

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Micklefield School

Full Name of the School	Micklefield School
DCSF Number	936/6080
Early Years Number	N/A
Registered Charity Number	312069
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Age Range	3 to 11
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	11th to 14th May 2009

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage were not inspected as part of this inspection.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

1.1 Micklefield School was founded in 1910 and moved to its present location in the Surrey town of Reigate in 1925. The school is located on two sites, the main school site and the nearby playing fields. It has charitable status and is run by a board of governors. Since it first opened it has grown considerably and is fully co-educational. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection in 2003, and a new building (Belton House) was opened in 2006 to accommodate the youngest pupils. Since the last inspection, numbers have fallen slightly because the decision was taken, in September 2008, to discontinue the nursery provision for children under the age of three.

1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 272 pupils on roll. Of these, 128 were boys and 144 were girls. Of the 272, 67 children were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and 71 were in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, there were 134 pupils. All pupils attend on a full-time basis except for those in the youngest classes who can opt to attend part-time.

1.3 The school has identified 40 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and these pupils receive additional help, usually in mathematics or literacy. This is provided either in the classroom, or through small group or individual activities. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. In total, 10 pupils do not have English as their principal language although all are fluent in English.

1.4 Most pupils come from the local area. The majority of pupils' parents are involved in the professions or business sector, and they are generally based in the local area or in London.

1.5 Entry to the school at the age of three is not on a competitive basis but is based on the date of registration. Pupils entering the school at a later stage have an informal assessment session prior to admission. The pupils cover a broad range of ability, though their average ability is above the national average.

1.6 Pupils transfer successfully to a range of senior schools at the age of eleven, with almost all in 2009 gaining entry to their first choice school. Over half of the pupils were awarded scholarships in a variety of areas, notably music and sport, as well as general academic scholarships.

1.7 The school has a series of aims which underpin its ethos. Principally, these are to create a family atmosphere where all pupils are encouraged to develop their potential, whilst becoming confident, independent and responsible members of the school community. The school also wishes to nurture all pupils so that their talents, whether academic, sporting, creative or musical, can be developed and valued. The school also seeks to create an environment where trust and security help the pupils to thrive.

1.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

2.1 The school, including its EYFS section, provides an all-round educational experience of high quality in line with its aims and philosophy. A broad, well-balanced curriculum is in place. Significant improvements and developments have taken place since the last inspection. For example, the establishment of a senior management team and the appointment of curriculum co-ordinators are beginning to have a wide-ranging effect on the quality of the curriculum being offered to the pupils. Throughout the school considerable emphasis is placed on providing pupils with activities that contribute to their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. Consequently, pupils are able to acquire the skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy successfully in a well-planned and structured manner.

2.2 Pupils benefit greatly from the variety and breadth of the educational experience they receive. Curriculum provision is strong. The EYFS curriculum covers the six areas of learning, and also includes specialist teaching in French, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and music. In Years 1 and 2, all subjects of the National Curriculum are followed, together with personal, social and health education (PSHE), French, religious education and a library period. Specialist teachers are increasingly used to teach pupils from Year 3 onwards, with drama replacing dance and a form tutor period being added. ICT and religious education are currently taught for less than is usual for pupils of this age, whilst physical education and games receive in excess of that amount. In the upper part of the school, specialist teachers teach all subjects, with some setting taking place in subjects such as mathematics.

2.3 The educational experience pupils receive contributes effectively to their progress in all areas of learning and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils acquire good analytical, speaking and listening skills in many subjects. All pupils have access to a broad range of sports through physical education and games, and this includes opportunities to represent the school in competitive sport and, outside the school, at national and premier club and league level. Currently, pupils' opportunities in ICT are limited by the present accommodation and resource provision. Consequently, not all subjects can make full use of ICT in their curriculum. However, improvements have been made since the last inspection relating to the timetabling of the subject and the way in which pupils store their work.

2.4 The educational experience pupils have in PSHE closely reflects the aims of the school and adds considerably to the progress they make in all areas of learning. It is enhanced by extra-curricular activities and close links with the community. The particularly strong caring ethos of the school enables all pupils to develop personally and socially as well as academically.

2.5 Given the size of the school, an outstanding variety of clubs and activities is offered that enhance the curriculum and provide for individual interests, as well as enabling new opportunities for pupils. The clubs are open to all and cater for a wide range of abilities and talents. Participation in clubs is optional, although uptake is high. As the pupils progress through the school, a wider choice is offered which parents and pupils appreciate. The educational experience in every year group is considerably enriched by opportunities to participate in visits to places such as the Isle of Wight and Northern France.

2.6 Pupils are well prepared both academically and socially for the next stage of their education. At each stage, pupils are equipped for transfer to the next section of the school, for example from the EYFS to Year 1

and from Year 2 to Year 3. Pupils are also well prepared for their transfer to senior school. Parents are able to meet with the headteacher to discuss the
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of school best suited to their children's needs and abilities. Preparation for entry examinations is also thorough.

2.7 The curriculum is being carefully and effectively developed and planned to extend pupils' skills and knowledge. The schemes of work and related policy documents are outstanding, with attention paid to depth of coverage, resources, and adherence to national and whole-school guidance. Such high quality documentation helps to ensure the progressive and continuous development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school.

2.8 Provision of additional support to pupils with LDD is also of a high quality. Pupils are identified from an early age at their time in the school and, if necessary, individual education plans appropriate to their needs are drawn up. Support in the classroom is good, with a generous allocation of teaching assistants for the class teachers, who plan effectively for each pupil's needs. Individual support is provided for those who require specific help by specialist staff; guidance includes strategies to teach these pupils, both in the classroom and in the learning support rooms. The programme for those pupils identified as being able, gifted and talented is in the very early stages of development, although in lessons these pupils are well catered for through the provision of appropriately tailored work.

2.9 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

2.10 In both their academic and broader education, pupils achieve particularly well. The school therefore meets its aim of encouraging pupils to develop and achieve their potential, as well as nurturing their individual talents. In addition, pupils clearly enjoy their work and apply themselves to it very well. They achieve significant levels of knowledge, skill, and critical and creative understanding in the subjects they are taught, as well as in the activities they pursue outside that taught curriculum. The last inspection found that attainment was good overall at both the ages of seven and eleven, although pupils were not reaching significantly high standards in ICT. Considerable progress has been made since then and high standards are now being achieved generally.

2.11 Pupils achieve very well in all areas of learning by the time they leave the EYFS. This is as a result of good quality teaching that is supported by a very well-planned programme of work. The outcome is that the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are learnt well and understood by these young children. In Years 1 and 2, these skills are built upon successfully. Pupils learn to read and write with increasing confidence and with much enjoyment. They demonstrate a good understanding of number as a result of the firm foundations put in place for their mathematical development. Well-planned lessons and effective teaching mean that pupils' knowledge and understanding are most successfully developed. Their ICT skills develop adequately as they move through Years 1 and 2. Due to the encouragement and support they receive from their teachers, pupils' creativity and imagination are also developing well and they are able to apply these to a range of activities, notably in subjects such as English and art.

2.12 When pupils reach the age of transfer to senior schools, they have well-developed speaking and listening skills relative to their age. They are articulate, and talk with ease and confidence to each other and to adults. They use their mathematical skills very well, particularly in subjects such as science and geography. Good standards are attained by pupils in ICT, and they apply the associated skills appropriately

to most subjects. However, the school recognises that it does not yet ensure the most effective use of ICT in all subjects.

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2.13 By the age of eleven also, pupils' creativity levels are good, particularly in their written and investigative work in subjects such as science, but also in their writing generally. The good standards that are achieved in many subjects reflect the critical and creative skills that are being effectively developed.

2.14 No significant differences are apparent in the relative attainment of different groups of pupils or between boys and girls. Pupils identified as being able, gifted and talented make appropriate progress given their overall ability levels. Similarly, those pupils identified as having LDD, as well as those for whom English is not their first language, achieve at a good level in relation to their abilities and, where applicable, make considerable progress towards attaining their individual education plan targets.

2.15 Pupils do not take externally moderated national tests. Consequently, direct comparisons between their own standards and those of pupils in maintained schools nationally are not possible. However, lesson observations, discussion with pupils, and the scrutiny of their work on display and in their books show that, at the ages of seven and eleven, standards are particularly good in relation to abilities. By the time they leave the school, many pupils have achieved well across most areas of the curriculum. These well above average attainment levels, particularly in English and mathematics, are indicative of the considerable progress that is made by pupils during their time at the school. In 2009, almost all pupils transferred to their first choice senior school with a significant proportion gaining scholarships.

2.16 Given the number of pupils on roll, the school has a significant list of both individual and team achievements in a number of areas. The school is proud of its pupils' performances in music, where many pass nationally recognised examinations in a number of musical activities and instruments. Several also play in local orchestras. Similarly high proportions of pupils gain merits and distinctions in national public speaking examinations; the school also won the Box Hill public speaking competition. Individual achievements include a winner of the Dunottar art award, successes in the Surrey under-11 triathlon team, including the United Kingdom national champion, and those who play football for the Surrey elite squad and as young players for a premiership team. In addition, other individuals play cricket for Surrey, gain awards at local pony clubs' dressage and show jumping competitions, and compete for local swimming clubs. Other whole-school successes include winning the 'Cottesmore Swimathon', and the 'Clean School' golden award. Whilst the school is proud of the successes its teams and individual pupils gain, care is taken to ensure that all have equal access to coaching and tuition, and therefore have the opportunity to compete at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability. Such opportunities also have a significant impact on pupils' personal development.

2.17 Pupils' attitudes to learning and achievement across the school are outstanding. They are friendly and eager to talk about what they are doing, and to share their views on the progress they are making. They look towards the teachers' marking to give them further pointers for improvement and recognise the value of the constructive comments they receive. They listen carefully and are respectful of each other. They are able to express their ideas by using the appropriate language for different subjects. Pupils are excellent learners, study hard and work effectively, both on their own and co-operatively in groups. A particularly good example of individual work leading to group work was during a Year 6 geography lesson, which was organised around a debate utilising arguments prepared for homework on the subject of coastal defences.

2.18 Pupils generally settle quickly in lessons, focusing with interest on the tasks they are given. They are enthusiastic about their learning and persevere, as was seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson when they had realised they had made a mistake and without guidance from the teacher, persisted in trying different methods in order to reach the correct solution. Pupils' concentration levels are very good. Pupils take great pride in their work, and its presentation is particularly good across all years and in many subjects. Good standards of handwriting and sketches complement the well-organised exercise books. The pupils enjoy coming to school and the learning experiences they are offered.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

2.19 The provision made for pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school has made considerable progress in this area since the last inspection. Pupils demonstrate an excellent moral, social and cultural awareness which is evident in the way they conduct themselves throughout the school. Their spiritual development is good. The school's caring ethos and family atmosphere enable it to meet its aims for personal development very successfully, especially with respect to pupils becoming confident, responsible and tolerant members of society. The school creates and promotes an environment in which pupils feel secure and valued, and in which they have a strong sense of moral values and justice in order to be able to develop into considerate members of the community.

2.20 Spiritual awareness is of a good quality. Teachers effectively build up pupils' self-esteem through valuing them as individuals, and their self-worth is celebrated regularly through frequent praise in lessons and publically in assemblies. The pupils showed empathy in several class discussions, most notably in a Year 6 history lesson related to evacuee children during the Second World War, and similarly in a Year 4 geography lesson considering the aftermath of the tsunami in South-East Asia. Circle time further enhances pupils' spiritual development by encouraging them to share any issues of concern and allowing them to improve their empathy skills and understanding of others. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to learn about world faiths other than Christianity and wall displays are used to good effect to promote these.

2.21 The moral development of pupils is outstanding and fosters an excellent sense of right and wrong from a very early age. Pupils respect the values of the school that are well displayed in a 'golden rule' format. The pupils are very well monitored and corrected sensitively should they stray from what is appropriate in their manners or conduct. Consequently, the behaviour of pupils in and around the school, as well as generally in lessons, is exemplary. Pupils are encouraged to take care of the school and accept responsibility. They are given the role of leaders, such as register monitors and librarians, which they carry out most efficiently. Staff provide excellent role models, as do the older pupils; this in turn reinforces the stated aims of the school.

2.22 Pupils are keenly aware of their social responsibilities to the school, and to the local and global community, and think about others as well as themselves. In addition, they are developing a good knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services. An outstanding standard of social development is achieved through the thorough PSHE programme, well-planned assemblies and fund raising activities, and in performing a variety of tasks and jobs to support and enhance the quality of school life. Very good examples of partner work and small group negotiations highlighted the exceptionally high quality of social development. Throughout, pupils are polite, helpful and show pride in their school environment.

2.23 Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities provided for their cultural development and the standard attained is outstanding. They enjoy learning about the cultures of the world and this promotes a harmony and tolerance throughout the school. They contribute to a variety of displays around the school and enjoy multi-cultural events such as Indian Week and Chinese New Year. Many subjects add to the pupils' cultural development, and corporately help to foster their appreciation of the culture of this and other countries.

2.24 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

2.25 Teaching overall is good and frequently outstanding. It effectively supports high achievement and enables all pupils, irrespective of ability, to achieve their potential in line with the aims of the school. This is an improvement on the situation found at the time of the previous inspection.

2.26 In the best practice, teachers expect a lot from their pupils and successfully motivate them to become interested in their work. Many learning opportunities are created to enable pupils to expand their knowledge and understanding of a particular skill or concept. Furthermore, teachers actively encourage their pupils to think and learn for themselves through their particularly good use of questions and tasks that are appropriately set to pupils' different ages and abilities.

2.27 Teachers' considerable enthusiasm and subject knowledge both challenge and motivate the pupils. This was clearly evident in a Year 1 mathematics lesson. The calm but firm and enthusiastic approach of the teacher ensured that all pupils made considerable gains in both their knowledge and understanding of how objects could be sorted into a variety of categories using a Carroll diagram. In addition, the teacher's own subject knowledge enabled her to present what she wanted her pupils to learn in a variety of different ways, in order to help, in particular, those pupils who did not understand the concept immediately.

2.28 Across the school, pupils' behaviour is well managed by teachers. They skilfully provide opportunities for pupils to express themselves in many different ways. Lessons are very well planned and pupils are given a clear understanding as to what they are expected to do as well as what they are required to learn. Effective use is made of the time available and most lessons proceed at a good pace.

2.29 The most successful lessons are also characterised by the way teachers use a range of different activities to both stimulate and motivate their pupils. Such activities include discussions and theoretical or practical work. This is particularly the case in subjects such as science, English, mathematics, and physical education and games, where pupils' learning is increased by the way they are encouraged to work in small groups or in pairs. It was also particularly evident in the Year 6 history lesson on wartime children, where following an excellent introduction from the class teacher using a considerable number of different sources of evidence, pupils discussed initially in pairs the merits or disadvantages of evacuation. The discussion that followed in large groups was of a very high quality and reinforced pupils' knowledge and understanding of life as an evacuee.

2.30 In those few lessons where the quality of teaching does not reach the high standards of the vast majority, it is largely because the pace is slower and consequently, not every pupil is fully challenged. Occasionally, the teachers' introduction is too long and, as a result, some pupils lose concentration.

2.31 In much of the teaching, very good relationships, based largely on mutual respect, exist between teachers and their pupils. Pupils' relationships with their peers are also of a similar quality. As a result, they express their opinions confidently and ably in a most positive manner. Teachers know their pupils well and in the best lessons give sensitive help, particularly to those pupils with LDD or those whose principal language is not English. Pupils' needs are well recognised and appropriately supported.

2.32 Effective use is made by teachers of the school's good quality resources. In addition, the helpful support given by teaching assistants enables pupils to make considerable gains in their learning. Resources are carefully selected by teachers and matched well to what is being taught. The well-stocked libraries and teaching rooms have considerable book supplies and other resources that are also well used to support pupils' learning.

2.33 Particularly good systems and strategies are in place to assess and record pupils' progress and attainment across the school. A range of standardised tests, starting in the EYFS, is used to assess attainment against national criteria including, for older pupils, verbal and non-verbal reasoning, and dyslexia screening assessments. From Year 3 onwards, further standardised tests and teacher assessments are conducted and inform teachers of the next steps in learning for their pupils. A recently introduced computerised monitoring and reporting system is being developed to collate assessment information, and to assist in internal planning and reporting to parents.

2.34 Results of standardised tests are also used to monitor attainment and to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, particularly those who might require additional help and support, who are able, gifted and talented, or those who are under-achieving. On-going refinement and development of the monitoring of pupils' progress regularly take place. All staff are involved in the development of the system for the benefit of pupils and have received training in the use of assessment data. This data is now also being used to review their planning and schemes of work, and to meet individuals' needs.

2.35 A comprehensive whole-school marking policy has recently been introduced which is clear and constructive, and offers praise and advice for improvement. This policy is well used in practice and is closely adhered to by staff in general. One or two anomalies occur. The school is aware of these and is putting in place appropriate strategies to resolve them.

2.36 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

3.1 The school provides outstanding pastoral care for its pupils, including those in the EYFS. It is successful in ensuring the welfare, health and safety of all pupils. Consequently it achieves its aim of making each person in the school community feel valued and respected. The very good standards found at the time of the last inspection have been improved upon. The school provides a most caring and safe environment. As a result pupils feel safe, and are happy and confident.

3.2 Outstanding systems are in place to ensure the best care possible. The headteacher and deputy headteacher operate an open-door policy. Supported by their staff, they have a considerable awareness of all issues and any concerns. Both pride themselves on their knowledge of the issues faced by all within the Micklefield community whilst empowering staff and pupils to take responsibility for the feelings of others. Pupils in Year 5 for example, said they were comfortable at being able to share their worries with all members of staff. They understood that whatever they said would be treated appropriately. The same pupils proudly discussed the community identity and the positives of feeling part of one large family. Such a response was commonly heard from pupils in all year groups.

3.3 All pupils are valued for their individual talents that are openly celebrated. Those with specific difficulties are appropriately identified and helped, and pupils themselves are supportive of each other across the whole school. In Year 2, pupils are given the opportunity to formally apply to be a 'red cap', a playtime helper. As part of their application, they have to consider the attributes they would bring to the position and how they could be of assistance to the other pupils in the lower part of the school. The recent implementation of a new scheme of work for PSHE has resulted in the comprehensive development of pupils' personal, social and health education. A recently introduced published programme in this area also enables pupils in Years 3 to 6 to understand how to take responsibility for others in the school, such as leading them in assemblies and circle time. Responsibility and team identity are engendered through the house system, and across the school, many positions of authority are awarded to older pupils who are guided towards developing the required attributes. Positions of responsibility now change termly in order to allow more pupils to have these opportunities.

3.4 Comprehensive anti-bullying and behaviour policies are in place. These are effective. The pupils are well aware of what to do if they are worried, and are sure that bullying is dealt with appropriately; this is constantly reinforced through circle time and PSHE lessons. Pupils understand what is expected of them through the 'golden rules'; they passionately discuss this code of conduct without any need for reference to a written list. Pupils also value the house point system that spans every aspect of the school, and look towards the reward certificates and presentations they are given as recognition of their many talents.

3.5 Outstanding measures to safeguard and promote pupils' health and well-being are secure and firmly established. Visits from the 'life bus' have enabled greater practical knowledge of the human body and how healthy living can have a positive influence. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthy snacks at playtime; a group of Year 2 pupils was observed intelligently discussing the various options available on the daily menu, relating these choices to a balanced and healthy lifestyle through the food they enjoyed the most.

3.6 Child protection measures are in place and are effective. Training in this area forms part of the school's in-service training programme. Staff are all checked and cleared to an enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau. Pupils are well supervised at break and lunch times. Sufficient staff are qualified first aiders and first aid equipment is readily available. The administration of medicines is tightly controlled and appropriate records are kept. Suitable arrangements are in place for pupils who are taken ill. Attendance and admission registers are completed accurately. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce risk from fire. Fire practices are held regularly and recorded. Any potential hazards are flagged by clear signs, and indicate safe and unrestricted exit in the event of an emergency.

3.7 Health and safety policies are comprehensive, and regular committee meetings involving governors are held to ensure that all is in order. Risk assessments are undertaken in all areas of the school on an annual basis and a clear policy is in place for the management of risk. The quality of food is satisfactory, with an appropriate menu being available. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and to take sufficient exercise.

3.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

3.9 The school has a most effective partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the wider community. Such high quality links enable the school to fulfil its aims well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when links with parents and the community were found to be good. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed a high degree of satisfaction with the teaching their children receive, the curriculum, the progress made by their children, and the attitudes and values instilled by the school. The help and guidance given to pupils and the high standards of behaviour expected were equally valued.

3.10 The main areas of concern raised by parents related to homework, the provision for pupils with LDD, and the number and range of extra-curricular activities. Some parents felt that too much homework is set, and some too little. The inspection team found that the amount of homework set is suitable for the age and abilities of the pupils. Help of a high quality is provided for those pupils with LDD, either within the classroom or through individual lessons with learning support teachers. Inspectors judged that the school provides an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, in subjects as varied as athletics and touch typing. They also found that all concerns raised by parents are handled with due care.

3.11 Some parents felt that the opportunities for them to become involved in the life of the school are insufficient. However, inspectors found that the school provides many opportunities for parents to be involved. For example, The Friends of Micklefield organise a range of successful events for both parents and pupils; volunteers are always welcome to join the committee. Parents help in a variety of ways, for instance with transport to matches and similar events. Similarly, the Family Book Club for Years 5 and 6 involves pupils, parents and other members of the family in reading and discussing a wide range of children's literature. In addition, each class has two parent representatives who have regular meetings with the headteacher.

3.12 Prospective parents are sent an attractive and informative school prospectus. For some, their first contact with the school comes when they join the Mothers and Toddlers Group which meets in the school several times a week.

3.13 A parents' notice board inside the school, a useful website and a regular newsletter, the *Micklefield Messenger*, ensure that all parents have up-to-date information about school activities.

3.14 The school provides parents with good opportunities to discuss their children's work and progress with pupils' teachers or the headteacher. The school's open-door policy and the routine of having a member of staff on duty to greet parents and pupils as they arrive in the morning means that, if necessary, parents have instant access to a member of staff. Younger pupils also have a home contact book through which parents can get in touch with the class teacher; appointments to see a teacher or the headteacher can also be made. Formal parents' evenings are held twice a year, and all pupils receive two detailed and informative written reports each year. Additionally, older pupils receive three progress reports during the course of the year. The quality of reports is good overall, although on occasions advice on what the pupil needs to do to continue to improve is limited. Welcome meetings take place at the start of the school year and general meetings are held as required. Parents of older pupils are also invited to meet the headteacher to discuss their children's applications to appropriate senior schools.

3.15 A broad variety of links with the local and the wider community enriches the lives of the pupils. Locally they compete in such events as music and art competitions and they have the opportunity to attend plays and concerts. Sports matches take place with neighbouring schools. Visits to events at local senior schools are also arranged. The school is used by local residents for meetings. Pupils raise money for organisations such as Tadworth Court, the local children's hospital; they were also delighted to visit the town hall to present the mayor with a cheque for money raised for a radio for the air ambulance. Further afield, families in Sierra Leone have been helped with gifts of clothes and toys. Plans are also well underway to develop a link with a school in Cape Town, introducing the possibility of exchange visits in the future.

3.16 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

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4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

4.1 The governance of the school is good. Governors are becoming increasingly effective in overseeing the quality of education provided and take care to ensure that the aims of the school are being achieved. The quality of governance, found at the time of the previous inspection, has been maintained. The governing body is well structured, very well led and includes a range of expertise. Governors' committed and informed guidance helps to ensure that the school maintains its distinctive ethos.

4.2 The governing body benefits from the experience and professional backgrounds of its members. It has a well-defined structure, with two supportive sub-committees. This enables it to operate efficiently in its oversight and support of the school. In certain areas governors are particularly successful, most notably in keeping abreast of new legislation and in securing the financial resources for continued school development. The result is strong educational provision with on-going investment being made in general resources, staffing and the school buildings. The creation of two new classrooms to enable Years 2 and 3 to have access to outdoor areas, as well as the development of a library for the older pupils, are examples of this.

4.3 Governors are expanding their role in overseeing the educational development of the school. The relatively recently created education and staffing committee is now beginning to hear from senior managers and staff about the work of various sections of the school or about the developments taking place in individual subjects. However, a formally planned programme for this is not yet in place. Governors also have a good oversight and awareness of both child protection issues and their responsibilities regarding health and safety.

4.4 Effective communications between the governors and headteacher, as well as amongst the governors themselves, ensure that they have a good insight into the working of the school. Governors visit the school and regularly attend school events. A number of governors have contact with members of staff through both formal and informal channels. The well-developed communication systems and general effectiveness of the governing body and its sub-committees are increasingly enabling governors to play a leading rather than supportive role in many aspects of school life, in the provision of sound advice and levels of challenge.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

4.5 The leadership and management of the school provided by senior staff are of good quality. The headteacher in particular has exceptionally strong leadership and management qualities. Her vision, ability to motivate others and overall determination are critical factors in enabling the school to make the progress it does and to attain its many successes. As a result, the school achieves its aim of creating a family atmosphere where all pupils are encouraged to develop their potential. Much of the success of the headteacher and senior managers is evident in the high quality of education the school provides, and in the way pupils are cared for and looked after. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection where leadership and management were judged to be effective.

4.6 The school's senior management team, consisting of four members, provides it with a clear sense of direction. This is largely as a result of the team's careful oversight of the work of the school. The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators, whilst being clearly defined are, in some cases, not systematically carried out in practice. This is particularly the

case with monitoring the teaching and learning in each subject across the whole school. Although progress is being made, practice is variable and, whilst some subject co-ordinators have a very good whole-school perspective of the development and progress of pupils in their subject, this is not the case with all.

4.7 The school has a sound five-year development plan in place covering building and site developments, staffing, resources, and academic and community development. Whilst timescales and personnel involvement are included, possible costings, success criteria and dates for review are not. Subject development plans are also at an early stage of development. The school recognises this; it is also aware that the regular on-going monitoring and review of subject development, as well as of other aspects of school life, are not yet sufficiently rigorous. Senior managers have also recognised the need to develop a fully effective method for analysing the school's needs, setting priorities and planning strategies in detail in order to meet the whole-school targets.

4.8 Policies and procedures are in place to cover many aspects of school life and are of very good quality. These generally have a whole-school focus but where different age groups may need different procedures, for example in relation to the setting of homework, these are appropriately identified. Regular checks are made on the implementation and effectiveness of such whole-school policies, particularly those related to child protection and health and safety.

4.9 Teaching and support staff are appropriately deployed. Generous staffing levels help to ensure that high quality guidance and support are given to all pupils, including those who require particular help with their individual learning needs. Staff recruitment is most efficiently managed, with the statutory staffing checks being made and the resulting records securely kept.

4.10 Staff new to the school have an effective induction programme that supports them well. This is also the case for newly qualified teachers, for whom the school closely follows the appropriate national guidelines. In-service training opportunities are available to staff and a sufficient budget supports this. However, the prioritising of training, closely related to the school development plan, is not always so effectively carried out. A formal system of performance management is beginning to be well used to support each teacher's individual professional development.

4.11 Most of the school is located on one site and good use is made of the facilities. The second site, containing the school's extensive playing fields, is located close by. On the main site, specialist accommodation is available, particularly for subjects such as art and science. Such accommodation, which is well used by teachers, has a particularly positive impact on pupils' overall learning and the progress that they make. However, the school recognises that the ICT accommodation restricts pupils' opportunities to develop their skills further. Particularly good provision is made for outdoor games which, when accompanied by the good quality teaching, further ensure that high standards are achieved.

4.12 The school has a good stock of quality resources to support both teaching and learning in most subject areas. It is aware that the provision of ICT equipment is limited. Currently, staff and pupils use the resources available well and see them as an integral part of the school; they are of great benefit to the development of pupils' skills.

4.13 Procedures for budgeting operate effectively. However, the recently introduced requirement for subject development plans does not yet include broad budgetary figures.

4.14 High quality support and assistance are provided by the administrative and other support staff. They ensure that the school runs most efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Good communications exist within the school as a result of an effective system of staff briefings, staff meetings and noticeboards.

4.15 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

4.16 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

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5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

5.1 Micklefield School provides a high quality education for its pupils. It has many strong features, some of which are outstanding. The school achieves its aims and meets the needs of its pupils. Many opportunities are provided to help pupils reach their full potential. Achievement levels are considerable, and particularly high in subjects such as English and mathematics. In addition to the taught curriculum, the extra-curricular programme and highly valuable educational visits also play their part in enabling pupils to achieve the educational standards that they do. Good and often outstanding quality teaching, a broad and well-balanced curriculum, the highly effective leadership of the headteacher and the particularly good relationships that exist within the school enable considerable achievements to be made by the pupils. They are responsible members of the school community and behave very well. Pupils are outstandingly well cared for and excellent provision is made for their moral, social and cultural development. Links with parents and the community are particularly good.

5.2 Many of the strengths found at the time of the previous inspection in 2003 have been maintained or built upon. Significant progress has been made in developments regarding ICT, although the school is aware that the subject is not yet fully developed. Whilst much progress has been made in other areas, the school also recognises that the recently created roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators are, in some cases, not yet carried out with sufficient rigour. In addition, development planning for the next few years is not sufficiently detailed.

5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

5.4 The school has no major weaknesses. In order to enhance further the education it provides, it should take the following action.

1. Continue to develop the roles and responsibilities of senior managers and subject co-ordinators, in order to:

develop further a system where all have a clear understanding of what their work entails in actual practice and the role they play in the on-going development of the whole school;

ensure that, through detailed development planning, there is a systematic approach to monitoring the review and development of all aspects of school life, including the curriculum, over a three- or four-year period.

2. Seek further opportunities to increase the use of pupils' ICT skills throughout the curriculum, including the review of the current use of ICT accommodation, the provision of additional equipment and on-going staff training.

5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

6.1 The inspection was carried out from 11th to 14th May 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr Graham Nunn	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Franciska Bayliss	Principal, ISA school
Miss Mary Burridge	Former Headmistress, GSA junior school
Mr Ian Sterling	Head Teacher, ISA school
Mr William Trelawny-Vernon	Head Teacher, IAPS school