to read, but there is no systematic partnership with parents. Expectations need to be reviewed and clarified to promote an effective partnership with parents in the promotion of reading. Raising standards in reading can have a positive impact on attainment and progress in all areas of the curriculum.
38. The school's plans indicate an awareness of the need to raise standards in writing and a positive start has been made. The 2001 and 2002 results in writing at the end of Year 2 were overall broadly in line with the national average, but there is an important need to raise the number of Level 3s being attained. At Key Stage 2, standards are beginning to rise. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in the writing elements of the English tests, showed an improvement in 2002 over previous years.
39. There are times in English and in the foundation subjects when the written work requires only a limited response. This is sometimes, but not always, matched to the needs of the pupils; significantly more could be expected of the higher attainers. A positive start has been made, but more can be done, including the promotion of extended writing and the development of detail. More writing tasks need to be built into work across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils' writing skills will benefit from more opportunities to write for a wider variety of purposes and audiences with higher expectations and clearer targets. More of the school's higher attainers can achieve better results and an improvement in written work can impact on standards across the school.
40. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages. This pattern is reflected in the 2002 results. More challenging work for the higher attainers could help to raise the standards. A scrutiny of work from the previous school year was undertaken during the inspection. Although the work was more carefully geared towards the needs of the differing ability groups at Key Stage 1, overall there were too many examples of all pupils being set the same work. This led to insufficient challenge for the higher attainers who could have achieved more with more challenging targets set for them. Overall, there was little evidence of diagnostic marking to help the pupils to move forward in their learning. The work scrutiny evidenced the extensive use of worksheets rather than the use of first hand experience in weight, measures and data handling. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection did not reflect the findings of the work scrutiny.
41. A positive start has been made in improving the provision and raising standards, especially in reading and writing. Less clear are the plans to secure improvement in mathematics. There is a

new guided reading scheme with more structured reading in lesson time. The school has firm plans to develop the reading scheme and replace many of the current books which are in poor condition. The school is starting to set individual targets in reading and writing, using 'target cards'. There is now recognition of the need to systematically analyse the reading results to provide clear targets for improvement. There are plans to develop a 'gifted and talented' policy as part of a wider consideration of how to best provide for the higher attainers. More information for parents can enable them to better see how their children are progressing and to see how they can further support their children. All these elements can help the school to move forward in the important need to further raise standards across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.

Standards in information and communication technology.

42. Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the previous inspection, but national expectations have risen since then and attainment is not yet sufficiently high. Pupils are now more competent in word processing skills and data handling and resources have improved significantly. Most of this progress has been made in the last two years and so pupils have not had sufficient time to develop the full range of skills to a sufficiently high level to meet the new requirements. Further development, especially in the areas of control and modelling, is needed in order to ensure that pupils receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. Nevertheless, access to the new improved resources is beginning to have a very positive impact on standards.
43. Pupils now have more opportunities to learn and practise skills. Each classroom has its own computer and pupils have two weekly lessons in the new computer suite. Teacher confidence in information and communication technology is improving. Staff training needs are given high priority in this year's school improvement plan. The forthcoming training programme will help to further increase knowledge and expertise.
44. In the lessons seen, instruction was clear and teachers and support staff gave effective support to pupils as they worked on their various tasks. In one lesson, pupils were observed working well in pairs on a challenging program which offered graded levels of difficulty. This allowed them to work at an appropriate level and stimulated them to progress quickly by managing activities in a required time. Most pupils made good progress.
45. In some other lessons, there were times when the organisation limited the opportunities for higher attainers to progress at an appropriate pace and provided too little support for less confident pupils to make sufficient progress. The computer suite is relatively new and staff are experiencing some teething troubles related to the size of the space available and seating arrangements. In some lessons, although pupils working in pairs had equal turns, the arrangement led to some restlessness and time off task for pupils not actively involved in operating the keyboard.
46. There is appropriately at present, a focus on information and communication technology supporting literacy and numeracy, although evidence of a wider range of work was seen in the computer suite, including portraits by younger pupils of Winnie the Pooh and minibests. Work by older pupils included the creation and control of imaginary characters and designing rules to make them move and also research on volcanoes using the Internet. During the short time of the inspection, although some effective use was made of classroom computers to support work being done in lessons, there were times when more efficient use could have been made of the equipment.
47. The school is aware of the need to develop information and communication technology as an effective tool to support other areas of the curriculum. It has a high profile in the current school improvement plan. The new co-ordinator is playing a significant role in this work. The policy has recently been updated and the school is following nationally prescribed guidelines which provide appropriate activities and enable pupils to learn systematically and build on previous attainment. An appropriate assessment system has been introduced. Time is planned during the coming year for the co-ordinator to support and monitor work in the computer suite and to provide training for the support staff. The current initiatives and other planned improvements will help to raise standards and ensure that pupils across the school receive their full National Curriculum entitlement.

The school's self-evaluation of its performance.

48. The school is committed to continued improvement and has made a positive start to self-evaluation of its performance. The headteacher, staff and governing body share a will to provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which they enjoy and in which they achieve high standards. However, the agenda for continuing improvement is not sufficiently clear. Further development is needed for the school to achieve its goals. There needs to be more rigorous analysis of data

- collected from assessments and more focused monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. An assessment co-ordinator needs to oversee this development.
49. All subjects are assessed and procedures are consistent across the school, although there is some variation in the quality of written comments about individual pupil achievement. Assessments of the achievements of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are thorough and regular reviews carefully track their progress. Assessment of the work of higher attainers is less well developed. The school does acknowledge the need to further develop accurate and regular assessment and recording of pupils' achievements.
 50. At present the information collected from test results is not used sufficiently well to identify strengths and weaknesses in the performance of different groups of pupils or to determine strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching. The school has made a positive start in setting targets for individual pupils in reading and writing. It has firm plans to improve its system by making these targets more specific, so that progress can be more easily measured. Pupils' views are to be included in discussions about appropriate targets.
 51. Some monitoring of teaching and learning takes place. Currently most classroom observations are done by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher with a little help from external agencies. The focus has been on teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. Although strengths in the teaching are well documented, some monitoring reports contain too little guidance on how the teaching can improve, especially those for relatively inexperienced teachers. The teaching observed during the inspection was creditable, being good overall. There was some variation in quality which ranged from satisfactory to very good. Some of this variation related to particular subjects. Teachers would benefit from more support from teachers with particular expertise. There are already plans to introduce this in information and communication technology.
 52. The school recognises the need to significantly develop the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they can more effectively audit work in their own subjects. The opportunity to analyse assessment results and to take an active part in monitoring work in the classroom would provide useful information to be used in their action plans for future development. An important focus needs to be the impact which their chosen objectives will have on pupils' learning. Training for the assessment of literacy skills is an objective in the current school improvement plan.
 53. The school recognises the need to develop clearer plans for self-evaluation of the school's performance in order to develop strategies to raise standards. More rigorous assessment and focused monitoring of teaching and learning can enhance teachers' performance and have a positive impact on attainment and progress leading to this effective school becoming even more effective.

Communication with parents.

54. Compared with the school's previous report, the percentage of pre-inspection questionnaires returned was very good. The level of agreement to many of the statements in the questionnaire was much higher than before, indicating that parents' views have improved overall. The parents are, for example, very happy with the teaching and the promotion of pupils' personal development and they agree that the school is welcoming and is easily approached with any concerns.
55. There remain, however, a number of parental concerns. There is a significant minority of parents who feel that the school does not work sufficiently closely with them and that they are not adequately informed on the progress and attainment of their children. The school has two parent consultation evenings each year, in the autumn and spring terms, with a limited amount of time for each parent. Although parents receive the obligatory invitation to discuss the pupils' summer reports, only a handful accept and more could be done by the school to promote review and discussion at the year end. The end of year reports contain helpful comments regarding the individual abilities of the pupils and some have a degree of evaluation of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Appropriately, they include the statutory reporting at the end of the key stages. However, some of the word-processed reports are very repetitive; for example, too similar sections

for different pupils in some subjects.

56. There are parental concerns regarding homework; some parents would prefer more, whilst others were satisfied with the amount. One parent expressed surprise at the high amount of homework given to the younger children, although he was supportive of this. Overall, the inspection judgement is that while the level of homework provided is broadly appropriate, the school's expectations on homework could be clearer; there are firm plans to review homework and make clearer the school's policy and expectations. Parents have little structured involvement in supporting their children in reading, as the arrangements are very arbitrary. A closer partnership in reading could have a positive impact on raising standards.
57. The questionnaire results show concern, mainly by the parents of the younger children, about the extra-curricular provision. The inspection team judges that the level of extra-curricular activity is very good, although, in line with most primary schools, the provision is substantially for the older pupils. This appears to be a matter where parents' concerns could be allayed by improved communication. The school could do more to seek the views of parents. The use of questionnaires and similar would give the school a clearer view of parental perception.
58. The school's prospectus and the governing body's annual report to parents are satisfactory, although the documents are rather perfunctory and do not sufficiently reflect the school's very good ethos; for example, the excitement of the activities in the Foundation Stage is not portrayed. The documents do not comply with the requirement to publish national figures for the key stage tests, which would enable parents to compare the results achieved by the school with those of schools nationally. Parents receive very little information on the curriculum, although the school has firm plans to communicate with them information about what work and topics the children will be studying.
59. The parents of the Foundation Stage children were observed entering the classrooms and many talked informally with the staff before or after school. With the older classes there was minimal interaction. The school indicates that it welcomes such access, but it could more actively promote such links. The partnership between the school and the parents is satisfactory, but more could be done to increase parents' involvement and to improve the effectiveness of their contributions to their children's education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- raise standards across the school, especially in writing by :
 - raising expectations of what the higher attainers can achieve;
 - promoting greater productivity on the part of the pupils;
 - developing target setting based on National Curriculum level descriptors;
 - improving the quality of marking to better promote high standards;
 - continuing to raise the profile of reading, writing and mathematics in the school;
 - continuing to develop the good support for lower attainers;
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of subjects, purposes and audiences;
 - involving parents more, for example, through a reading partnership;

(paragraphs 34 – 41)

- improve standards in information and communication technology by :
 - continuing to develop staff confidence through the planned information and communication technology training;
 - continuing to develop a range of software to support learning in all areas of the curriculum;
 - continuing to ensure that there is full use of computers in all classrooms;
 - continuing to develop the monitoring role of the co-ordinator;
 - systematically ensuring that pupils have regular and full access to the programmes of study.

(paragraphs 42 – 47)

- develop self-evaluation of the school's performance by :
 - the closer involvement of the subject co-ordinators in this process;
 - the close scrutiny of all available data to analyse pupils' performance, including by gender, in order to develop target setting to enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can;
 - the monitoring of all aspects of provision, including standards, resources and planning;
 - developing a systematic approach to subject evaluation;
 - the continuation of structured monitoring of teaching and learning which includes target setting and review.

(paragraphs 48 – 53)

- improve communication with parents by :
 - reviewing and making clearer the homework arrangements;
 - canvassing the views of parents to identify any concerns;
 - giving more curricular information;
 - developing a home/school reading partnership;
 - improving arrangements for consultation evenings;
 - giving consideration to 'open house' sessions for parents during the day;
 - raising the profile of the governors in adding their support to this.

(paragraphs 54 – 59)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	9	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	30	45	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	209
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	15

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	17	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	9	10	12
	Total	24	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83(89)	90(93)	97(100)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	15
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	26	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90(89)	86(89)	86(93)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	12	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	12	12
	Girls	11	9	13
	Total	19	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70(100)	78(88)	93(100)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	12
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	22	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81(83)	81(88)	89(92)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	206	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-- Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR --Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	132.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	19

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	477329
Total expenditure	474975
Expenditure per pupil	1987
Balance brought forward from previous year	16650
Balance carried forward to next year	19004

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	247
Number of questionnaires returned	103

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	47	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	49	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	56	4	1	3
The teaching is good.	53	43	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	46	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	23	9	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	38	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	50	10	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	55	44	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	52	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	36	24	9	14