

INSPECTION REPORT

Kirk Merrington Primary School

Kirk Merrington, Spennymoor

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114074

Headteacher: Mr M. Blocki

Reporting inspector: Mr P. M. Allen
OIN 17531

Dates of inspection: 8th – 9th May 2001

Inspection number: 194266

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	South View, Kirk Merrington Spennymoor Co. Durham
Postcode:	DL16 7JB
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E. Foster
Date of previous inspection:	10 th February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kirk Merrington Primary School is a small rural primary school catering for children aged four to eleven years. The school is situated in the west of County Durham. Of the 80 children on roll, most live in the village, the remainder being from neighbouring communities. There are a similar number of boys and girls. There are three classes, one for Reception and Key Stage 1, one for a very small number of older Key Stage 1 pupils and younger Key Stage 2 pupils and the third for the oldest pupils in the school. All the children are of white ethnic origin. There are eight pupils on the register for special educational needs, this being below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Virtually all the children have had pre-school education, most in the playgroup opposite the school. Overall, attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with what could be expected. The school seeks to create a happy, caring environment in which each child feels confident and secure. The school has set priorities for the future including the further improvement of work in writing and in information and communication technology.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with many strengths. The quality of education is well supported by the school's caring, community ethos. The pupils have very positive attitudes to the work and most achieve well. Standards in tests have mainly been high in recent years. The quality of teaching is good overall. The staff are very committed to the school and the headteacher is providing positive leadership. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ The good and very good quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is bringing about the high standards at the end of the key stage, especially in science.
- ◆ The school is significantly raising standards in written work at Key Stage 2.
- ◆ There are very good procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress.
- ◆ The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development contribute well to the quality of education.
- ◆ The school's links with the parents and the community have a positive effect on children's learning.

What could be improved

- ◆ The provision and standards in information and communication technology.
- ◆ The curriculum for Reception children, so that it more clearly supports the Early Learning Goals.
- ◆ The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has shown a steady improvement since its last inspection in February 1997. The issues from that report have been addressed. Success criteria are now included in the school development plan to indicate how targets contribute to pupils' attainment and how

improvements are measured. The quality of pupils' handwriting has improved significantly. There are now much better opportunities for pupils to write at length; much of this development has taken place recently, giving rise to improvement. Since the previous inspection, standards in the core subjects have gradually risen, planning and assessing of work has improved, the provision for homework is better and the accommodation has been improved. The staff have a shared will and capacity to maintain and build upon the standards of education provided.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	C	C	C
Mathematics	A	B	A	A
Science	A*	A	A*	A*

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

Children at the Foundation Stage (Reception year) attain well and are in line to reach the new nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals; a significant minority are likely to exceed them. Although each year group of children is relatively small, the results over recent years have been broadly consistent year by year. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are good in writing and very good in reading and mathematics. Standards in written work have shown good improvement during the current year. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are very good in English and mathematics and excellent in science. The standards in English are not reflected in the recent test results because standards are now higher than they were previously, especially in written work. Standards in science are reflected in the results over recent years, such as last year when the grades achieved put the school in the highest five per cent of all primary schools in England. The results, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, are very creditable. Standards in information and communication technology are sound across the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils show a lot of enthusiasm for school and have very positive attitudes towards their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very good both inside and outside school and this contributes to the harmonious, community spirit.
Personal development and relationships	The provision for personal development is very good, underpinned as it is by the very good relationships between the adults and the pupils.

Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with national averages. The school works closely with parents to ensure there are no unauthorised absences.
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The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development contribute to the quality of education provided.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	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 quality of the relatively small amount of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall. It was very good in 21 per cent of the lessons seen, good in 50 per cent and satisfactory in all the remainder. The good and very good teaching seen at Key Stage 2 brings about the very good standards at the end of that key stage. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught, especially given the difficulties in teaching the national strategies to split age classes. The needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are generally met, although there is a need for the teaching of the youngest children to be more closely focused on the new Early Learning Goals.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although the curriculum is broad and balanced, the main priority for the school is to continue to significantly develop its information and communication technology curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides mainly good support for pupils with special educational needs, although the targets in the individual education plans are insufficiently focused and provide too little detail.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in social and moral development. This has a very positive impact on the quality of education provided.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school ensures the health, safety, care and protection of all its pupils within its caring, community ethos. The school shows a good commitment to educational inclusion.

The school's links with parents are a strength of the school. There are very good procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, well supported by the governing body, is providing positive and caring leadership. There is a team approach where everyone's contribution is valued.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is keen and very supportive of the staff and the school, with a will to continue to develop its roles and responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has made a positive start to self-evaluation but there is a need to develop ways of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes prudent use of its resources; the surplus income is being reduced through expenditure on an increase in staffing for special educational needs teaching and for the Reception children at the Foundation Stage.

The school's strategic planning beyond the current year, as identified in the school development plan, is not providing sufficiently clear and detailed direction. Good use is usually made of time, although the headteacher's teaching time could be better structured to provide support for groups of pupils, especially in the literacy and numeracy lessons. Spending is carefully linked to the school's priorities and appropriate consideration is given to the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The children like school, are expected to work hard and are making good progress. ◆ The standards of behaviour. ◆ The way the school helps children to become responsible. ◆ The school is approachable and works closely with parents. ◆ The quality of teaching. ◆ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There were no areas of concern.

All the views expressed by parents, mainly at the meeting, were very supportive of the school. One parent summed up the views of many when she said, 'It's a really lovely little school.' Inspectors support the parents' positive perceptions of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The good and very good quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is bringing about the high standards at the end of the key stage, especially in science

1. Standards have gradually risen over recent years and the pattern of attainment at the end of both key stages has not been significantly affected by the relatively small number of pupils in each year group. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are currently very good in English and mathematics and excellent in science. This reflects the pattern of attainment over recent years in mathematics and science but less so in English where standards have risen significantly over the last year, especially in writing.
2. National performance data indicates that, taking the three years from 1998 to 2000 together, the performance of pupils in English exceeded the national average for their age group. The pupils' performance over the same period exceeded the national average significantly in mathematics and very significantly in science. The grades achieved in science in the 2000 tests put the school in the highest five per cent of all primary schools in England; this was also the case in 1997 and 1998 and is very likely to be so in the forthcoming 2001 assessments.
3. Assessments undertaken shortly after the pupils have started school indicate that attainment on entry is broadly in line with what could be expected. The pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and this progress is maintained and enhanced throughout Key Stage 2. During the short duration of the inspection it was possible to observe only a relatively small number of lessons, mainly in literacy and numeracy, but including one in science. A strong feature of the teaching is the way in which teachers plan the work with care and in detail to meet the needs of the pupils, given the very wide range of age and ability in each of the three classes.
4. In the good quality teaching there are very high expectations that the pupils will listen attentively, behave very well and work productively and carefully. This was the case in a good literacy hour with the older pupils. The lesson started with a clear review of previous work on persuasive writing. Effective use was made of the text 'Riches of the Rainforest' which offered pupils opportunities to talk about conservation issues; the pupils showed a good understanding of why the writer likened the rainforest to 'a chemist's counter'. 'Well done everybody,' said the teacher at the end of that section of the lesson which then moved on at a good pace, fully engaging the attention of the pupils. The teacher consistently signalled high expectations and the pupils responded well. The pupils worked hard at their tasks, well supported by the teacher who moved around the groups intervening and offering support and encouragement.
5. The staff are enthusiastic and make good use of the recently acquired commercial mathematics scheme, including the assessment elements. This was apparent in a very good numeracy lesson with the younger Key Stage 2 pupils. In this lesson there was a high proportion of direct teaching involving questioning, explaining and demonstrating. At the outset the teacher led a brisk oral session on addition, the questions becoming progressively harder with the pupils showing much enthusiasm to identify the answer with their number fans. 'Show me!' said the teacher and they all did. 'Last one,' said the teacher at the end of that section and the pupils were clearly disappointed. The teacher showed good subject knowledge through very focused questioning. The group work was well organised with no queues of pupils waiting for help. The teacher managed to involve the whole class whilst preparing one specific group for their tasks.

The pupils worked hard and concentrated well, giving of their best. They were sensible and co-operated very well with one another.

6. The very good teaching produces very good learning and a look through the exercise books from September to the time of the inspection gives clear evidence of the good progress being made by all the pupils, including those with special educational needs.

7. It was possible to see only one science lesson during the inspection and that was with the older class on the subject of the human body. The teacher showed very good subject knowledge with very clear explanations; the pupils were very attentive and highly motivated by the discussion. The work focused on each part of the digestive system and the pupils gained new knowledge; at times they were totally engrossed in their learning because the subject matter was made so interesting. In the written work, the pupils were able to consider the amount of energy provided by different foods through a challenging task, representing data in a bar chart.

8. The very good teaching and learning observed in this one lesson gave clear insights into how it is that the pupils attain such excellent standards in science. It gave a clear indication of how the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is bringing about the high standards at the end of the key stage.

The school is significantly raising standards in written work at Key Stage 2

9. The previous report praised the good standards in reading and speaking and listening but identified the need to raise standards in written work. Attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 was judged to be in line with the national average; attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 was judged to be better but the need to develop opportunities for pupils to write at greater length was identified as one of the issues for the school to address.

10. Improvements have been made. At Key Stage 1, in the summer 2000 tests, the performance in writing exceeded the national average. National performance data indicates a similar pattern of attainment in writing since 1997. Although in 2000 all the pupils achieved the appropriate level 2 for writing, none of them achieved the higher level 3. The school, intent on raising standards, is addressing this point and the likelihood is that some pupils will achieve the higher level in writing in the Key Stage 1 assessments for summer 2001. This will represent an improvement on previous years, although there is scope to continue this improvement.

11. Standards of written work have risen significantly at Key Stage 2. In the 2000 tests, whilst results were high in mathematics and excellent in science, in English they were only in line with the national average and with the average for similar schools, with a low number of the higher level 5 being achieved. This pattern of lower attainment in English is apparent in recent times. National performance data indicates that, taking the three years from 1998 to 2000 together, whilst the performance of pupils in English exceeded the national average for their age group, it exceeded the national average significantly in mathematics and very significantly in science. The school has recognised very clearly that it is the writing element of English which needs improving and that is the area which has been targeted, most significantly during the last year.

12. The teachers at Key Stage 2 have, this year, introduced a structured, timetabled approach to extended writing involving a good variety of tasks for various audiences and purposes. This has captured the imagination of many of the pupils who clearly aspire to improve and develop their work. Examples of tasks evidenced in books include book reviews, such as very good quality ones on Laura Star's 'The Mystery Island' undertaken by pupils in Years 3 and

4. Other examples include writing a newsletter about a school trip, a diary about 'The Plague', a fable, a 'cautionary tale', and a traditional story. Letters have been composed and imaginative creative stories have been written, such as ones on 'If a picture could speak' and 'Beyond the bookcase'.

13. The pupils are given very specific, helpful guidance, together with the criteria for the appropriate various National Curriculum levels between level 3 to level 5, for writing a non-fiction and a narrative text. This gives the pupils very tangible help and insights into what they need to do to improve their work. The pupils are well supported when undertaking the writing tasks and the high expectations lead to good quality presentation of work. Each piece of work is given a level, which is shared with the pupils, together with detailed quality marking, including very clear targets to bring further improvement. The enthusiasm of the teachers rubs off on the pupils who learn to plot a sequence of episodes as a plan for writing and to focus carefully on language to create particular effects.

14. The work in exercise books gives clear evidence of the very good provision being made. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in the writing element of English are clearly higher than previously. Standards in English at the end of the key stage are now very good and above national averages. This is likely to be reflected in the 2001 test results, when all pupils are well placed to reach the appropriate level 4 with a half or over likely to reach the higher level 5. It is to the credit of the school that the target to raise standards in written work is being met, with plans for further development in this important area of the curriculum.

There are very good procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress

15. The school has built upon the good assessment procedures identified in the previous report and these are now very good. The school has made a good improvement in the way pupils' writing is assessed and their progress monitored. Significant features of the assessment procedures are the consistency across school and how staff work together to ensure they have a clear view of pupils' achievements. Assessment procedures have had a positive impact on the high standards of attainment.

16. Teachers' detailed planning is of a good standard and builds upon clear evaluations of pupils' progress through the very good systems to monitor their attainments. The impact of the planning and assessing of pupils' progress helps them to achieve well. Effective use is made of the assessment components within the nationally prescribed schemes of work to help the school assess pupils' work in terms of specific learning outcomes. Staff make good use of a commercial mathematics scheme which supports the National Numeracy Strategy. Good use is also made of the associated assessment materials, information from which is used to inform future planning and highlight any areas that need to be revisited.

17. Writing activities completed by Key Stage 2 pupils are assessed regularly and these are recorded in the pupils' individual assessment books to show clearly the progress being made. Guidelines for the various types of writing and corresponding National Curriculum levels are attached to the books. Each piece of writing is marked and given a National Curriculum level and pupils receive feedback about their work. Marking is effective with constructive criticism and indicates how the work can be improved.

18. Pupils use the guidelines well and this ensures they understand the marking and how they can improve their work and achieve a higher level. This is very good practice because it enables pupils to develop a greater awareness of their own learning. It also encourages positive

attitudes to work and some pupils say that because they know how to improve it, they want to work even harder. Assessment materials provided by the local education authority are used well to assess the work of the younger pupils.

19. There is very good analysis of pupils' performance in national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 and of the optional national tests at Years 3, 4 and 5. The analysis enables the school to look at areas of the curriculum where teaching or learning may need to be improved. The local education authority provides detailed information showing how pupils have progressed during the time they have spent at the school. The information shows pupils are achieving very well. Staff make good use of all assessment information collected in order to set realistic targets for the future.

20. At the end of the year a summative record of assessments in all subjects is produced for each child which very clearly shows the achievements and the progress made. The school is well placed to maintain the present high standards of assessment.

The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development contribute well to the quality of education

21. All staff have the same high expectations of pupils' attitudes, work and behaviour and this results in a very pleasant and well ordered community in which learning is well supported. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and are proud of their achievements. Lessons are made enjoyable and teachers plan experiences to make learning challenging and exciting. The pupils respond to this with enthusiasm and their determination to work hard is usually evident. This plays an important part in the progress they make. The positive attitudes to learning are strongly supported by parents and the community and are significant factors in the school's success.

22. As soon as the children enter school in the morning, they quickly settle to tasks with very little prompting. Pupils are highly motivated by the mental problem solving activities in numeracy lessons. Teachers extend and challenge the pupils with quick-fire questions and they respond well to this. The Key Stage 2 pupils confidently explain their different methods of working out the correct answers.

23. Pupils of all ages are keen to express their opinions and contribute to discussion sensibly. In a religious education lesson, pupils eagerly shared their views about the qualities of a good leader. Key Stage 1 pupils are interested in books and enjoy reading together in class. During a literacy lesson, they showed great interest in finding out about how Dick King-Smith begins to write his books. They expressed great delight when the teacher showed a range of his books and many recognised the front covers as their favourite books that they read at home. The teacher encouraged them to bring these books from home to share with the class.

24. The very good provision for pupils' social development arises from the many and varied opportunities provided by the school. It is a strong feature of the school that is effectively enhanced in everyday interactions between pupils and adults. Relationships throughout the school are of a high standard helping to achieve a positive work ethos in which pupils collaborate and learn well. Pupils give good support and encouragement to

each other and show very good levels of co-operation in group and class activities; for example, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics activity, pupils worked well together to sort out some confusions arising from the use of a calculator.

25. Pupils of different ages mix well together in class and older pupils set good role models both in their behaviour and attitudes to work. There is a good sense of community amongst pupils and adults, with everyone showing regard and respect for each other. Pupils are friendly and polite and, without a second thought, stand aside and hold doors open for adults. They like showing their school and its work to visitors. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions and older pupils are supportive of the younger ones; children talk companionably whilst eating and obviously enjoy each other's company.

26. Pupils like to be helpful and readily volunteer to carry out duties around the school such as tidying the classrooms, litter picking and taking messages. Older pupils are rightly given a good range of more responsible duties, such as setting up the hall for assemblies and running the school bank. Good opportunity is given for the pupils to gain independence in organising when they will complete their homework tasks.

27. Children are encouraged to think about the environment and have a good understanding about conservation issues such as what makes rainforests special and why they should be conserved. Good social relationships are fostered in the organisation of frequent visits to places of historical and cultural interest. The school has a particularly good programme of residential visits for pupils from Year 4 upwards which gives pupils the opportunity to learn about living and co-operating together in a community setting way from home.

28. Staff encourage pupils to take part in sporting activities with other schools. In the special games for the Millennium, the school hockey team was chosen to represent Sedgefield Borough and came runners up. Older pupils attend the 'Safety Carousel', a course which gives them the knowledge to adopt a healthy lifestyle and teaches them how to cope in emergency situations. All the various experiences offered, promote the pupils' personal development which contributes well to the quality of education.

The school's links with the parents and the community have a positive effect on children's learning

29. The aims of the school are reflected in its everyday life and make a strong contribution in creating a caring, friendly environment where everyone is valued. The strong community spirit is built upon an effective partnership between the school, the home and the wider community. Parents, governors, staff and pupils have worked hard towards creating a feeling of community and are rightly proud of their school and its successes.

30. Parents are interested in the school and are supportive of their children. The school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of parents, who consistently express a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of provision. Their views show a great deal of good will towards the school. There are a number of enthusiastic parents and volunteers from the community who regularly help in the classrooms. They are well deployed and their contributions have a positive effect on the standards achieved by the pupils.

31. Parents accompany pupils on educational visits, help run extra-curricular activities and assist in organising sports days and school performances. Their help is highly valued and appreciated. There is a thriving Friends of the School Association, which organises a good range of social and fund-raising events. The events are very well supported by parents and members of the community and successfully raise substantial amounts of money for school funds. Local businesses make a good contribution by providing prizes for raffles and competitions.

32. Parents are keen to support their children when work is sent home and this reinforces the importance of learning. They are happy to read with their children and help them learn spellings and tables. They have positive views about the homework provided both in the amount and type given and appreciate the way the amount set gradually increases so that it prepares children well for secondary school. Parents appreciate the clear communication between home and school and feel staff are very approachable. Consultation evenings are very well attended and parents feel well informed about how their child is progressing. All these important links have a positive effect on pupils' learning and the quality of education provided.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision and standards in information and communication technology

33. The staff show very clear recognition that information and communication technology is the major area for improvement. The raising of attainment in this subject is a significant educational priority and target and this is reflected in its prominence in the school development plan. A timetable of necessary action makes clear the plans to improve hardware and software resources, to give pupils access to the internet and school network, to develop software support across all curricular areas and, importantly, to improve teacher knowledge through training. A good start has been made but much remains to be done.

34. By autumn, the school hopes to have sufficient computers and programs to develop skills more effectively. At the time of the inspection there was a recently created small computer area in the entrance corridor, with three work stations where adult volunteers were beginning to provide useful support to individual and small groups of pupils. Further computers will be installed in the hall and classrooms, bringing the number up from six to 11. This will provide a good pupil to computer ratio. The extra provision can help to better support the teaching of the appropriate skills and give more opportunities for pupils to practise those skills. Information and communication technology skills are at present insufficiently developed across the curriculum, although good use is being made of software which supports the new mathematics scheme.

35. Training is beginning to have an impact on staff confidence and make teachers more aware of what the pupils can achieve. The staff have recently attended training at a local high school (with Technology Status) as part of a primary partnership for information and communication technology. The school's participation in the National Grid for Learning can develop staff competencies further.

36. The recent resource limitations have impacted upon both the progress pupils make and their access to activities to reach the higher levels in information and communication technology. The school is well aware of the recent deficiencies and the importance of raising attainment in this subject. The staff accept that it is only now that the pupils are able to receive their full entitlement to the programmes of study of the National Curriculum.

37. The work is being led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has valued the recent 18 hours support time from the local education authority's information and communication technology support teacher. The co-ordinator has created a new policy; this includes long term planning based on the nationally prescribed scheme of work that identifies the skills to be taught and how they can be used across the curriculum.

38. Much of the progress in this area is recent and is being aided by the improvement in resources. The planned developments, the shared commitment of the staff and the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator all place the school in a good position to continue improving the information and communication technology curriculum with the aim of raising standards in this very important area.

The curriculum for Reception children so that it more clearly supports the Early Learning Goals

39. The new national Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception year (the end of the Foundation Stage). The new curriculum for these young children prescribes ways of working which involve children learning through structured play and practical experiences. As the Reception children are taught in the same class as Key Stage 1 pupils, this does create some difficulties in providing the youngest children with an appropriate curriculum. Additionally, the situation is not helped by the space available in the classroom which makes it difficult to give good access to sand, water and large scale equipment.

40. The children in the Reception year make a very positive start to their schooling. They benefit from the hard work of the teacher and the nursery nurse who works for half the week. A lot of thought goes into planning the work and there are good procedures for assessing and monitoring. Staff are warm and caring and value the children as individuals. The supportive relationships enable the children to feel secure and happy during their introduction to school life. The work planned for the children provides a solid base for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum but needs to take more account of the new learning goals.

41. Children in Reception are taught alongside the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Much of the work currently undertaken is more geared towards the needs of the older pupils; for example, in science, geography and art and design. Sometimes the work is too structured and advanced for a number of the Reception children. The staff need to further their knowledge and understanding of the Early Learning Goals and to take more account of them in planning the curriculum. This can partly be achieved through the forthcoming participation in in-service training. The development of a policy for the Foundation Stage curriculum could provide a useful start to this.

42. There are times, especially when there is no nursery nurse support, when the children are required to sit for too long at one time, with insufficient involvement in their learning. The work for the younger children can benefit being undertaken in shorter, more focused time allocations. This happens some of the time when, appropriately, the nursery nurse focuses on the Reception children, often in the hall adjacent to the classroom.

43. More opportunities can be developed for the nursery nurse to work discretely with these children at the start of the new school year in September when the nursery nurse's hours will be extended so that she is working full time. This is an appropriate development and one that can help the school to better meet the children's needs with a number of advantages. For example, this can enable the children to have experience of supervised outside play, an area which does not currently fit into the provision. The Reception children need more opportunities to explore, investigate, discuss, create, practise and consolidate

their developing knowledge, skills and understanding. They need to increase their creative and physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world at a level more appropriate to their levels of development.

44. With the exception of resources for the physical area of development, the classroom is adequately resourced but more use needs to be made of the available resources. Children need more opportunities to be actively involved in practical and creative activities which include some choice and decision making by them. This can give more of a balance between formal adult-led activities and time spent in having opportunities to learn through structured activities which support the goals which have been identified.

45. The classroom setting is an attractive, secure place to be and the teaching and learning have many good features. The good features in place can be built upon to provide a richer and more varied curriculum for the Reception children, adding to the quality of education provided. The success in this will involve a review of the curriculum as well as making good use of the many skills of the nursery nurse; this can enable the curriculum for the Reception children to more clearly support the Early Learning Goals.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning

46. The staff are mindful of the need for school self-evaluation. Although a published system of self-review has been introduced which involves all staff, including the headteacher, using a tick list to appraise performance, this is insufficiently rigorous, leading to little development. The staff do review and appraise the planning and assessing of their work and, through review, have significantly adapted the national literacy and numeracy strategies to meet the needs of the pupils who are taught in classes with a wide range of age and ability.

47. The whole school approaches to planning, assessing and recording contribute to the monitoring and evaluation process. The school very effectively analyses performance information using local and national performance data. This has helped to inform the school's target to increase the number of pupils attaining level 3 at Key Stage 1 and the number attaining level 5 at Key Stage 2, especially in the area of writing where the school's targets are likely to be met. Records are kept of assessments made on entry, optional and end of Key Stage 1 national test results, together with detailed assessments which concentrate on the core subjects. Good use is made of the data to monitor individual pupil performance, leading to both individual and year group targets.

48. The area for development for the school is to formally monitor teaching and learning. Whilst the teaching observed during the inspection was very creditable, being good overall, there was some variation in the quality between that which was judged to be satisfactory and that which was judged to be very good. The school aspires to benefit all its pupils with consistently high quality teaching which promotes consistently high quality learning.

49. Some informal monitoring of teaching undertaken by the headteacher has been introduced. The particular problem for this school is that it is difficult to make use of rigorous, objective monitoring, when each of the staff members has been established in the school for a long period. Rigour in monitoring could be better achieved by enlisting support in this process, possibly from the local education authority.

50. Focused monitoring of teaching and learning can provide targets for improvement, targets which are monitored and reviewed. This can enhance teacher performance and have a

positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. This could help make the quality of education provided by this good school even better.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

In order to build on the school's many strengths and the quality of education provided and to further raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ improve the provision and standards in information and communication technology as identified in the school development plan by:
 - *continuing to build up staff confidence through training;*
 - *ensuring the maximum use of computers;*
 - *providing greater access to all the programmes of study;*
 - *extending the range of software to support learning across the curriculum;*

- ◆ broaden the curriculum for Reception children by:
 - *ensuring that it takes more account of the Early Learning Goals;*
 - *developing the role of the nursery nurse to support this work;*
 - *giving children better access to the resources available;*
 - *reviewing and, where necessary, extending the resource provision;*
 - *giving children more opportunities to make choices and take part in practical and creative work;*

- ◆ develop monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning through the introduction of a formal system for monitoring which:
 - *involves structured lesson observation;*
 - *provides feedback and target setting;*
 - *enables the review of targets;*
 - *contributes to the professional development of the staff.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	50	29	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

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	8

English as an additional language

Number of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

Number of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	6	10	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	10	10	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	10	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

As the number of boys in Key Stage 1 was less than 10 then their results are not recorded separately as they are for girls.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	6	5	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (82)	100 (82)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (82)	100 (82)	100 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

As the number of boys and girls in Key Stage 2 were both less than 10 then only the school's overall percentage results are reported.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20 : 1
Average class size	23.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	180,554
Total expenditure	183,967
Expenditure per pupil	2,191
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,404
Balance carried forward to next year	9,991

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	35	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	56	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	76	21	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	24	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	35	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	24	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	38	12	0	15