

INSPECTION REPORT

TACOLNESTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tacolneston, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121060

Headteacher: Mrs M Barker

Reporting inspector: Mrs Julie Moore

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 4th February 2003

Inspection number: 248220

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary School
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 5 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Norwich Road
Tacolneston
Norwich

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Paul Aldous

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tacolneston CE Primary is a Church of England school, situated in the small Norfolk village of Tacolneston, about seven miles from Norwich. It is smaller than most schools and most of its pupils live in the village. The school has recently changed from a First School to a Primary School. The building has been renovated and extended and the school has trebled in size. There are 38 boys and 42 girls on roll. Pupils start school in the reception class at the beginning of the school year they are five, with broadly average skills and attainment. However, this can vary significantly from one year to the next. All the pupils are white European and there are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Sixteen per cent of pupils are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and this is broadly average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Three of them have a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has experienced significant turbulence over the last few years. It has trebled in size, and has changed from a very small First school to a larger Primary school, with significantly more pupils who have special educational needs in each year group. An extensive building programme lasted for a whole year, during which the pupils' education was maintained under very difficult circumstances. There have been a number of staffing changes, and all of these combined factors meant that improvements were not as fast as expected. The headteacher has led the school soundly through these difficult times. Things have stabilised now, all the school is in the new building, and permanent teaching staff are in place. Teaching is good, with many strengths. Standards fell short of expectations in the national tests for the eleven-year-olds in mathematics and science, but they are now picking up and are above average. Standards in English remain high. Further work is still to be done on planning the curriculum, assessing progress and standards, and developing a long-term strategic plan for the way ahead. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- There is very good teaching in Year 5 and 6 and pupils do very well. Many of them attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Learning is enjoyed, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities adds richness to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is an extremely attractive place and the displays are excellent. Throughout the school pupils attain high standards in art and design.

What could be improved

- The foundation stage curriculum is not planned effectively.
- The school lacks a co-ordinated approach to planning its curriculum and assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainments.
- The school's long term strategic plans are not securely in place.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected as a First school over five years ago. It is now a Primary school and it is not possible to judge improvements since then. The school is on course to move forward positively and it has the capability to do just that.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	A	C
Mathematics	A	A	D	E
Science	B	B	D	E

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

In 2002, the eleven-year-olds attained well above average standards in the English tests, and below average in mathematics and science. They did less well when compared to similar schools¹, attaining average standards in English and well below average in the other main subjects. This is a very small school and one pupil more or less can make a significant difference to overall percentages. The year group had high numbers of pupils with special educational needs, and although all the pupils did well in English, standards were not as good in the other subjects. Overall, all pupils made good progress, as did those pupils with special educational needs. Progress in English was very good. There is some variability in attainment trends over the years because of the very small numbers of pupils in each year group.

Inspection findings show that standards in mathematics and science are above average for the eleven-year-olds, with high standards in English, and average or below for the seven-year-olds. This younger group read with a reasonable degree of accuracy, but the lower attaining pupils do not have any strategies to identify unknown words in their texts. Higher attaining pupils read fluently. Writing standards are below average as are standards in mathematics. What the school is especially good at is art and design, where standards across the school are well above average, and pupils achieve extremely well.

Many of the children in the reception group are on course to achieve their targets² by the end of the reception year. They make satisfactory progress. The school's targets for Year 6 were met last year, and the school is on course to achieve its targets this year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very positive about school and learning. They are keen and they try hard to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils always behave very well, both in lessons and outside school. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils and adults get on together very well. Pupils are adept at supporting and helping one another, and they are growing into responsible young people.
Attendance	Very good. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

¹ Schools with similar percentages of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.

² These are the Early Learning Goals

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.

Teaching is good overall. Four out of five lessons were good or better, and the rest were satisfactory. The strongest teaching is in Year 5 and 6, where the teaching is consistently very good. This means that the pupils make very good progress in their final years at Tacolneston. Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons, with younger pupils, included learning slowing down for a group of boys who speedily lost interest when their teacher was working with another group. They produced a limited amount of work, which was not good enough.

Teachers work hard across the three classes in the school to make sure that pupils' learning is exciting and challenging. They are successful, and they are supported very well by the classroom assistants. Boys and girls of all capabilities make good progress, and this includes those pupils who are gifted and talented as well as those pupils with special educational needs. Children in the reception year make satisfactory progress. Their curriculum needs adjusting to meet their overall needs more specifically, and their lessons need to be planned more precisely.

English and mathematics are taught well. Staff know their pupils very well in this small school. Tasks are pitched at the right levels so that the pupils move forward in their learning. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills successfully in other subjects. Most of them are adept at speaking clearly and articulately to put forward their ideas and suggestions. They use their writing skills successfully to support work in history and religious education. In science, pupils record the outcomes of their investigations clearly and accurately. They also use their number skills effectively, for example, when they record their findings in a line graph. Pupils with special educational needs get good support and they make good progress towards their targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The full curriculum is in place, but there are gaps in PE and the curriculum for the reception children lacks balance. The school's range of extra-curricular activities is very good, and this adds a richness and vibrancy to the whole curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive the right kind of support that enables them to progress well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A strength of the school. Pupils are thoughtful and caring towards each other. They help each other and they are absolutely clear about right and wrong. Behaviour is very good, and pupils are well aware of their own cultural traditions and heritage, as they are of wider cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school has a positive and caring ethos. Pupils are cared for safely. Their progress and attainment are tracked carefully but this needs a united, whole school, approach to be really effective in moving pupils on in their learning.

The new school provides a stimulating environment for its pupils. For the first time it has a school hall, as well as other specialist areas such as a library. Staff have now been trained to use the large physical education (PE) apparatus in the hall. The next stage is to use this equipment within the PE curriculum. Prior to the new building, PE was held in the village hall, with no large apparatus.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The school now needs to firm up its longer-term priorities. As the school has grown in size its systems need reviewing to take account of all the recent changes. The staff work together very well, and there is a strong team spirit. Everyone helps each other effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their duties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. All the information about the school's progress is analysed. This information needs to inform future plans more accurately.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors make sure that funds are used well. They apply the 'best value' principles consistently. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Now that the school has regained its stability, with a brand new building and a permanent staff, the head and her team are on course to move forward positively. They have a clear vision of the way forward, and the excellent accommodation is a valuable asset in promoting pupils' learning.

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 like school and they behave well. • Children are expected to work hard. • The school helps children to become mature. • There is an interesting range of activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents do not feel well informed about how well their child is getting on. • Many of them do not feel comfortable about approaching the school and they do not feel that the school works closely with them. • Parents feel that there are weaknesses in the management and the teaching. • Parents feel that pupils' progress could be better.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. They do not agree with their negative views. There was a very high return rate for the parents' questionnaire – 80 per cent – and there was also a good turn out at the parents' meeting. Inspectors spoke to many parents during their visit, and there were no unsatisfactory comments about the work of the school. Inspectors judge that the recent upheavals have caused the school to 'mark time' as the head and her team have been focusing on maintaining the pupils' education. This period is now behind them and the school is on course to move forward with renewed vigour.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

There is very good teaching in Year 5 and 6 and pupils do very well. Many of them attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

1. The teaching is good overall, with many strengths, and some areas for development. Four out of five lessons were good or better, and the rest were satisfactory. The strongest teaching is with the pupils in Year 5 and 6, where the teaching was very good. Pupils in these year groups make very good progress, and this includes those pupils with special educational needs as well as those that are gifted and talented.
2. There are a number of reasons for this high quality teaching:-
 - Planning is very good. Work is pitched at the right levels and pupils' progress and attainments are regularly tracked. Pupils rise to the challenges set for them because the teacher has high expectations of what they are capable of achieving.
 - The teacher knows her subjects well, and she knows the capabilities of her pupils. Different teaching styles are used very effectively so that pupils of all capabilities move forward in their learning.
 - Questions are used very well to check out learning or to challenge and extend pupils.
 - Lessons are rounded off well so that learning points are reinforced for all the pupils.
3. Some, or all, of these factors were present in the strongest lessons. In one literacy lesson, featuring the myth *Odysseus*, there was a reading focus. At the start of the lesson the teacher gave a very good review of the previous lesson. This meant that the pupils were straight into their reading without wasting any time. The challenge for the pupils was to identify whether the text gave them more information than the pictures. By pointing out the judicious use of adverbs, the teacher guided the pupils successfully, so that they speedily realised that pictures could not identify meaning. One pupil commented, after looking at the pictures, *'We have no idea that the sailors are lured in when they hear the sirens' singing'*. The language used in the myth enabled higher attaining pupils to infer why the sirens wanted the sailors out of the way, successfully extending their understanding of the text.
4. In this lesson the higher attaining pupils achieved standards that were well above average for their age. Many of the other pupils achieved above average standards. By the end of the lesson pupils had speedily developed their own writing frame, using word-webs very well, and demonstrating how adverbs are used effectively to create moods, atmosphere and feelings. In their written work the pupils chose their words imaginatively and precisely, aptly conveying their meaning. Standards in English are well above average for many eleven-year-olds in this small school.
5. Excellent planning in a mathematics lesson meant that work was clearly pitched at the right levels for pupils working within all the ability levels within the class. Pupils' capabilities range from well below to well above average, in this mixed-year group of nine- to eleven-year-olds. With this wide range the teacher has to be spot on in her assessments of what the pupils have learnt in any one lesson. She does this by checking

out learning as the lesson goes along – looking at work, asking questions and asking pupils to explain how they arrived at a particular answer; her system works well.

6. In one lesson the pupils were solving problems. The very brisk start to the lesson, using white boards to jot down answers to quick conversions, e.g. *'How many metres in 20 cms?'*, meant that pupils were using their knowledge of decimals effectively. Answers were checked out quickly, demonstrating that pupils have a very secure understanding of using all number operations to two decimal places. Attainment was well above average for many pupils, and they made excellent progress all round. The lesson moved forward at cracking pace, but no-one was left behind due to the teacher's skill in checking out individual learning. This lesson included every pupil in the class. Pupils with special educational needs had the help they required from a classroom assistant. This helped them to progress very well in their understanding of number operations, as well as pushing up the standard they reached.
7. The school calls on the services of a well-qualified governor to help and assist pupils in their science activities. He works closely with the class teachers, ensuring that science lessons are high quality. This develops a love of the subject for many boys and girls that they take with them to the secondary school. Junior pupils are good at their science investigations, and they really enjoy them. Pupils have a secure understanding of 'fair testing', and higher, average and lower attaining pupils use their computers competently to chart their results and to record their findings. The older pupils were investigating the different states of matter, using their senses and their knowledge, to explain what happens when strong perfume is exposed to the atmosphere. At the end of the lesson the teacher reinforced the main points, which concluded with the pupils creating a 'Mind map' of everything they had learnt about solids, liquids and gases over a series of lessons. Standards were high, and, once again, the classroom assistant worked very capably with the pupils with special educational needs. By acting as their 'scribe', and recording their written findings onto the lap top computer, she made sure that they were ready to join in the final discussion with the rest of the class.
8. Pupils in the lower juniors are well taught. Here, the learning environment is calm and interesting and learning is fun, as it is all through the school. This is one of the reasons that the pupils are keen to learn. Work is always at the right level, the teacher knows her pupils very well, and their experiences in the infant and reception class are built-on and developed successfully.
9. The school provides an effective curriculum and makes good time allocations. So that all the subjects receive enough time, and the best use is made of the staff's expertise, some subjects are taught at the same time across Year 3 to 6. The whole teaching and support team, work with mixed-ability groups and this works well. Year 3 and 4 pupils were making dough, in preparation for bread, and other Year 3 and 4 pupils were working with textiles, creating a wall hanging following a visit to How Hill. Teachers were very sure in their knowledge of the subjects. Support staff were well-briefed, and they too were very knowledgeable. Pupils' skills were taught very well as a result. Pupils had high expectations about the quality of their finished piece of work and they could identify how it might be improved, for example, one boy said *'My running stitches are too big, that means they won't be strong enough and my hanging will not be properly finished'*.
10. Younger pupils in Year 1 and 2 are taught in the same class as the reception children. Their permanent teacher has just returned, and the class is currently adjusting to this. Teaching is good for the infant pupils. Governors have ensured that there are three adults in the class, one teacher and two classroom assistants. This is a generous staffing ratio for the whole group. Reading standards for the higher attaining seven-year-olds are

broadly average. They are below average for the rest of the group, as are standards in writing and mathematics. This is a very small group of seven pupils. Many of them had well below average starting points when they joined the reception class and they have made satisfactory progress overall. Teaching is satisfactory for the reception children, but their work needs to be planned more specifically than it is at present.

Learning is enjoyed, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities adds richness to pupils' learning.

11. Learning is enjoyed because teaching is good, and this makes the pupils want to learn. Pupils with special educational needs, and those that are gifted and talented, achieve as well as their classmates. Teachers are adept at using a range of teaching styles successfully, and the range and variety of the extra-curricular activities are very good. All of this enhances learning successfully. The strategies used include:-
 - ❑ Making very good use of shared events and experiences so that learning is meaningful.
 - ❑ Moving lessons forward at a good pace so that pupils' interest is held and they concentrate hard.
 - ❑ Drawing on the skills and expertise of a range of people, including scientists, artists and authors, so that the pupils are taught by others as well as their class teacher.
 - ❑ Taking the pupils out of school on residential and day visits to places that are educationally interesting so that their classwork is supported and consolidated in many ways.
12. In a lovely example in the reception and infant class, one of the school guinea pigs gave birth to two babies overnight. The teacher made the best use of this event, discussing with the children why the mum and her babies needed to be quiet. Children understood this and it gave them a valuable opportunity to empathise with the needs of the guinea pig and her new family. Later in the day the children observed the family, and with the teacher's help, weighed each baby, charting its weight accurately using their number skills. The birth was celebrated, and it provided many opportunities for the children to observe and question, as well as record the event through their drawings, paintings and their writing. The teacher assured the inspectors that this event had not been planned with Ofsted in mind.
13. Pupils really do want to learn, and their attitudes are developed successfully right from the start of their time in school. Throughout the school pupils' attendance rates are very good, very little school time is missed, and this helps learning to progress well. In a numeracy lesson in Year 4 the pupils concentrated hard, working out the area of regular and irregular shapes and using centimetres as their unit of measurement. The teacher and the classroom assistant worked closely with each group of pupils, so that learning speeded up and no time was wasted. The higher and lower attaining pupils worked with older and younger pupils, in different classes, and this enabled work for the remaining Year 3 and 4 pupils to be pitched at the right levels for everyone.
14. Tacolneston prides itself on the richness of its curriculum, which is accessible to every pupil and includes every pupil as well. Great care has been taken in developing the new building, which is aesthetically pleasing with many interesting features, such as original works of art, paintings, sculptures and carvings. Artists and authors, such as James

Mayhew and Anthony Browne, have worked alongside pupils, giving them a real understanding of how authors and artists create their work. This has raised pupils' expectations of their own capabilities so that they too produce quality drawings, paintings, poetry and prose. One parent, who is also a scientist, works alongside the pupils in each class, helping and supporting them so that they have a first-hand knowledge of how scientists set about their investigations. This successfully complements the creative and aesthetic development of the pupils, which they gain through their other work.

15. Residential and day visits to places of interest also enhance the curriculum, in addition to developing pupils' social skills well. Junior pupils visit How Hill and Wells, and some high quality work with lower juniors, following a field trip to How Hills, shows evidence of pupils' great interest and enjoyment. In discussions with pupils their keenness is apparent when a group of them said *'Its great to go away, we have great fun, but we like being here as well'*. Musical and sporting activities, as well as activities that are based on pupils' own interests, are offered after school hours at various times in the school year. These are popular with pupils and their parents, and, alongside all the other wide-ranging activities, this small school really does provide an all-inclusive curriculum that is rich and vibrant, broad and balanced.

Pupils' personal development is very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

16. Tacolneston is a church school, and the strong Christian ethos underpins everything that the school does in its daily life. There are many strengths:-
- Pupils have a strong sense of tolerance and understanding.
 - They have a secure moral code towards each other, towards school life generally and towards the wider world.
 - Behaviour is very good, as are relationships.
 - Developing strong cultural values is an essential part of the school's work.
17. There are times for quiet reflection and prayer in the hurly-burly of school life, and these give pupils and staff the opportunity for moments of personal peace during the busy day. Quiet areas around school, including a small courtyard area, provide pupils and staff with a place to go if they need personal privacy for a short time. All of this creates an ethos that is caring and compassionate, developing a climate in which each person can grow and flourish.
18. Pupils achieve high standards in their personal development, and these are achieved in various ways. Older and younger pupils work and play together, helping and supporting each other. Throughout the school pupils have a range of responsibilities, which include being register monitors, looking after the library books and checking that equipment is in the correct place. They make decisions about their work with their classmates, deciding how they are going to tackle problems or carry out investigations. More capable pupils work with less capable pupils, for example, on the computer or at a design technology task.
19. Class and school rules are understood by everyone, and the pupils demonstrate good levels of self-discipline. Behaviour is very good, both in the classrooms and outside in the playground. Right and wrong are understood clearly. Moral issues are discussed and tackled as they arise in the school's day-to-day life and pupils are helped to decide the

most suitable course of action. Moral issues are also discussed in religious education lessons. This whole school approach enables pupils' understanding to be reinforced successfully.

20. Social development is very good, and the pupils experience a number of activities that develop their social awareness effectively. Fund raising for those less fortunate than themselves helps them to be aware of the importance of helping others. They do this very well in the normal day-to-day life of the school, but raising funds for other children and people that they don't know personally helps to develop and foster their understanding of wider communities.
21. Cultural development is excellent. Although Tacolneston school is situated in a small village in Norfolk it really does succeed in developing the pupils' cultural awareness. Their own cultural heritage is celebrated in many ways through the work of artists, authors, poets and musicians. They also study, and enjoy, the work of other creative persons in different cultures such as African, Indian and Australian. Different religious traditions and festivals are taught and understood effectively. Stories about people, such as Mary Seacole, help pupils to understand a range of issues linked to social class, race and traditions. Very good use is made of visits to local and national art galleries and museums, such as the National Gallery in London, and local sites of historical significance. This whole area is one of strength, enhancing the school's positive ethos very successfully.

The school is an extremely attractive place and the displays are of excellent quality. Throughout the school pupils attain high standards in art and design.

22. One of the first things that visitors to Tacolneston notice when they enter the school are the very high quality displays. The headteacher, governors and staff take great pride in providing a stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment – an environment in which pupils want to learn and are happy about themselves and their work:-
 - Attainment in art and design is well above average throughout the school.
23. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved in working with a range of two- and three-dimensional activities at every level. The school aims to develop its pupils' sense of creativity, and it is successful. Right from the time they start in the reception group, pupils are encouraged to explore and experiment with a range of materials, textures and designs. They have very good exemplars around the school, and these include paintings, drawings, designs and carvings, all of which help to raise pupils' expectations of their own capabilities. One example is a painting to celebrate the building of the new school by James Mayhew, others include a ceramic wall plaque and carving. The pupils themselves painted a wall mural in four sections, based on the seasons of the year. They worked with James Mayhew, and the final mural is a very good visual picture of the school, the children and the staff, set in the context of the changing seasons of the natural world.
24. In other displays around the school, pupils' paintings and drawings are full of colour, movement and life. Using different tones and shades of colour the pupils represent their feelings very effectively, for example, in Year 3 and 4 following a field trip to How Hill nature reserve. The different shades of grey, blue and green water are captured brilliantly by using pastels and paints successfully. High quality work includes drawings and paintings of birds in flight, birds feeding and swimming on the water; some of these are in the style of the Impressionists, others are pupils' own individual work. All of them combine pupils' own observations, alongside the very successful use of a range of techniques, to

create striking images of pupils own choosing. Three-dimensional clay models of a marsh harrier, coot, squirrels, hedgehog and frogs, show that pupils are equally talented in their three-dimensional work as well. The best use is made of digital cameras, which are used regularly to record things as they happen, with many good examples from the field visit.

25. All of this contributes towards creating an aesthetically pleasing environment in which pupils' talents and interests are nurtured and developed successfully. Whatever their capabilities, pupils' creative work is valued and cherished, making sure that they have a positive self-image and that they feel positive about themselves.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The foundation stage curriculum is not planned effectively

26. The school has identified this as an area for development:-

- The planned curriculum is partly, but not wholly, based on the stepping stones for learning which lead towards the Early Learning Goals³.
- Systems for assessing and recording children's attainment and progress are only partly in place.

27. The reception children (foundation stage) are taught in the same class as pupils who are in Year 1 and 2. This is quite normal for small schools the size of Tacolneston. Children join the reception group at the beginning of the year they are five, initially on a part-time basis. Younger children attend full-time after the Christmas break. This works well, especially for the younger children who may need a longer time to experience reception activities before moving on to more formal activities in Year 1.

28. The earlier turbulence caused by building work and staffing issues has now settled down – as referred to earlier in this report. In the Autumn term the governors and the headteacher made sure that sound systems were in place for teaching and learning in this mixed-age class of infant pupils. Discussions with staff, and scrutiny of the Autumn term plans and records, show this to be the case. Most of the reception children who have been in school for one term have made sound progress, and they are on course to meet their targets by the end of the reception year. The others are not at this stage because they are newly arrived in school. Permanent teaching arrangements were in place for three weeks prior to the start of the inspection, and the school is now poised to move forward in its work on the foundation stage curriculum.

29. Currently, the class is taught by two teachers to allow the headteacher some non-teaching time so that she has sufficient time to manage the school. All of this needs careful management to make sure that pupils' learning does not suffer. Governors are fully aware of the situation, and they have planned effectively to create an environment where the younger children in the school can learn and progress. Two classroom assistants work closely with the teacher so that each year group always have an adult on hand to support their learning. This is working well. However, some current day-to-day and half-termly plans are not always clear about what the reception children are going to learn in a lesson, and plans are not always firmly based on the stepping stones for learning. Long-term plans need to be developed so that there is a secure overview of the

³ Stepping stones are the stages in learning for nursery and reception children. Early Learning Goals are the targets for children to achieve by the end of the reception year.

foundation stage curriculum, which will guide teachers' short and medium-term plans. Systems are not fully in place for assessing and recording what the reception children know, understand and can do. This makes it more difficult to plan the next stages in children's learning accurately.

The school lacks a co-ordinated approach to planning its curriculum and assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainments

30. The changing nature of the school means that curriculum developments have taken place within each class:-
- Whole school systems for planning the curriculum and assessing and recording pupils' attainments and progress are not securely in place.
31. Curriculum developments have taken place as new staff have joined the school and existing staff have worked in different classes. The resulting systems work soundly overall, but they could be more efficient across the whole school. The very good systems for planning work, and assessing standards and progress in the upper end of the school, would be a useful starting point for developing a common structure from Year 1 to Year 6. Good systems in the lower juniors can also be incorporated into this whole school approach, making a corporate system that is workable for everyone.
32. Curricular responsibilities have been decided, and the three teachers each have a specific curricular responsibility for one of the main subjects of English, mathematics and science. Staff share the responsibility for all the other subjects, and the Key Stage 1 teacher has the responsibility for the foundation stage curriculum. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these responsibilities. Physical education has not featured highly in the school's previous curriculum because it had no facilities except for the playground and village hall, which is a walk away from the school. This situation has changed now that the school has a new hall, with a full range of equipment for physical education. The input of local education authority advisory staff is moving the subject forward, but the pace of development is slow.
33. The curriculum is planned around a two-year rolling programme or, in the case of history and geography, a four-year rolling programme. Staff use the recent national guidance to plan and develop the curriculum over long, medium and short periods of time, and this is effective. The subjects are at different stages in their development, but the headteacher and her staff are clear about what needs to be done to move things forward, for example, in PE. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The first draft of a curriculum map has been produced, and this helps staff to check the coverage of the whole curriculum as well as making sure that nothing is missed out.
34. Pupils' progress and attainments are tracked against key objectives in Years 3 to 6. A start has been made to develop this system in Years 1 and 2. What is missing is a cohesive whole school approach. Without this it is difficult to check out attainment and progress accurately for all groups of pupils.

The school's long term strategic plans are not securely in place

35. The turbulence encountered by the school during its change to a Primary school from a very small First school, as well as the new building project, has already been documented in this report. The headteacher has guided the school soundly during these difficult times, working in a collegiate way with the staff. Now that things are back on an even keel, with stable staffing in all three classes, governors and the headteacher are

aware of the need to have a secure and complete development plan for the future. This is needed to guide the school firmly through its future development as a larger primary school from a very small first school. Careful analysis of all the information about the school will assist governors and the headteacher in planning the way forward.

36. Governors are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and they have many strengths in their group. Funds are well managed and governors always consider the principles of best value before making spending decisions. Financial decisions are always based on providing a quality education for the pupils at Tacolneston, one in which every pupil achieves as well as they can in every aspect of school life. They acknowledge that there is some way to go, but everyone works together effectively as a member of the Tacolneston team and they have the will and the capability to succeed. Pushing up standards is everyone's main priority. That said, in this small school one pupil can make a significant difference to overall percentages. The school's targets in Year 6 were met last year, and it is on course to meet its targets this year.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

37. To improve standards, and the quality of education provided by the school, governors and senior managers should:-

- (1) Put in place an appropriate curriculum for the reception children, making sure that there are secure systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainments.
See paragraphs 26 – 29.
- (2) Develop a co-ordinated whole school approach to planning the curriculum and assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainments over time by:-
 - Welding together the very best of the systems in operation in Years 3 to 6
See paragraphs 30 – 34.
- (3) Develop a long-term strategic plan that clearly identifies the way forward for the newly developed primary school.
See paragraphs 35,36.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	2	9	2	0	0	0
Percentage	19	13	56	13	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than six 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)	N/A	77
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	13

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	N/A

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	5	10	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (79)	87 (86)	87 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (79)	80 (93)	100 (93)
	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 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	4	7	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (86)	73 (86)	91 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (86)	73 (93)	91 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Because there are fewer than 10 boys or girls in Years 2 and 6 their results are not reported separately.

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	70	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	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	0	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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	263165
Total expenditure	248999
Expenditure per pupil	2964
Balance brought forward from previous year	267
Balance carried forward to next year	14433

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	32	15	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	45	6	9	11
The teaching is good.	40	38	17	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	32	26	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	28	23	9	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	37	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	31	20	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	35	38	14	6	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	8	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	42	2	8	2

