

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH LEVERTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

North Leverton

Retford

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122765

Headteacher: Mr. K. Bacon

Reporting inspector: Mrs D. J. Brigstock
23067

Dates of inspection: 11-12 November 2002

Inspection number: 248392

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Street North Leverton Retford Nottinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. N. Purkiss
Date of previous inspection:	2-4 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

North Leverton is a mixed primary school for pupils aged five to eleven. It draws its pupils mainly from the local area, although some pupils come from villages nearby. The school is smaller than average with 83 pupils on roll and 19% more boys than girls. In recent years there has been a fall in roll, due to the closure of a nearby local authority housing estate. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (mainly for learning difficulties) is above average, but there are no pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. All pupils are of white heritage and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the socio-economic background of most pupils is below average. Most children enter the reception class with well below average attainment. Over the last two years half of the teaching staff have left and new appointments have been made, including a new headteacher. This has led to considerable change in the internal re-organisation of the school. Classes in Years 1 and 2 are small and a new and a solid partnership with the pre-school group has been set up in order to raise attainment for the youngest pupils. During the inspection the largest class of Year 5 and 6 pupils was taken by a temporary teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

North Leverton Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and the school provides its pupils with a very good curriculum. The very good leadership shown by the governors during the last two years has not wavered, and the headteacher's day-to-day management of the school and its curriculum is effective. However, due to staff turbulence and absence since his appointment, he has not had enough opportunities to develop his leadership skills. As a result of these factors, pupils' overall standards remain below average by the time they leave the school and for most pupils achievement is satisfactory rather than good between Years 3 and 6. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the good quality of information provided by the headteacher. As a result, they are active in promoting the school and holding it to account.
- The quality of teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was good and teachers' planning and assessments were detailed and specific for each class. As a result, good learning took place.
- The school provides a very rich curriculum enhanced by a wide range of residential educational visits and extra-curricular activities, which extend pupils' opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences very well.
- The school provides very good opportunities for spiritual, moral and social education. Consequently, pupils have good attitudes and develop a very good understanding of their local culture and community.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in a rate of attendance that is well above average.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing throughout the school, and standards in mathematics and English overall by Year 6.
- School improvement planning over a longer period of time, ensuring that the school critically evaluates what has been achieved, and plans more effectively for the future.
- More opportunities could be provided for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1998, the school has made satisfactory improvement. The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed although the school improvement plan remains a short-term document. The school has developed a strong and useful partnership with the pre-school group in the building. The Early Years group is an exciting new feature, with the potential to raise standards on entry to the school, and the school's provision and use of information and communication technology (ICT) by both staff and pupils are much improved. In addition the school buildings have been extensively redecorated and furnished, providing a well-lit, colourful and stimulating learning environment. The good quality of teaching has been largely maintained, but there have been staff changes and teaching is only satisfactory now for Years 3 to 6.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E*	E	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	B	D	B	
science	E*	B	B	A	

Note: E means the school's performance is in the lowest five per cent of school's nationally.*

This is a small school and, as such, comparisons between one year and another are significantly affected by the results of individual pupils. However, over the last three years improvement in the school's performance has been broadly in line with the national trend.

Standards in English in the current Year 6 are below average overall. The quality of writing is a particular concern. Currently writing lacks enough descriptive language to attain the standards expected by the end of this year. Standards in mathematics are average, but the higher-attaining pupils are not on course to meet their targets. Standards in science in Year 6 were not investigated on this short inspection.

In Year 2, standards in English, maths and science were well below average from 1999 to 2001. In 2002, standards rose though they were still well below average in reading and writing, with writing weaker than reading. In mathematics, standards were average, better than in similar schools. Currently, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics but pupils are achieving well in reading and mathematics. Standards in science are average. The pupils are doing well in science because of a consistent focus on practical activities. Standards in the reception year are well below average because children start school with poorly-developed skills. By the end of the reception year last year, standards improved to below average, and this group of children achieved well.

The school sets challenging targets for individual pupils, which those in Years 1 to 4 are on course to meet. However, the older pupils in Years 5 and 6, particularly the highest-attaining pupils, are not. As attainment on entry is well below average, most pupils' achievement up to and including Year 4 is good. This good progress has not been maintained in Years 5 and 6 and most pupils' achievement by Year 6 is currently satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to work and learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils co-operate with their teachers and each other in lessons and play together outside well. A small minority of the older boys struggle to maintain appropriate behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. As pupils get older they willingly take on more responsibilities around the school. They are confident to express their feelings to each other and to adults.
Attendance	Very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Since the usual teacher for Years 5 and 6 was not in school during the inspection, the teaching seen in lessons for that class was not necessarily typical of the teaching they receive. Judgements about teaching overall are influenced by the lessons seen, but also take into account evidence from a study of the work pupils have done over a longer time. In Year 5 and 6 the work studied showed weaknesses related to teaching. This reduced the judgement on teaching to satisfactory for Years 3 to 6.

The teaching and learning in lessons observed were mostly good and never less than satisfactory. All teachers successfully created an atmosphere where effort was valued and pupils were confident to express themselves. Teachers planned their lessons very thoroughly, and made effective links between subjects. The skills of literacy and numeracy were taught well because teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach them. Those pupils that learn best through practical and visual activities were well catered for, and pupils with special educational needs had specifically-targeted activities and effective additional support to help them learn. There was good teamwork between teachers and learning assistants, and adults gave genuine praise when pupils did well.

Teachers use a wide range of strategies, agreed by the whole staff and prominently displayed throughout the school, to manage pupils' behaviour. On the few occasions where the teaching was satisfactory as opposed to good, poor behaviour was not dealt with quickly enough, the rest of the class was temporarily distracted, and so their rate of learning slowed.

The study of work in Year 6 showed that the highest-attaining pupils are not challenged well enough. Marking pays too much attention to how the work looks and not enough attention to how good the content is.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The additional visits undertaken by each year group clearly enrich the curriculum, providing pupils with a very good range of worthwhile, first-hand experiences.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans for children are specific to their needs and contain challenging, measurable targets. Learning support assistants are very effective in supporting this group of children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, with an extensive range of learning opportunities. Pupils learn to value and respect each other and to get on well together in an inclusive society. The links to local culture and the community are very good and learning about other cultures is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. Teachers know their pupils' strengths, weaknesses and aptitudes very well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher's day-to-day management of the school is good but he has not had enough opportunities to develop his leadership skills since being appointed. He is building a motivated team of teachers in order to improve standards. Co-ordinators carry an appropriate level of responsibility and have a good understanding of their role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body works well and has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is very active in promoting the school in the wider community.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has rightly identified the need to raise standards as its prime area of development, and is taking action. The school improvement plan is costed but is limited because it does not evaluate previous actions well enough and does not extend further than one year.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school is successful in applying for additional grants. The principles of best value are applied well and governors are aware of, for example, the value added to pupils' education by investing in smaller class sizes and the Early Years group.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy coming to school. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Children are expected to work hard. There are an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about how their children are getting on. The quantity of homework. The school working more closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments from parents. They found that the homework that is scheduled meets recommendations, but noted that some temporary teachers have not always set it. The inspection team agrees that the school could work more closely with parents and give them better progress information.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the good quality of information provided by the headteacher. As a result, they are active in promoting the school and holding it to account.

1. The governing body is very good. It is active in promoting the school and holding it to account. It has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the quality of information that the headteacher provides. All policy documents are up-to-date and in place. The policy for promoting race equality has raised awareness of this issue and resulted in the governors and headteacher exploring new ways of preparing pupils to become part of a more ethnically diverse society through their visits outside the local area.
2. Both the leadership and management of the governors have grown in influence since the last inspection. The governing body uses the information supplied by the headteacher to hold the school to account for its performance, and takes an active part in making decisions. Governors insist upon maintaining the additional visits and educational experiences as an integral part of pupils' learning and not as an 'optional extra.' They have a very good overview of the school's budget and make informed decisions on spending. This has been important for the school in the light of its falling roll and the consequent effect on the budget. When the new housing estate is built the governors plan to take a pro-active role in recruiting new pupils and families to the school.
3. Several members of the governing body are very active in school and have begun to monitor the work in classrooms, writing reports for the headteacher. One reason for this increased activity has been in the reorganisation of the school since the previous headteacher left. The deputy headteacher was promoted to headship and, for financial reasons, the post of deputy was not replaced. The Chair of Governors is now a sounding board for the headteacher to discuss some of the issues on, for example, staffing and recruitment. Some of the money saved has been spent on reducing class sizes in order to raise standards. The school's results from 2002 and the standards seen during the inspection indicate that this decision is having a positive impact in Years 1 and 2. Another governor uses his practical skills in school, so reducing the need to pay for outside contractors to do the work. The governors and headteacher firmly support the school as an inclusive community school with strong links to the Church and seek to find ways of strengthening these further.
4. The headteacher provides the governing body with good information on, for example, the budget, staffing, the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Since his appointment five terms ago, there has been a large turnover of staff plus a considerable amount of staff absence. To manage the situation and to minimise disruption to pupils' education, he has either taught classes himself or brought in supply teachers to cover for absences. Staff absence has been expensive both in financial terms and in the effect it has had on pupils. There has been a drop in standards of the behaviour of a minority of the older pupils, caused by the number of teachers that the oldest pupils have had. It has also had a negative impact on the amount of time the headteacher has had to undertake his own headship training and lead the school into its next phase of development.
5. The headteacher has improved the leadership role of co-ordinators so that they take a more active part in the monitoring process, so addressing one of the key issues from the last inspection. For example, the co-ordinator for special educational needs is released by the headteacher for half a day a week to review the progress that pupils have made against the targets set in their individual education plans and to set new ones. In this she is assisted by a learning support assistant, who is also freed from the classroom at the same time. As a result, all the plans are well structured with additional activities planned for this group of pupils, who achieve well over time. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have conducted audits of their subjects and been fully involved in the actions, for their subjects, itemised in the school improvement plan. These clearly identify the time planned for their monitoring of teaching and learning, the training required for staff to improve their own subject knowledge and to keep up-to-date with current initiatives, and the

steps they intend to take to improve standards. For example, the school plans to liaise with Beacon schools to see and investigate good practice and co-ordinators have a lead role in this initiative. The headteacher has developed the performance management of teachers effectively and this is now firmly embedded into the school's monitoring process. The headteacher monitors the standards of teaching and learning throughout the school and has a good understanding of pupils' standards throughout the school. He has, however, not made enough intervention to minimise the disruption caused to the oldest pupils' education by the number of teachers they have had, for example in the setting of homework and in the content of their lessons.

The quality of teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was good and teachers' planning and assessments were detailed and specific for each class. As a result, good learning took place.

6. All teachers seen during the inspection have a good understanding of how literacy and numeracy lessons should be taught, and apply this knowledge in lessons. They plan literacy and numeracy lessons following the guidance for mixed-aged classes contained in the national strategies. They make the pupils' learning effective through interpreting these requirements in planning documents and lively and interesting delivery of lessons. They make links with other areas of the curriculum so that pupils use the skills they have learned in other subjects, such as writing lists, making graphs using ICT, and sorting data in science. These opportunities to practise the skills learnt in literacy and numeracy lessons consolidate pupils' learning and their confidence well.
7. No science lessons were observed during the inspection in Years 5 and 6. Science lessons seen in all other year groups, including the children in the reception class, focused strongly on pupils' first-hand investigations. This focus is a likely reason for pupils' high attainment in science over the last two years. The youngest children effectively improved their knowledge and understanding of the world through investigating how sound travels and making their own instruments; very practical activities, which also improved their communication skills and widened their vocabulary. The lesson encouraged them to ask questions and think of answers about why and how sounds became louder or fainter. Pupils in Year 2 were also applying investigative skills during a good lesson on electricity. The teacher had high expectations of what each group of pupils could learn and had organised the lesson so that specific scientific vocabulary was used and practised. The group of higher-attaining pupils advanced their learning well, and by the end of the lesson they were working at an above-average standard, not only making different electrical switches but also expressing and testing their ideas on which materials made good conductors. In Years 3 and 4, the expectations of the teacher were very high as she encouraged pupils to investigate and question the links between the measurements of different bones in a human body. A limited scrutiny of pupils' science books in Years 5 and 6 showed that all aspects of the science curriculum were taught and that pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, for example learning the names of the parts of a flower, were practised.
8. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good overall and, as a result, the quality of learning observed was also good. Teachers' planning documents are detailed and specific for each group within each class. Activities are planned which have good links to other subjects and which catch pupils' interest. Other adults in the classrooms are used effectively to support learning. A good feature of teaching is the way planned activities are designed to take pupils' learning styles into account. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 2, the pupils learned how to make sensible estimates of numbers through feeling bags of objects, looking at them, making estimates and then counting to check their accuracy. The numbers being used were larger for the higher-attaining pupils; the student in the class was well briefed to support one of the groups, and the lesson was active and enjoyable. All pupils achieved the objectives set as their interest was caught and held. In a very good lesson in investigating sounds, the youngest pupils played 'whispering' games, walked away from their teacher until they could no longer hear an instrument being played, recorded their findings, with the help of their teacher, on a bar chart and were encouraged to express their own ideas on how far sounds travel. These varied approaches appealed to pupils, who learn through visual and physical activities; their interest was engaged and all of them met the lesson objectives. This use of a variety of learning styles is directly related to the training staff have had on the ways in which children learn, and its inclusion in the school

improvement plan. It is a good example of the positive impact that staff training has had on teaching and learning.

9. Links made between areas of the curriculum are good. For example, in a science lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, links were made between investigative science, mathematics and ICT. The tasks set were very challenging: to construct questions on the relationship between different measurements of the body. The teacher had a 'real' skeleton to demonstrate the relative size of different bones and used ICT to graph measurements. The pupils had to create and answer questions such as "Do people with the longest legs have the longest arms?" using the data provided. Later in the day, they experimented with a program in the computer suite to find different ways of displaying their data. These linked activities gave pupils opportunities to practise what they had learned in different settings, so consolidating their learning.
10. Teachers have a very clear understanding of what their pupils know and can do through the accurate and up-to-date assessments they make in class files. The new system of using 'I can' statements to measure pupils' attainment, itemised in the school improvement plan, is fully in place and teachers use the information provided to pitch lessons at an appropriate level for different groups of pupils within their classes.
11. Pupils with special educational needs have very specific and additional objectives on their individual education plans, and their progress towards meeting their targets is monitored carefully and taken into account when planning lessons. Teachers fully include pupils with special educational needs in their lessons, asking them appropriate questions and drawing them into discussions, as seen in a good lesson on ordering the days of the week and sequencing the seasons in a lesson for Reception and Year 1 pupils. Once again different learning styles were taken into account so the pupils had objects to handle, such as a pair of sunglasses for summer and a scarf for the winter months. The teacher used drama to reinforce teaching points and the younger children mimed activities they did throughout the day, such as brushing their teeth. The higher-attaining pupils were given simple writing tasks to complete. The variety of activities kept pupils alert and interested and they made good progress.
12. In the best lessons high expectations of work and behaviour result in very good progress. In a very good literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher used well-chosen passages from 'The Water Babies' to illustrate how characters could be described. His insistence on the use of good descriptive language brought out the best use of language heard during the inspection. For example, when describing Tom, pupils' descriptions included phrases such as, "a little bony boy," "eyes bruised and red-rimmed," "feet blistered and bleeding." This class has had a difficult start to the year because of teacher absence and contains a few disruptive pupils. The teacher used constant praise for good ideas and his quiet, unwavering and positive insistence on good behaviour led to a visible rise in pupils' self-esteem. All members of the class appreciated his teaching methods and attitudes towards them. They were fully engaged and eager to win praise through producing good work.
13. Teachers use resources very well. In a literacy lesson in Year 2, the teacher provided resources in boxes for the pupils to construct three-dimensional scenes for a setting of the story 'Big Bear and Little Bear,' which they then labelled by writing on small packs of 'Post-its' that were provided. This activity engaged pupils' interest well. They began to think of more interesting words to use to describe the settings for the story they were to write later in the series of well-planned and connected lessons. Their vocabulary improved as a student helped them find different words to use in a simple thesaurus.
14. Teachers and classroom assistants work together well during lessons and both ideas and best practice are shared. A good example of this is the teamwork in the Early Years department, where the teacher and classroom assistant jointly plan exciting and interesting learning activities for the pre-school children who attend three times a week. These sessions, separate from the reception class, prepare children well for full-time education and have the potential to raise standards from the low attainment on entry currently experienced in school. This low baseline on entry to the

school affects attainment in Year 2. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 but still don't reach the standards expected for their age.

The school provides a very rich curriculum enhanced by a wide range of residential educational visits and extra-curricular activities, which extends pupils' opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences very well.

15. The school provides a wealth of learning experiences in addition to the National Curriculum. Each year group in Years 3 to 6 has residential visits which give pupils first-hand learning experiences of different people and places and widen their knowledge and understanding of different lifestyles. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have an overnight study visit to Buxton, where they look at the geology of the area and visit the caverns. Year 5 pupils spend a week on a study educational visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne with a focus on science, and in Year 6 the pupils spent a week on an exchange study visit to Dublin and hosted its partner Irish school for a week later in the summer term. The focus for this trip was to compare and contrast the lifestyles of different communities, improving pupils' learning about different cultures. The school is active in seeking additional financial resources for these visits. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have visited places such as Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Haddon Hall, and the youngest pupils have visited a local supermarket which provided them with some of the resources to set up a 'shop' in the classroom. In addition to improving pupils' understanding of the varied settings in which people live, these visits also make a significant contribution to their spiritual, social and cultural development.
16. The school also runs a wide and varied selection of extra-curricular activities such as sailing, cricket and basketball. Some of these clubs are run in partnership with parents, harnessing their additional support and expertise. The school celebrates individual pupils' achievements through the presentation of attractive certificates which are bound as Portfolios of Achievement and are presented to them when they leave the school. The additional opportunities to learn new skills and sports and to have them publicly celebrated have a very positive impact on pupils' self-esteem as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The school provides very good opportunities for spiritual, social and moral education. Consequently, pupils have good attitudes and develop a very good understanding of their own local culture and community.

17. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is very good. The school has strong links to the church and the governors are very keen for these to continue. Currently a pastor comes in to lead assembly every three weeks and his stories and songs elicit an enthusiastic response. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about important spiritual issues. As an example, pupils from Year 2 wrote prayers for Remembrance Sunday and read them at the village war memorial and, in a history lesson, listened sympathetically to a poem about World War 1. Pupils show compassion for others and have raised money for charitable works, led by the school council. Some of their paintings and their residential visits also serve to improve their spiritual understanding.
18. During the inspection the staff were very good role models for their pupils. The school rules are evident and very clear throughout the buildings and the grounds and pupils take care not to litter the playground or other shared areas. Older pupils care for younger ones, and they support and encourage good behaviour. The school awards good behaviour well and pupils appreciate this. Younger pupils are very clear on how to behave. For example, they know, understand and keep the rules about not approaching the beck that runs through the school grounds.
19. Pupils take increasingly more responsibility as they progress through the school. The democratic school council, consisting of four boys and four girls, have their photographs on display around the school so that other pupils know who they are. They look at ways to raise money for things they believe in; for example, the 'Air Ambulance' service. They review the school rules and how well they are being kept and make suggestions for new ones. They discuss school issues and are confident to express their opinions. Older pupils are very keen to do additional 'jobs' around the school. For example, they collect registers, sort out sandwich boxes for each class, mark up

team points, ring the bells at the end of teaching sessions and do photocopying. These activities not only develop their social skills very well, but also raise their self-esteem.

20. Pupils' cultural development is good in terms of their own local culture and satisfactory in learning to understand other cultures. They have a lot of links with the local community; for example, the design and decoration of tiles around the village sign. Each week, senior citizens arrive in school for lunch and eat alongside the pupils. Some also come and read with them. The visits, some of which are residential, give them a better understanding of other geographical areas and the settings in which other people live. Links to a more ethnically diverse society need further development. The school is in an all-white area, and cultural and religious differences are learned about in the religious education curriculum but visits to see different lifestyles such as a visit to a temple, mosque or food shops haven't taken place recently. The headteacher and governors are currently reviewing this provision to see if they can improve it further through, for example, widening the focus of the school's planned residential visits.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in a rate of attendance that is well above average.

21. Parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils arrive on time and slip quickly into the school's routines for the day with the minimum of fuss. The school has high attendance rates, since 1999, compared with other schools and the rate of unauthorised absence is below average. Pupils feel safe in school, knowing that during the school day and at lunchtimes they are cared for.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in writing throughout the school, and standards in mathematics and English overall by Year 6.

22. Standards in writing are too low in by the end of Year 2 because pupils are not doing as well as they do in reading, mathematics and science. This is confirmed through a scrutiny of pupils' work and observations during the inspection. Teachers are taking some action to raise standards. For example, the reception children join with the Year 1 pupils, where appropriate, in learning about phonics and sharing books. They are given a lot of book-based activities using, for example, story sacks to improve their knowledge of how books are used and to re-tell stories in their own words. A scrutiny of work shows obvious improvement over time by Year 2, helped by the positive examples of teacher marking to which pupils respond. For example, the teacher wrote, "Who went with her?" and the pupil responded, "She tuck Josey Jump." However, throughout the school there is a lack of descriptive language of the quality expected for each year group. Samples of independent writing lack descriptive words, even in recounts of well known stories, such as 'Red Riding Hood'. Few in the year group use full stops or capital letters properly to show the beginning and end of sentences. Standards of presentation are below average, even though pupils have the skills to do better. Pupils in Year 2 learn to join their handwriting and they have regular practice in this in handwriting books, which clearly show they can make joins between letters. The majority of the class do not transfer these new skills in other written work and still print their letters.
23. Standards in writing and presentation are below average in Year 6. Pupils have varied styles of handwriting and presentation, but these remain below expectations for too many pupils. Some still do not consistently join their writing. The highest-attaining pupils can set out their work using different formats, for example in poetry, and transfer and edit them using ICT, but they are a small minority. This group of pupils can use descriptive language effectively to paint a picture using words. For example, when writing about the beck that runs through the ground one pupil wrote:
- "The beck flows as dirty as a pig
Gloomy deep, sunlight weaving as little
Waves. The wind whistling like a bird.
Autumn leaves and brown twigs floating on top."*
- And another wrote:
- "The frothy bubbles float downstream in groups.....the bubbles glisten like tiny specks of glass."*
- However, examples of this standard are rare. The quality of the poems written by the rest of the class is below average for this age. Some of their use of language is trite and focuses on making simple rhymes, for example when describing a snake, *"A sweet hiss, like its giving you a kiss."* A scrutiny of work revealed that the lowest-attaining pupils in Year 6 still make simple spelling mistakes such as 'hur' for 'her', and 'stris' for 'stories.' They also make fundamental grammatical mistakes such as 'they was.' Their attainment is well below expectations for their age. The middle-attaining group still have erratic spelling skills and untidy presentation and do not use speech marks or tenses correctly even though these are specific targets for them. The quality of language they use is livelier but they are not working at the level expected for their age, either in reading or in writing. The small group of higher-attaining pupils are working at an expected level for their age but no higher. They summarise stories well, and answer questions on the texts they have read correctly. They use speech marks, capital letters, and ellipses correctly and structure interesting sentences. They have learned to use personification in their writing; for example, when writing about a plane one pupil wrote, "I'm a giant of the air.....my arms outstretched wide."
24. A scrutiny of work in Year 6 showed that pupils have not had enough practice in solving mathematical problems or doing investigations. Most of the work pupils complete is pitched at Level 4, which is the average standard expected for their age, but the higher, middle and lower-attaining pupils do the same work; not enough work has been planned to extend the learning of the highest-attaining pupils. The lower-attaining pupils succeed in their work with adult support, but those capable of higher attainment do not attain higher standards. Marking focuses mainly on presentation rather than why pupils have not understood work or what they have to learn next. In the lesson seen during the inspection, there was a lot of practical activity and some investigative

work, which all the class enjoyed, and different tasks were set for different groups of pupils. All pupils succeeded in their tasks.

25. The oldest pupils have suffered several changes of teacher over their time in Years 3 to 6. Some teachers moved from the school within an academic year. Other teachers have had extensive absences through illness over the last three years. This has had a negative impact on pupils' learning, a concern voiced at the parents' meeting before the inspection began. To counteract this disruption as much as possible, the headteacher has either taught the class himself or brought in supply teachers. This has had variable success. Some supply staff have not marked pupils' work well and the subject matter of their written work is not always appropriate for the age of the pupils. Presentation of work is variable, ranging from good to unacceptable. Monitoring of planning and work needs to be more focused and have more impact than at present for this class. It is planned to appoint a new permanent member of staff this academic year.
26. The school has rightly identified the ways in which they can raise standards in both English and mathematics in the school improvement plan. One strategy focuses very clearly on improved assessment by staff and pupils of what pupils know and can do and what they need to learn next. Teachers have these assessments in files and are keeping them up-to-date. Already, in Years 3 and 4 there is a measurable and documented improvement in standards. Also, the plan describes how visits to Beacon schools will be used to observe best practice in teaching plus the use of literacy and numeracy consultants from the local education authority to guide teachers in their work. Another feature of the planned improvements is to make pupils and parents more aware of the expected levels of attainment through displaying work at different National Curriculum levels and highlighting the differences in content and style.

School improvement planning over a longer period of time, ensuring that the school critically evaluates what has been achieved, and plans more effectively for the future.

27. The school improvement plan clearly outlines the improvements planned for raising standards, the development of ICT, the Foundation Stage and the buildings. It outlines what steps will be taken and who will be responsible for each development. It says how each action will be monitored and when, plus how much it will cost. This amount of information is good for the current year but the plan does not evaluate what has already happened and how successful it has been, nor does it contain enough information on what is planned for the future. Therefore, as a strategic long-term plan it is too limited.
28. The development of co-ordinator roles, through their monitoring of standards of attainment and teaching throughout the school, is clear. The planned impact of visits to Beacon Schools is also plain, plus how staff training needs will be identified in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning further. The plan mentions in one sentence that a new staff team will be built but gives no information as to how, when or why this will happen. There is no information on how the headteacher will undertake his own professional development or develop a wider national view of school improvement. This is an important omission as he will be leading the school in its next stage of development.

More opportunities could be provided for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers.

29. Results from the parents' questionnaire and comments from parents, both at the parents' meeting and during the inspection, show concern about the quality and quantity of information available for parents on their children's attainment and progress. The inspection team agrees with this view.
30. The school holds one parents' evening in the autumn term and gives a written report to parents on their children's progress in the spring term. There is no meeting near the end of the summer term to discuss progress by the end of the school year. The school has an 'open door' policy and parents find teachers and the headteacher very approachable. They are comfortable discussing any problems they have with them. However, this places the responsibility of finding out what their

children know and can do firmly on the shoulders of parents, who complain that unless they are told if something is wrong, they can't do much about it.

31. The written reports give good information about what pupils know and can do, plus what they have to learn next to improve their skills, in English, mathematics and science. They also give information about the topics to be studied the following term. The information about attainment and progress in other subjects (known as the foundation subjects) is scant and does not meet requirements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- a. Raise standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 and in writing in Year 2 by:
 - Raising pupils' and parents' awareness of the expected levels of attainment for each year group.*
 - Using the expertise of literacy and numeracy consultants and staff in Beacon schools to agree on levelling standards in writing and how to teach more use of descriptive language.*
 - Increasing the number of times that staff meet with the purpose of comparing and levelling standards of writing.*
 - improving pupils' presentation skills through raising expectations of handwriting throughout the school, insisting that skills learned in handwriting are applied in all written work.*
 - Improving marking in Years 5 and 6.*
 - Increasing opportunities for problem-solving tasks and investigations in mathematics in Years 5 and 6.*
 - Planning different mathematical tasks for groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6, particularly for the higher-attainers.*
 - making more focused interventions when standards are not being maintained, particularly where pupils are taught by supply staff, to include the setting of regular homework at these times.
 - stabilising the staffing situation in Years 5 and 6.

** The school has already identified these actions in the school improvement plan.*
(Paragraphs 23-30)

- b. Extend the school improvement plan, so that completed actions are more critically evaluated and future actions are identified. The plan should extend for more than one year and include planned opportunities for the professional development of the headteacher.
(Paragraphs 31-32)

- c. Improve the quality of information to parents by:
 - revising the format of the annual written pupils' reports to parents to include comments on pupils' attainment and learning in each foundation subject.
 - Increasing the number of occasions where parents are invited into school to discuss their children's attainment and progress.
(Paragraphs 33-35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	9	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	15	70	15	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 seven percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll		YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs		YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		17

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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

As there are 10 or less boys and 10 or less girls in these cohorts for Key Stages 1 and 2,, the number of girls and boys is not included in the following tables.

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	10	3	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (85)	77 (69)	85 (77)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (69)	85 (77)	85 (77)
	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	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	8	7	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (67)	64 (89)	100 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (75)	82 (89)	100 (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	83	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	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)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	307,105
Total expenditure	289,834
Expenditure per pupil	3,083
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2,368
Balance carried forward to next year	14,903

Recruitment of teachers

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

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

83

Number of questionnaires returned

27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	0	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	30	0	4	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	41	7	7	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	26	15	4	7
The teaching is good.	63	22	0	0	14
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	33	26	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	37	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	19	15	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	33	4	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	33	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	37	0	4	0