

INSPECTION REPORT

MILTON PAROCHIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Milton Malsor, Northamptonshire

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121982

Headteacher: Mrs. K. Patterson

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. R. Fry.
21073

Dates of inspection: 14 – 15 July 2003

Inspection number: 248310

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

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Glossary

Baseline assessment – tests for pupils when they join the school or in their first year.

Booster classes – extra classes provided for pupils in English and mathematics to help pupils to do better in the SATs (national) tests.

Co-ordinator – teacher in charge of organising a subject, such as English or physical education.

Curriculum – everything the school teaches pupils in and out of class, such as English, science and health education, visits and visitors.

ICT – information and communication technology.

Key Stage 1 (infant age) – pupils aged 6 to 7 years old. (Years 1 and 2)

Key Stage 2 (junior age) – pupils aged 7 to 11 years old. (Years 3 to 6)

Multi-cultural education – for example, the study of the beliefs of different ethnic groups within the United Kingdom.

National averages – refer to National Curriculum test results and teachers' assessments in English and mathematics where there are national comparisons with all schools and similar schools in Years 2 and 6.

National expectations – most pupils are expected to reach Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects at the age of 7 years and Level 4 at the age of eleven.

National tests – sometimes known as SATs, tests for all pupils 7, 11 and 14 years old.

Pupil – term used for a child of compulsory school age.

SATs – national tests for pupils aged 7, 11 and 14.

Scheme of work – courses of lessons in eg. English, for teachers to use when planning lessons. The school uses national guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to help teachers plan lessons for some subjects.

School development plan – set of plans that show how the school will improve over the coming year or longer, what its priorities for action are and how it will spend its money.

'Similar' schools – Schools are placed in groups for the purpose of comparing SATs results with other schools, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. For example, one group covers schools who have 8 – 20 percent of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

Tracking – word used to describe a method of recording individual pupils' progress.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Green Street
Milton Malsor
Northampton

Postcode: NN7 3AT
Telephone number: 01604 858816
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr. M. Brown

Date of previous inspection: 26 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Milton Parochial Primary is a school for boys and girls aged between four and eleven years. The school educates pupils from Milton Malsor and the surrounding area, and from south-west Northampton. It has 107 pupils on roll, including fifteen children currently of reception age. No pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. Children's attainment on entry to the school is typical of young children nationally. Fourteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below average. A small number of pupils, for example, need extra help with reading, writing and mathematics skills. All pupils speak English and no pupils have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Milton Parochial Primary School is an effective school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, permanent teaching and support staff have managed the school very well during a difficult period recently. The teaching and learning are good overall now and are very good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' standards of work in English and mathematics have been well above average over the last three years in Year 2 and average overall in Year 6, compared with all schools. In 2002 results in Year 6 overall were well above average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their work. The school makes sure it includes all pupils in everything that it does. Pupils' achievement is good. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils' achievement is good, including pupils with special educational needs.
- The leadership and management of key staff are very good. The headteacher is an excellent leader.
- Teaching and learning are good in lessons overall and are very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Visits to places of interest enrich the curriculum and pupils' personal development very well.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and their responses to the care the school shows for them are very good.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Some parents are not content with the policy for homework.
- The system for recording pupils' attainment and progress in some minor subjects is incomplete.
- The school has not completed the process of devising a policy for Racial Equality.

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 in 1998 and progress with the key issues identified then has been very good. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT), history and geography now meets the expectations in the National Curriculum. The new computer suite is already having a beneficial effect on pupils' standards of work. More time has been devoted to the systematic teaching of historical and geographical skills. Pupils' standards of work in Years 3 and 4 are much higher. There are schemes of work to guide teachers' planning in place for all subjects and planning is thorough. Teachers' records of pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science, ICT, geography and history are good. Teachers use worksheets appropriately in lessons. Behaviour is now very good in all classes. The playground has been resurfaced.

There are other improvements. The quality of the school's self-analysis has improved considerably. The school has grasped all the new national initiatives intended to improve the curriculum, and has successfully managed them over the years. The teaching is better and more lessons are very successful. The care for pupils has improved considerably and parents' very positive views of the school have been maintained.

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:	Milton compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	C	C	D
Mathematics	E	D	A	B
Science	D	C	A	A

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

Pupils' performances have varied considerably in the last three years. It is common for results to fluctuate from year to year in small schools, so the results in the table need to be treated with some caution because one pupil in 2002 represented eight per cent of the class. The school is placed in a higher group of 'similar' schools that does not reflect pupils' average capabilities on entry to the school. The table above shows that standards of pupils' work in Year 6 have steadily improved. In National Curriculum tests in 2002, Year 6 pupils' standards of work in English were average compared with all schools and below average compared with similar schools. In mathematics standards were well above average compared with all schools nationally and above average compared with similar schools. Science standards were well above average nationally and in comparison with similar schools. The table also shows that pupils' standards in English have been lower than in other subjects. Pupils met their targets set by teachers in mathematics and science in 2002. Overall pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. There is little variation between the achievement of boys and girls.

Indications are that attainment has been good in national tests this year and observations made during the inspection support this view. Writing standards are slightly lower and the school has made improvement in writing standards a priority for action for several years. The emphasis on better writing is raising standards in, for example, Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their work throughout the school and they attain the targets in their individual education plans.

Indications are that attainment in Year 2 this year has been good in national tests and observations made during the inspection support this trend. In 2000 and 2001 Year 2 pupils reached well above average or high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work in all other subjects observed met national standards in all years or was higher. In Reception, most children attain the standards expected nationally and some reach higher standards in the 'Areas of Learning' they study. Children respond very well. Young children become more confident and continue to learn many important skills, such as how to count and to read and write.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils show a very keen interest in school life and enjoy participating in all activities. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and to each other during lessons because they want to learn. Pupils respond maturely to all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and at playtimes. They also work very well together on shared activities. Many pupils have a thirst for knowledge and school is exciting. Movement around the school is also good.
Personal development and	Very good. Pupils share their feelings and thoughts confidently. They enjoy the

relationships	duties and tasks they have to do, such as older pupils helping younger ones as 'buddies.' Pupils establish very good relationships with everyone.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average last year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3-6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

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

The teaching of young children in Reception and Year 1 is good. A temporary teacher was teaching the class during the inspection. Teaching takes full account of children's special educational needs. Activities are varied, well planned and pupils learn to co-operate when they play together. The teachers provide, for example, practical activities in language and mathematics lessons and children learn the sounds of letters and how to recognise and use different coins. Activities match pupils' abilities well.

Throughout the school, pupils' capacity to learn is extended well and pupils' needs are met in lessons. Staff absences have not resulted in a drop in standards in Years 1 and 2. There is a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. Teachers question pupils well during lessons and use this method to revise pupils' knowledge. The basic skills of English and mathematics are taught well in literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils were observed learning, for example, how to improve the quality of their writing in Years 3 and 4 as a result of the teacher showing the class good examples of writing that pupils had written.

Teachers group pupils of similar capabilities effectively so that they have work that is hard enough for them. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 reflects teachers' high levels of expertise. Class management is very good and pupils make the most of what is offered in lessons. In several lessons the teaching was excellent for a range of reasons. They included the fast pace of these lessons, use of problem solving approaches and the involvement of visiting experts. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because teachers and support staff meet their needs quickly, often in small groups or individually. Support staff make an important and positive contribution to the teaching in all lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school gives high priority to teaching the basic skills of English in literacy lessons and in other subjects. Very good displays of pupils' work show that pupils find the curriculum interesting. The provision for information and communication technology has improved greatly. The range of visits to places of interest enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The provision is very carefully managed. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Support staff help pupils effectively with their work in lessons and in small groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in everything that the school does. The social and moral tone of acts of collective worship is very good and pupils learn, for example, about dealing with worries and being hopeful. The school council is a very good initiative that allows pupils to participate in decisions about how the school should work.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils are very well cared for each day and there is a happy atmosphere in school. The school helps pupils to develop effectively as young people because pupils' individual, social and academic needs are met. Whole class discussions are very successful. The assessment system to record pupils' progress in several minor subjects is incomplete.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has provided excellent leadership and the school has a very good agenda for improvement, such as to improve standards of pupils' writing. The school's aims are well conceived and all staff work as a team. Temporary staff have been organised efficiently to minimise disruption to pupils' education. The school has high expectations of all pupils and staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Many governors take an active role in helping to develop the school and are 'critical friends.' The chair of governors knows the school's strengths and what needs to be done. Governors are closely involved in preparing the school's plans for improvement. The school involves all pupils successfully in all it does, but the policy for Racial Equality has not been completed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and staff have accurately identified the areas that the school needs to improve, based on the results of the school's self-evaluations. The school adopts a very honest and self-critical approach. There is a good informal programme for checking teaching and learning in lessons.
The strategic use of resources	Good. 'Best value' is found for purchases. There is a good ratio of adults to pupils, which helps pupils make better progress. The school has an underspend that it will use to maintain the four classes across the school. The school intends to compare its costs with other like schools. The administration of the school is efficient. The school is kept clean and in good order by the cleaner in charge.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Fifty seven per cent of questionnaires were returned and 12 parents attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like going to school. They make good progress with their work. The teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. Children's behaviour. Most parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with a question or problem. The school has high expectations of children. The school helps children to mature and be responsible. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The homework policy. The consistency of teaching this term in one class.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views, but also agrees with parents that the homework policy is due for review. The school had identified this issue and plans to do this in the autumn term. Some parents at the meeting also expressed concern about the number of different teachers who have taught Years 1 and 2 this term. The inspection team is satisfied that the school has done all that it can to make sure that children's education has been interrupted as little as possible.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils' achievement is good, including pupils with special educational needs.

1. Pupils' achievement has been good in 2002 and 2003. Overall, children join the school with attainments in English and mathematics that are typical of children nationally and leave with above average standards in Year 6. Pupils' performances have varied considerably in the last three years in Year 6. It is common for statistical results to fluctuate from year to year in small schools, so the results need to be treated with some caution because, for example, one pupil in 2002 represented eight per cent of the class. In 2000, the results in Year 6 overall were well below average compared with all schools and in 2001 they were average. During 2001 and 2002 the school had a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a small number of pupils had a very poor record of attendance at school. The reasons for the lower results then related to the characteristics of the year groups and not to the quality of teaching.
2. The school has been placed in a group of 'similar' schools that is higher than it ought to be that does not reflect pupils' average capabilities on entry to the school. Groups of 'similar' schools are based on the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. In 2002 pupils' standards of work overall in national tests were judged as well above average compared with all schools in Year 6. However, they were average when compared to similar schools. This grade does not reflect fairly on the school. Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
3. Standards of pupils' work in Year 6 have steadily improved over the last three years. There is little variation between the achievement of boys and girls because teachers make conscious efforts to provide lessons that interest both boys and girls. Pupils' National Test results in English have been lower than in other subjects in Year 6 because writing standards are slightly lower. The school has made improvement in writing standards a priority for action. Improvement in standards of pupils' writing is a national issue. There are very good initiatives in place that the school reasonably expects to continue to lift the standards of pupils' written English to compare with their reading standards. These initiatives include using drama to stimulate pupils' ideas for writing and the use of 'drafting,' to encourage pupils to write with more interest. Pupils draft their ideas and then rewrite them after the teacher has marked their work. This process improves the standard of what they have written and how they have written it.
4. There are many reasons why pupils' good achievement has occurred. The school makes good use of the money made available to it. The headteacher and governors have provided a good ratio of adults to pupils and good quality resources for pupils to use. Pupils receive much adult help and support and so make good progress in lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work thoughtfully, particularly in English, and pupils learn new ideas and consolidate what they know every day. The headteacher and staff have identified the key areas for development very clearly and the school has a very clear sense of direction. For example, teachers ensure that pupils experience many types of writing in order to improve pupils' range of writing. There are many good displays of work, of which pupils are very proud. Pupils feel valued and important.
5. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the overall good quality of teaching ensures that pupils make good progress from the time they enter the school until they leave it. All pupils have responded particularly well to the opportunities that the school gives them. Pupils know that it is worth working hard and good work brings worthwhile

rewards. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and in the interest they have in lessons. A further reason why pupils achieve well is that teachers plan lessons that require pupils to learn at a good pace. Teachers provide interesting and well written information for pupils to use, such as in English and mathematics lessons. Pupils are always clear what they have to do and how long they have to do it. They receive praise when a job is well done, and pupils therefore develop a sense of pride in their work.

6. In Year 2 in 2001 and 2002, pupils reached well above average or high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2001 results were exceptional. They were very high in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were observed predicting the end of a story called 'The Gardener' by Sarah Stewart. They showed a good understanding of the plot and hoped, for example, that the main characters would remain safe.
7. In Reception, most children attain the standards expected nationally and some reach higher standards in the 'Areas of Learning' they study. In a mathematical development lesson that was observed, children recognised and ordered coins by value with increasing success up to £1. In a physical development lesson, children invented their own games with some adult help, using a range of given equipment successfully.
8. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' standards of work in English and mathematics observed were above average. Pupils in Year 4 have an above average understanding of time and their understanding of how to build tension in their stories is good. In Years 5 and 6, pupils know what 'similes' and 'metaphors' are and use them properly in their writing. Pupils proved to be good at seeing and explaining patterns in numbers in a mathematics lesson.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their work throughout the school and they attain the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils were observed, for example, pronouncing syllables of words, joining them and then saying the whole word. Pupils' progress is such that most attain the standards expected nationally at the end of Year 6.
10. The standard of pupils' singing is very good. Pupils hold notes accurately and sing parts tunefully. Many pupils are members of the choir and they sing with enthusiasm. The choir represents the school in various community gatherings and also sings to parents during concerts. The school has displayed some very good animal models and other models made in design and technology lessons by Years 5 and 6. Each has a moving part, such as a mouth that opens and shuts. The models are robust and very well finished. Pupils have, for example, used cams successfully to make things move in the way they want.

The leadership and management of key staff are very good. The headteacher is an excellent leader.

11. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and permanent staff. The headteacher has a substantial teaching commitment. The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and makes it clear to all what she expects. The school is successful because all teachers and staff work together to improve the school. Over the last three years, teachers have steadily improved the quality of education and ensured that pupils' needs are met each day. Recently the school has had long-term staff absences. The headteacher has successfully filled these positions with a minimum of disruption to pupils' education. The headteacher has established a good rapport with a small number of temporary teachers to teach the classes. Most of them know the school well and fit in with the school's

systems with ease. The headteacher ensures that all temporary teachers are very well prepared and that lesson content fits in with the termly plans for each subject in each class. There has been no drop in standards of pupils' work overall in Reception and Years 1 and 2, although pupils' presentation of work is more variable in the Year 1 and 2 class than in other classes.

12. The headteacher takes a leading role in most aspects of school life. She is a very successful teacher yet she carries out her role as ambassador and organiser for the school equally well. For example, the school now has a very good ICT suite that is large and well designed. The staff discusses the future direction of the school in a wide range of areas, such as pupils' attainments each year in National Tests and how teachers should manage their responses to trends in results. Communication throughout the school is very good and everyone feels involved at their particular level.
13. The school has clear reasons for what it does, based on the accurate and thorough self-evaluations carried out by staff. The headteacher has a strongly held belief that all pupils must have every opportunity to do well. The headteacher keeps the school up to date with educational developments but also ensures the pace of change does not overload the staff. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and they take a detailed interest in pupils' standards of work. For example, the provision for special educational needs is very well managed and pupils make good progress with their individual targets. Every pupil is valued and parents confirm that there is a positive atmosphere in the school. The school also makes special provision for older pupils who need extra help with mathematics. Parents report that the extra group work sessions are beneficial and have boosted their children's standards of work and their confidence.
14. The deputy headteacher sets a very good example in her teaching and in her participation in all aspects of school life. Staff gain from her enthusiasm for teaching, the way she develops ideas in lessons and from her general manner. The deputy headteacher makes a very good contribution to the smooth running of the school. She has played a leading role in raising standards in English. For some years, pupils' reading standards have been higher than those in writing, which is common in many schools. The school is aware that some children are reluctant to write. The deputy headteacher has developed the curriculum for literacy successfully as a result of recognising these trends. She has, for example, investigated ways to improve pupils' writing, has taken advice from other experts and kept a close check on standards in all classes. Teachers use a variety of ways to boost pupils' standards in writing, such as by pupils' use of 'writing journals.' Pupils record their drafted work, best copies and their responses to teachers' comments in one place. In this way pupils can look back at their targets and corrections, and remind themselves what they need to do next or how they can improve their work.
15. The school's aims are very well conceived and many of them were seen being fulfilled. The school's main aim is to provide an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. Other aims include the development of a purposeful, positive learning environment in which children feel secure, valued and confident. In this way pupils realise much of their likely potential. The school is committed to a curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and allows pupils to become life-long learners. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are rooted in developing a sense of individual responsibility and citizenship.
16. The governing body provides good leadership and support for the management of the school. The governing body makes a significant contribution to the school's development planning process. The chair of governors has a good understanding of the strengths and points for development for the school. For example, he and governors have supported a

school organisation based on a generous adult-pupil ratio. Governors make a good contribution to financial control and ensure there is enough money to pay for this arrangement. Governors know what can or cannot be done and therefore set realistic targets for spending with the headteacher.

17. The chair of governors outlined several reasons why the school is successful. He pointed out the considerable qualities of leadership shown by the headteacher and the efficient way that the business of the school is dealt with. He commented accurately that pupils make good progress, but there is no complacency. Many governors have good links with classes and have some understanding of how well pupils are getting on compared with national standards. Governors recognise this is an area for development. The governor responsible for pupils with special educational needs makes a very good contribution. She regularly works with pupils and checks the work of the school closely.
18. The school's development plan gives the reader a very good indication of what the priorities for school development are. For example, the school has identified the need to improve the provision it makes for homework and to complete the system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress for all subjects. The inspection team found no areas for developing teaching further that the school has not already identified for itself. The school's development plan contains all the main areas that the school needs to address to make further progress. The document indicates that the school knows its strengths and areas for development very well. The school uses performance management appraisals effectively to highlight areas for whole school action and to motivate staff further. During a meeting with all staff, they were asked, 'Why is the school successful?' The consensus of opinion was that the school is very well led, that all associated with the school enjoy their work and that within a small staff there is a good range of expertise. The staff also feels that they work closely together, and that all important matters are dealt with in a spirit of co-operation.

Teaching and learning are good in lessons overall and are very good in Years 3 to 6.

19. The good teaching and pupils' excellent attitudes to school are two of the main reasons for pupils' good achievement. Many examples of good to excellent teaching were observed during the two days of the inspection.
20. The teaching has many common positive features throughout the school. Teachers' lesson preparation is thorough. Some of the daily plans available during the inspection made very good references to pupils' prior learning from which their progress in lessons could be measured. There is a good match of tasks to pupils' capabilities, which helps pupils to respond positively because what they are asked to do is within their scope. Learning support assistants work well with groups of pupils and help to bring about their good progress through tasks. They prompt pupils and keep them on task at all times.
21. Teachers showed the high levels of their expertise in many lessons. In most lessons, pupils' learning is well paced and follows a logical sequence. For example, pupils learned how to programme the floor robot successfully and in quick time in Years 1 and 2 because the teacher knew exactly when to give encouragement or the next teaching points. Expert teaching of literacy in Years 3 and 4 is raising standards of pupils' writing. In one lesson the teacher displayed good examples of pupils' writing. Pupils learned to describe characters better and began to focus on building tension in their stories because they could read good examples that their classmates had written and so gain ideas. The teacher wrote worksheets that were carefully designed. Pupils had a number of questions to answer that guided them through the task bit by bit, so that they were not

overwhelmed. Pupils with special educational need work on similar tasks, as their capabilities require. They are very well supported and make good progress with developing their ideas in all lessons.

22. Teachers' management of classes is very good and pupils make the most of what is on offer. Reception and Year 1 pupils learned to devise their own games in a very good physical development lesson. The teacher explained very clearly what pupils had to do. The lesson was very well conceived and pupils needed to apply the skills they had learned during the term. The teacher put out a range of equipment for pupils to use, including bats, balls, hoops and bean bags. Groups of pupils discussed their ideas and came to a decision about what sort of games that they wanted to play. One pupil observed, 'We've got to have rules.' There was good learning in the lesson. Pupils worked together, agreed what they were going to do and tried out their ideas with some prompting from the adults. Pupils tried ideas and rejected some of them. They all used most of the available equipment to make, for example, balancing or throwing games.
23. The relationship between teachers and pupils is very good. Very good relationships have been established for a number of reasons. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully, and make references to pupils' targets in English, mathematics and science. Therefore pupils have a good idea what they have attained and what they need to do next. Pupils see the care that has been taken over their work and they follow this good example.
24. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher and a visitor combined to lead a drama lesson. Pupils learned to express their feelings in role as wartime evacuees. Pupils spoke clearly in response to the adults' prompting and explained, for example, how they would have felt to be sent away from home for their own safety. The lesson added to pupils' depth of knowledge about the Second World War because the adults added in facts and ideas as pupils needed them.
25. In Years 5 and 6 an outstanding mathematics lesson was observed. The lesson was based on a problem solving approach to learning. The teacher set pupils a number of problems to complete. Pupils, for example, had to build 'towers' of numbers with three numbers on the bottom row, two on the next row and then one on top. The teacher set the rules about how the numbers were to be generated and then asked pupils to look for patterns. Pupils applied their knowledge of numbers that they had gained over the year extremely well. They discovered all kinds of patterns in the numbers and gained great satisfaction from doing so. At the end of the lesson, the teacher and pupils explained many of the important relationships between the numbers so that all pupils could see what others had learned.
26. There are few shortcomings in the teaching. However, occasionally teachers planned to do too much in lessons and pupils did not have enough time to complete valid and useful tasks, so pupils' learning was limited at those points in two lessons. Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Many actively support pupils at all stages in lessons. On occasions though, some sit passively listening to the teachers teaching, rather than listening as well as, for example, carrying out other tasks that do not require their full attention. On one occasion in a literacy lesson in the Reception and Year 1 class, the teaching was not followed by a teacher directed activity for pupils that reinforced the main point of the lesson. Pupils' progress was therefore limited.

Visits to places of interest enrich the curriculum and pupils' personal development very well.

27. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils benefits from the depth in which they study the subjects. The quality of the curriculum is a positive influence on the standards that pupils attain. Parents report that their children feel that the school makes learning fun and that their children enjoy going to school. Pupils are enthusiastic about what they do because the curriculum is stimulating. In one lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils were amazed to see that plants can grow just using the light that comes through a keyhole. Others were surprised to see how plants will grow through a maze, so long as there is a light source at the far end.
28. The curriculum the school provides in the Reception class gives young children a good start to their education. The teachers present children with a wide range of exciting activities based on the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The curriculum helps develop children's motivation to learn. The curriculum introduces children to using their senses to investigate the world around them and to work together.
29. Pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils have visited, for example, Sulgrave Manor living Tudor museum, the Millennium Dome and a Synagogue. From time to time the school celebrates a particular period by holding, for example, a successful Victorian Day or a Jubilee Fete. Performances and ceremonies in the church are a regular feature of school life. The school celebrates important dates in the year. For example, pupils enter the 'Decorate an Easter Egg' competition and celebrate May Day. The decorated eggs are very attractive and show pupils' very good capacity to find a unique setting for their eggs.
30. The cluster of local schools made a trip to the Royal Opera House to see Giselle, and pupils have seen a performance of Twelfth Night. Pupils' understanding of the world of work improves when they visit businesses, such as a nearby large supermarket. One pupil recently won a story writing competition. The prize was a splendid adventure playground for the school. Pupils have had a visit from the fire service, which they found interesting.
31. Teachers plan pupils' moral development very successfully. They encourage pupils to take part in many activities that emphasise care for others. Pupils raised funds for Comic Relief. They held a sponsored silence that raised £1167 for Macmillan Cancer Relief, raised funds for Help the Aged and give strong support for the RSPCA and other conservation work.
32. The school has a very good policy for helping to develop pupils socially. The school council is a very successful initiative. This initiative develops pupils' social understanding very well. Pupils help to produce the school's magazine. Members of the school council in the past decided to decorate the toilets because they felt the toilets needed it. The school council has an agenda for each meeting and there are representatives from each class at each meeting. During the inspection they discussed maturely how well the play equipment bought for use at breaktimes was used. Council members agreed there should be a rota for using the equipment at the meeting, so that pupils would know when it was their turn to use the equipment. Pupils feel their views are valued and respected.
33. The buddy system is another very good social initiative. The oldest pupils pair with the youngest. They help their young buddies, ensure they have a friend and make sure they are safe at playtimes and lunchtimes. Years 3 and 4 visit a field centre each year and they learn how to find creatures when pond dipping and to navigate efficiently when orienteering. The development of pupils' independence continues each year when Year 6 attend a residential centre for a week. Pupils also take part in important safe cycling

courses and Year 6 pupils have taken a personal safety-training course. Teams take part successfully in, for example, football in the community and in swimming galas.

34. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. The headteacher is an outstanding communicator when the whole school is gathered. In one assembly, she considered questions that are very important to pupils at the end of the school year. She talked about how we worry about things unnecessarily. The choice of subject was particularly relevant to Year 6 pupils who are about to leave school.
35. The curriculum for information and communication technology has improved considerably. The school has a new, large, well designed ICT suite. Year 6 pupils were observed learning, for example, how to improve their multi-media presentations in co-operative pairs. The ICT suite allows pupils to develop their own ideas independently to a high degree.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and their responses to the care the school shows for them are very good.

36. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils receive a curriculum that builds on their previous knowledge in small steps, so that pupils learn new ideas at the right speed for them. The care shown for pupils is very good in the small group lessons. Other pupils who need extra support receive it in the areas where their need is greatest. They receive extra help in English lessons, for example, in small groups with the school's support staff. Many pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs make good progress and reach national standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Pupils' attitudes to work during these sessions are excellent. Pupils know how important the work they do is and respond accordingly. The school's 'Golden Rules' work very well. Pupils are polite and caring towards people and their property.
37. Teachers know their pupils well and meet their needs effectively. Day-to-day, teachers care very well for all pupils. Adults and pupils have very good relationships based on a high level of mutual interest and respect. The lunchtime staff effectively organises pupils, such as with the boxes of games for pupils to play with and in the quiet area. Lunchtimes run smoothly. Support staff in classrooms make a valuable contribution to lessons. They often work with groups of lower attainers. They quietly repeat the key points that the teacher has made and maintain eye contact with pupils to ensure that they are listening carefully. This process raises pupils' levels of concentration and therefore their capacity to engage successfully with their work.
38. Teachers over the years have encouraged pupils to show interest in their work and to commit themselves to learning. Pupils make an outstanding response in many lessons. In Years 5 and 6 pupils showed an exceptional attitude to a mathematics lesson. Pupils were very keen to answer and to listen to what their classmates had discovered. They worked very hard to solve the problems they had been set and were often bursting with what they felt were the correct answers. The final whole class review of the lesson was excellent, partly because pupils' attitudes to their work were so good.
39. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils responded very well to the temporary teacher. The lesson was based on a question and answer approach. Pupils learned how to make a maze by translating the teacher's example on display onto the floor of the class using squares of paper. Pupils listened very well to the teacher's instructions and several

groups of pupils added their suggestions to the maze accurately. Many pupils have an instant trust and a capability to make the best of what the school offers them.

Parents' views of the school are very positive.

40. The school has a very good partnership with parents. Links with parents reflect the quality of leadership and management of the school over the last five years. Parents' positive views have been maintained since the last inspection. The school's relationship with parents has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and on the atmosphere in school. Parents' confidence in the school shows in pupils' excellent attitudes. Parents have many good reasons why they should support the school. For example, pupils receive a curriculum that is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors and their children are happy at school.
41. At the parents' meeting and in the questionnaires, parents gave many positive responses about the school. Sixty-one questionnaires were returned. The results of the questionnaires showed, for example, that ninety-seven per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire believe that the school is well managed and that the teaching is good. All but two parents reported that their children like school. Ninety-one per cent of parents feel the school's expectations of their children are realistically high. All parents feel that the school helps their children mature and become responsible. Ninety-five per cent of parents believe that their children's progress is good. Virtually all parents are comfortable when asking the school questions or when resolving a problem.
42. Some parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school does not work closely enough with them or provide enough information about what is happening. The inspection team disagrees with this view because there is regular consultation with parents about their children's progress and about whole school matters. The school has an 'open door' policy and the headteacher keeps parents well informed about what is happening through regular newsletters. Some parents at the meeting also expressed concern about the number of different teachers who have taught Years 1 and 2 this term. The inspection team is satisfied that the school has done all that it can to make sure that children's education has been interrupted as little as possible during the absence of teaching staff.
43. At the meeting for parents, several commented that the questionnaires sent home from school to ask for parents' views were very helpful. Parents know they have been involved in shaping the direction of the school. Their responses are used to shape sections of the school's development plan. Parents also commented that the mathematics evening provided for them by the school was illuminating and interesting. Parents noted that the provision for information and communication technology has improved hugely. They commented that the school rewards pupils for any aspect of their work or social behaviour, such as kindness to others, good work or carrying out duties.
44. Parents make a significant positive contribution to the school. For example, parents run clubs, such as chess and netball on a regular basis. Others help in classes. One parent has expertise in teaching drama, which she offers to the school. The 'Friends of Milton School' are active and raise much needed funds for equipment and books.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Some parents are not content with the policy for homework.

45. There is a broad spread of opinion amongst parents about homework. Some parents feel there is too little homework and others that there is too much. Some parents feel that homework in some classes has not been set consistently and that changes in teaching staff have also meant that some consistency has been lost. At the meeting, some parents believed that teachers should mark all homework and that more guidance for parents about how they should respond to tasks brought home by their children could be given.
46. The provision of homework is the only area where a significant minority of parents believes that there is room for improvement. The school has consulted parents regularly about a number of issues including homework in the recent past. As a result of this consultation, there is an entry in the school development plan for the headteacher to discuss all aspects of homework again with parents next term. Inspectors feel this is a good course of action. Some areas that might be considered are the range of activities that constitute homework, how often it should be set and whether homework should primarily be to practise skills learnt during that week in lessons or should include some new learning.

The system for recording pupils' attainment and progress in some minor subjects is incomplete.

47. Teachers keep good accurate records that chart pupils' progress and attainment year on year in most subjects. Record keeping is most detailed in English and mathematics. There are also good records of children's attainment on entry to the school in the Reception class. In history and geography the assessment system and pupils' records broadly follow those recommended by the schemes of work provided by the government. Teachers have good checklists of important aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding that they wish pupils to have. For music, design and technology, physical education and art there is no organised system to check and record pupils' attainment and progress. The school has identified this issue and intends to complete the assessment and recording system for these subjects over the next year.

The school has not completed the process of devising a policy for Racial Equality.

48. The school successfully involves all pupils in all that it does. Pupils learn about other cultures and all staff make informal checks on how pupils respond to each other. The school has drafted an appropriate policy but governors have yet to formally adopt it. Sections include the school's aims, such as for the school to create an environment where pupils feel valued and secure. There is a section about teaching and learning which talks of providing all pupils with opportunities to succeed in lessons. There is another section about tackling racial harassment and the steps the school would take if such an event were to occur. Staff development has been considered, with training linked to priorities within the school's development plan. All schools were required to have the policy in place in September 2002.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. The governors, headteacher and staff now need to,

- Improve the provision of homework by agreeing a new policy with parents.
- Improve the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress in art, design and technology, music and physical education by extending the systems in place for history and geography to those subjects.
- Complete the process for adopting a policy for Racial Equality.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	5	10	1	0	0	0
Percentage	15	28	52	5	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 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)	0	107
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
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	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	3	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Pupils	Total	14	15	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (94)	94 (100)	88 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Pupils	Total	15	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	94 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	7	6	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Pupils	Total	10	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (81)	85 (69)	92 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Pupils	Total	9	10	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (81)	83 (88)	92 (88)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

The numbers of pupils in Years 2 and 6 were small. To avoid the identification of individual pupils, boys' and girls' results have not been included separately in the tables.

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	104	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	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)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

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	3

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	2002 / 2003
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	£
Total income	275430
Total expenditure	272590
Expenditure per pupil	2434
Balance brought forward from previous year	13430
Balance carried forward to next year	16270

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	20	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	34	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	43	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	41	15	3	2
The teaching is good.	75	22	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	35	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	14	7	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	54	31	15	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	77	20	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	31	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	28	7	0	4

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting for parents, some expressed concern about the number of different teachers that have been teaching one class this term.