

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

**Buckden C.E. Primary School**  
Huntingdon

LEA area : Cambridgeshire

Unique Reference Number : 110810

Headteacher : Mr. P. Shevlin

Reporting inspector : Mr. Colin Henderson  
A 23742

Dates of inspection : 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707028  
OFSTED inspection number: 186114

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school :	Infant and Junior
Type of control :	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils :	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	School Lane, Buckden, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 9SX
Telephone number :	01480 810241
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Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs. Marilyn Rolin
Date of previous inspection :	November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. Colin Henderson, Registered Inspector	Religious education Under fives	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Mrs. Sheila Gurney, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils? welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mr Mohindar Galowalia, Team Inspector	Science Design and technology Equal opportunities	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr. Paul Evans, Team Inspector	Mathematics Music Special educational needs	The curriculum and assessment
Dr. Kevin Wood, Team Inspector	English Geography History	The efficiency of the school
Mr. Peter Collings, Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Art Physical education	Pupils? spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

Standards of attainment are well above average particularly in English and mathematics lessons.

- C. Teaching is of a consistently good quality throughout the school.
- C. Relationships are excellent. Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave very well.
- C. Curriculum planning and the use of assessment information are of a very high quality and ensure that work is matched well to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities.
- C. The leadership and management of the school is excellent and gives a clear, positive direction in continually trying to achieve high standards.
- C. Excellent financial planning and control ensure that the school gives very good value for money.
- C. Links with parents and their involvement in their children's learning are excellent.
- C. Pupils' personal development is very good; values such as caring and showing respect for others are strong features of the school.

**This is a very good school with many excellent aspects. It has no weaknesses. The school already uses high quality development planning to focus on improvement. Further developments on minor points in some aspects of planning in science and increased opportunities in information and communication technology should be considered as the basis for the governors' action plan. This will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school responded very positively to the last inspection. A detailed action plan set appropriate targets for each issue. This was implemented very well and very good progress was made. Improvements in teachers' planning and the development and use of a policy for more able pupils have been particularly effective in raising standards. Significant improvements in the range of assessment procedures and the use of the information to monitor and record pupils' progress ensure that teaching builds effectively on what pupils have already achieved. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very successfully and these are contributing significantly to raising standards even further. The increasing use of setting targets for improvement, the consistently high quality of teaching, improvements since the last inspection and a clear commitment to continue to try to improve standards, mean that the school is very well placed to make further improvements.

### Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	

English	A	B
Mathematics	B	C
Science	A	B

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These results show that standards were well above average compared to schools nationally in English and science. They were above the average of similar schools; those which have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards in mathematics were above the national average. They were average compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 was well above average in all three subjects. At Key Stage 1, the 1999 National test results show that standards in reading and mathematics were well above the national average. They were above average in writing. The number of pupils achieving higher than the nationally expected Level 2 was well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that attainment at the end of both key stages is well above the national average in English and mathematics. Consistently good quality teaching, supported by the very successful implementation of the strategies for literacy and numeracy, are promoting high standards. Attainment in science is currently above the national average. Very effective revision procedures have yet to be implemented with the current Year 6. These procedures, together with an increased number of higher attaining pupils, resulted in standards which were well above average at the end of Key Stage 2 in last year's Year 6. Standards in religious education are above those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations throughout the school. The school is currently preparing to implement a greatly increased range of resources which will provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and use their skills. Good teaching and a very well planned curriculum enables children under five to attain standards at the age of five which are expected to exceed those expected nationally in most areas of learning, particularly language and literacy and mathematics.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information and communication technology		Sound	Good
Religious education		Very good	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world.	Good		
Other subjects / areas of learning	Good	Good in all subjects and frequently very good, for example in physical	

		education and design and technology at Key Stage 1. Insufficient evidence to judge quality of teaching in geography
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Teaching is sound or better in all lessons. It was good in 50 per cent of the lessons observed with a further 35 per cent being very good or excellent. There is some excellent teaching for children under five and at each key stage. The consistently high quality is a very significant factor in achieving high standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; sound; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Sound' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.*

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good throughout the school.
Attendance	Above the national average. There is a punctual and efficient start to the day.
Ethos*	Excellent. Pupils adopt a very positive, enthusiastic attitude and are keen to succeed. Excellent relationships promote very good personal development of pupils.
Leadership and management	The school is managed excellently. Strong, clear leadership is provided by the Headteacher, together with a very effective staff team and an active, supportive Governing Body. There is an excellent team approach focused on continually trying to improve standards.
Curriculum	Very good for under fives and at both key stages. High quality planning and very good assessment procedures are used well to ensure learning activities match pupils' needs.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision throughout the school. Learning activities are planned well to meet their identified needs. Support staff are used very well to enable these pupils to make good progress towards their learning targets.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Excellent moral provision and very good spiritual, social and cultural development contribute significantly to the school ethos.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Very good overall; good staffing levels and very good arrangements for their professional development. A good range of resources and very good accommodation, although playground space is rather restricted.
Value for money	The school provides very good value for money.

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>I. Their children enjoy school.</p> <p>II. They are encouraged to help with their children's learning and play an active part in the life of the school.</p> <p>III. The school has a calm and caring atmosphere and pupils get on very well together.</p> <p>IV. Teachers are very approachable and any problems are quickly sorted out.</p> <p>V. The school achieves good standards.</p> <p>VI. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p>are not consistent</p> <p>inconsistency between</p> <p>attaining pupils knowledge.</p>



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Parental responses from the 70 questionnaires returned (28 per cent) and from the 23 parents (6 per cent) who attended the meeting were very supportive. There were very few concerns. Inspectors' judgements confirm the parents' positive views of the school. Unit letters keep parents very well informed about what is being taught in school. Very effective planning and assessment procedures, supported by an effective policy for more able pupils, are used very well to ensure higher attaining pupils are challenged well to extend their skills and knowledge. Although there was some evidence during the inspection of some inconsistency in the use of homework, the school policy is generally used well to promote pupils' understanding, particularly in English and mathematics.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

There are no key issues for the school to address but, in the context of its many strengths, the following minor points for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan;

- X. Ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding in science is successfully built on prior knowledge in all required aspects. (paragraph 102)
- XI. Review the current scheme of work for information and communication technology to ensure that the increasing range of resources are used fully to cover all required aspects and to support learning in other subjects. (paragraph 108)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. Buckden C.E. Primary School is situated in the large village of Buckden, which is close to the A1 and south west of Huntingdon. There are 354 pupils on roll (169 boys and 185 girls). This is larger than average for a school of this type, although smaller than at the time of the last inspection. The school serves the local village and Southoe, a smaller village approximately two miles south of Buckden. Over a third of the school's pupils come from outside of the school's designated catchment area. The community is a mix of different social and economic backgrounds, although the majority of children come from supportive and stable homes. Parents take a keen interest in their children's education. Five percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. There are two pupils with English as an additional language which is below average. There are 60 pupils (17 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, two with statements of need, which is just below average.
2. The school does not have a nursery, although all children under five have had some pre-school experience. The school receives children mainly from local playgroups. Children's attainment on entry is quite broad, although it is above the nationally expected standards at the age of four. The school sets out its purpose clearly in its prospectus and aims to provide a well thought out and planned education in a safe and caring environment. This gives a positive direction to all aspects of the school's work. The school received a positive report from its last inspection. The key issues identified included monitoring progression in learning, particularly in mixed-age classes; clarifying the learning purposes of activities, particularly within topics; and recognising the extent of previous learning in order to challenge pupils to apply skills more rigorously.

## Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	27	27	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	24	23	25
	Girls	27	27	27
	Total	51	50	52
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	94 (89)	93(91)	96(91)
	National	79 (80)	83 (81)	86 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	23	25	25
	Girls	27	27	27
	Total	50	52	52
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93(89)	96(93)	96(100)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	32	29	61

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	27	26	31
	Girls	26	21	27
	Total	53	47	58
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	87(84)	77(68)	95(75)
	National	70(65)	69(65)	78(72)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	27	26	31
	Girls	27	22	27
	Total	54	48	58
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	89(90)	79(86)	95(90)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)  
missed through absence for the  
latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.0
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised	School	0.2

<sup>1</sup>

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Absence	National comparative data	0.5
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## 2. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	35
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

1. Children show quite a broad range of attainment on entry to the school, although it is above the national average overall. Many children have above average literacy and numeracy skills. Baseline assessment information confirms this broad range and is used well to plan a suitable range of learning activities. Children under five make good progress in all areas of learning. Their progress is very good in aspects of language and literacy, numeracy and physical development. All children are expected to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning. Many are already exceeding standards expected by the age of five in language and literacy, numeracy and physical skills and are making good progress in aspects of the National Curriculum.
2. Children settle quickly into school routines and clearly enjoy being at school. Children relate very well to adults and to one another. They play and work together well, sharing toys and equipment. The majority of children listen carefully, speak clearly and confidently and are keen to respond to questions. They enjoy looking at, and reading books together. Most children under five know their letter sounds, recognise simple words and are beginning to read whole sentences. Many form their letters accurately and begin to write their own sentences, with encouragement and support where needed. Progress in their knowledge and understanding of number is very good. Many are counting confidently from one to twenty and accurately match numbers of objects with the correct figure. Most recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes such as square and triangle. Most children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They use computers well to type out their names, with some help to develop their skills in using the keyboard and mouse. Good progress is made in children's creative development with appropriate opportunities to use pencils and crayons for drawing, to make music, for example, by rhythmic hand-clapping, and to act out different roles when playing with others. They develop very well physically, with particularly effective use being made of a very good range of apparatus, including climbing equipment, wheeled toys and small games equipment.
3. The results of the 1998 and 1999 Key Stage 1 National tests show that attainment in reading is well above average compared with all schools nationally and above average compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving higher than average levels was well above average in 1998 and above average in 1999. The results of the 1998 and 1999 Key Stage 1 writing tests show that attainment is above average compared with schools nationally. It was above average in 1998 compared with similar schools and in line with the average for similar schools in 1999. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in writing in both 1998 and 1999 was well above average compared with all schools and with similar schools. The results of the 1998 and 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests show that attainment in English is well above average compared with schools nationally and above average compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving above higher than average levels is well above the national average. There were no significant differences between the test results of boys and girls over the last three years at either key stage. The 1999 Key Stage 2 English test result of 87 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 and above enabled the school to get very close to its challenging target of 89 per cent. The number of pupils who achieved Level 5 increased by 20 per cent on the 1998 results.
4. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment in English is well above the national average at the end of both key stages. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school. Pupils listen very carefully, and respond confidently to questions, for example, when talking about poetry in a Year 2 lesson or discussing characters from a Shakespeare play in Year 6. Attainment in reading is well above average at the end of both key stages. The school has developed the National Literacy Strategy very effectively and this is significantly promoting pupils' literacy skills. Literacy Hour activities are used well to focus upon the development of reading skills. Most Year 2 pupils read

with confidence and fluency, and discuss which aspects of the stories they have enjoyed.

5. These skills are extended very well in Key Stage 2 and, by Year 6, most pupils confidently read from Shakespeare plays, such as 'Macbeth'. Higher attaining pupils look carefully at the range of vocabulary used in 'Kubla Khan'. Pupils have good skills in reading for information and these are used well to develop a more independent approach to their work. Standards in writing are well above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use a good range of writing styles, for example, stories, diaries and posters. They spell simple words accurately and higher attaining pupils use and spell correctly a increasing range of more complex words. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use their drafting skills well to develop very imaginative stories which are then improved in both content and accuracy before being rewritten neatly. Standards of punctuation and spelling are good. Handwriting is generally neat, legible and very well presented. The high standard of literacy skills is used well throughout the school to promote standards in other subjects such as science and history.
6. Ninety six per cent of pupils attained Level 2 or above in the 1999 National tests in mathematics at Key Stage 1. This was a five per cent improvement on last year's results and is well above the national average. It is in line with the average compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving Level 3 was above average in 1999, although three per cent lower than the 1998 results. Test results over the last three years show steady improvement overall with boys and girls consistently achieving higher than average standards. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 2 National tests in mathematics show that standards have improved since the previous year. The number of pupils achieving the national average of Level 4 is above average compared with schools nationally, and average compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving higher than average levels doubled on the 1998 results and, at 34 per cent, is well above average. Results over the last three years show a steady improvement overall. The school exceeded its realistic target of 74 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 or above and significantly exceeded its target of 23 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 5. Girls and boys consistently achieve higher than average standards.
7. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in mathematics is well above average at the end of both key stages. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy very successfully. Good quality teaching is significantly raising the standards of numeracy even higher. Pupils have very good numeracy skills and they use them well to promote standards in other aspects of mathematics and in other subjects, for example, science and geography. Year 2 pupils accurately add and subtract numbers up to 100 and use mental strategies with increasing confidence to add numbers involving tens and units. They multiply and divide accurately using single numbers. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 identify and name a good range of two and three- dimensional shapes. This knowledge and understanding is built on well at Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils use large numbers, for example hundreds of thousands, to show they have a good understanding of place value. They multiply accurately by two digit numbers and divide by 10 and 100. They have a good understanding of measures and money and use it well to solve challenging practical investigations.
8. Results of the 1999 teacher assessments in science at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the number of pupils achieving Level 2 or higher is above the national average. It is broadly average compared with similar schools. The number achieving Level 3 is also above average nationally and in line with the average of similar schools. The 1999 results show an increase in the number of pupils achieving Level 2 although the number achieving higher levels was significantly less than the previous year. At Key Stage 2, the results of the 1999 National tests show that attainment is well above average nationally and above average compared with similar schools, for the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4. The number achieving higher levels shows a very large increase and is also well above the national average and above the average of similar schools. Results over the last three years show that attainment has remained above the national average, although the 1998 results were lower than previous years.
9. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment in science are above the national average at the end of both key stages. Well focused topic revision, together with a greater number of higher attaining

pupils in the previous Year 6, promoted standards which were well above average at the end of last school year. Current standards show that pupils have above average knowledge in many aspects of their work. At Key Stage 1, pupils understand and explain what makes a test unfair. They accurately classify objects and know the main characteristics of living things. At Key Stage 2, they develop their investigative skills very well, predicting accurately and showing an increased understanding of fair testing. Higher attaining pupils carefully explain the reasons behind their predictions. Pupils have above average knowledge and understanding in such aspects as electricity and living things.

10. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils develop their keyboard and mouse skills well at Key Stage 1 and begin to use them effectively in word processing. They type their names and short sentences and these activities are used well to reinforce their letter recognition and word building skills. Pupils build on these effectively at Key Stage 2. They increase their knowledge and understanding of how to bring graphics into their word processing work. They enter, store and access information. They combine different skills well, for example, to develop their own questionnaire and collect data to enter into the database.
11. Attainment in religious education is above the standards expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of each key stage. They have a good knowledge and understanding of aspects of Christianity and other faiths. Year 2 pupils talk knowledgeably about stories from the Bible. They show a detailed understanding of Islam, with a good knowledge of Muslim prayer rituals and some of the contrasts with Christian practices. At Key Stage 2, pupils improve their knowledge of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, and of other faiths, for example, Judaism. They know about the Jewish sacred book and their Sabbath. Visits to local churches are used very well to develop pupils' understanding of the features of different religious services.
12. Pupils make good progress overall throughout the school. High quality planning and assessment procedures are used very well to develop a good range of activities which are matched closely to the needs of pupils of differing abilities. These, together with consistently good teaching, are used very effectively to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are built well upon prior understanding. This promotes good progress in English and mathematics and in the development and use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Good progress is made in science through careful use of pupil groupings and a well-planned range of challenging activities, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Pupils make sound progress overall in information and communication technology. They make good progress in aspects of their work, for example, word processing, but opportunities are not consistently developed in all areas to ensure good progress overall.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The levels of support given to these pupils and the use of the well focused short term attainment targets in their individual education plans match work closely to pupils' abilities. This enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress, particularly in literacy, in both key stages. Where pupils' difficulties are emotional or behavioural, the consistent use of the behaviour policy and the high expectations of all pupils maintains their focus and attention on their work. This support enables good progress. Higher attaining pupils make good progress. Teachers use extension activities well to challenge these pupils to apply their skills and knowledge, for example, in science and mathematics.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

14. The last inspection reported on pupils' consistently good behaviour, good attitudes to learning and their courtesy and thoughtfulness. Now these aspects are very good.
15. Children under five behave very well. They are confident and enthusiastic. Most of them are

articulate and they show remarkable maturity for children so young. For example in circle time they give their news clearly, one after another, listen politely and do not interrupt. At both key stages pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour is one of the school's many strengths. Almost all parents feel high standards of behaviour are achieved. Pupils' mature, confident and conscientious attitudes make a significant impact on the quality of their learning. Behaviour is very good in class, during assemblies, in the dining room and in the playground. No bullying was observed and on the rare occasions it does occur, it is swiftly and satisfactorily dealt with. The school does not have to exclude pupils.

16. Relationships throughout are excellent. Pupils work and play well together. They are polite and friendly both to adults and to each other and they are welcoming to visitors. They show respect both for adults and for one another. They show trust in their teachers' ability to help them with both academic and personal problems. Adults know the children well. All the staff are supportive of each other and work extremely well as a team.
17. Pupils, particularly in Year 6, are encouraged to take on responsibilities and they do so willingly and reliably. The school council meets regularly and there are elected delegates from every class even including Reception. Year 6 pupils make a significant contribution to helping with the smooth running of the school community. They give invaluable help at lunch times in the dining room, helping Reception children prepare for lunch and at playtime. They help with play throughout the school during wet lunch times. Pupils are given to express their views and allowed to exercise some personal choice, as much as is practical throughout their time at Buckden. Pupils' personal records of achievement enable them to set some of their own targets and the structure of the literacy hour is used well to promote independence of learning. The many opportunities for pupils' cultural development together with educational and residential visits in Years 4, 5 and 6 all add to pupils' enjoyment in school life and make a very positive impact on their personal development. The school's four C's of care, courtesy, consideration and co-operation are very clearly demonstrated by pupils and staff alike. The older pupils are maturing into socially aware and confident young people.

#### **Attendance**

18. The good attendance at the time of the last inspection has been maintained at almost 96 per cent for the year 1998/99. Procedures fully meet requirements. Lateness is minimal and is largely restricted to one or two families. There is a prompt start to the day and lessons begin punctually.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### **Teaching**

19. The quality of teaching has been maintained at the high level reported at the last inspection. It is good throughout the school, with frequent examples of very good and excellent practice at under fives and at both key stages. It was good in 50 per cent of the lessons observed and very good or excellent in a further 35 per cent. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and is positively promoting the development and use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and this enables them to make good progress. Strengths were identified in all classes and the consistently high quality of teaching is a significant factor in achieving high standards.
20. The teaching of the different areas of learning to children under five is good, frequently very good and, on occasions, excellent. Teachers' planning is excellent, consistent between both classes and based well on the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Some teaching is planned within the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and this encourages higher attaining children to progress at an appropriate level and at their own pace. For example, in a higher attaining mathematics group, the teacher uses questions very effectively to encourage children to explain how they got their answers when asked to count more than or less than a certain number. Teachers are very well organised. They work very



closely together as a team to ensure that children have a good activities programme which is a good balance between whole class and group activities, and directed and chosen tasks. Teachers praise children very well for their achievements and use opportunities consistently to encourage them to develop their language skills, for example, when talking about the differences between 'fact' and 'fiction' books. Teachers use explanations and demonstrations very effectively to improve the quality of children's work. In a physical activity in the hall, the teacher demonstrates very clearly the difference between jumping and bouncing, and this results in children using their knees well to improve the quality of their bouncing movements.

21. Throughout the school teachers and support staff work well as a team with a consistently high standard of planning and preparation. They use assessment information very well to organise a broad range of activities to challenge pupils of different abilities effectively within each class. In a Year 3/4 literacy lesson, the teacher had organised four different learning activities within the class to develop pupils' word building, spelling and reading skills. The teacher challenged higher attaining pupils very well by asking them to review and evaluate poetry. They were then required to explain their reasons for choosing a particular poem as being 'brilliant'. Teachers use day-to-day assessment information very effectively to inform and guide their lesson planning. Where the lesson objective has not been fully met, this is carefully noted and used to plan for subsequent lessons. Teachers have consistently high expectations of standards of work and behaviour to which pupils readily respond. They manage their classes very well. Very good relationships enable teachers to know their individual pupils well and provide good quality guidance and support to encourage them to improve the quality of their work. For example, teachers mark pupils' work very effectively and use an appropriate range of encouraging and constructive comments to indicate ways in which the standard can be raised.
22. Where teaching is of an excellent or very good quality, teachers maintain a brisk and challenging pace to lessons. Time is used very effectively to make sure that pupils remain focused on their tasks and try hard to complete the work within the target time. In a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher makes pupils fully aware of the time they have to complete a particular part of their story writing, and regularly reminds them of the remaining time to ensure that they make full use of their skills. Teachers share the learning objectives of the lesson with their pupils so that they clearly know what they are trying to achieve. Teachers then use the plenary session at the end of the lesson very effectively to assess how successful the pupils have been in meeting the learning objective. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, the teacher uses the plenary very well to enable all three activity groups to report back to the class on the methods they had used to work out their answers to some money addition problems. The teacher then used these explanations very effectively to develop the knowledge and understanding of others in the group by asking them to try to work out answers in a similar way. Some teachers use homework well to link in with work in class, for example when encouraging pupils to use their scientific knowledge to look carefully at different food types at home, although this was not consistently evident in all year groups.
23. In the 15 per cent of lessons where teaching is not high quality, but is still sound overall, teachers do not consistently use questions to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. They ask questions well to encourage pupils to respond and become involved actively in the class or group discussion. However, they do not always use follow-up questions to challenge pupils to develop their answers and seek to improve the quality of their work. In a Key Stage 1 dance lesson, the teacher uses the opportunity to ask pupils to observe and describe the dance sequence of other groups. They are not asked to look for ways in which the quality of the performance could be improved.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The strength of teachers' planning and the consistent modification of work to match pupils' levels of ability is very good. Very effective use is made of pupils' individual education plans to target areas of weakness. Some use of ability setting in mathematics and English enables teachers to focus very carefully on the narrower range of needs within the group. All teaching and support staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently well and this contributes to the education of all pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties.

The specialist support teacher from the local authority's Learning Support Service contributes very well to the high quality of teaching for these pupils and helps to promote their good progress.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

25. In the last inspection report the school met the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. There was a satisfactory allocation of time for the teaching of specific subjects and the curriculum was appropriately broad and balanced. The school continues to provide a broad and well balanced curriculum throughout the school. The curriculum for children under five covers all the required areas of learning and is excellently planned to give a very good balance between directed activities and those encouraging children's choice. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught at both key stages. There are very good school policies for health, sex and drugs education. There is a strong moral link in the sex education programme and older pupils are taught to be strong in their decision making despite the possible influence of other pupils.
26. In English the detailed policy provides a suitable balance of activities and this has been enriched by the very good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Reading is consistently taught throughout both key stages. Writing covers a range of forms and is well used in the wider curriculum. Pupils are taught to speak clearly and to listen attentively. Handwriting and spelling skills are consistently developed. There is good use of computers in language development, for example, using word processing to reinforce letter and word recognition. In mathematics a very good scheme of work promotes very good quality work at both key stages. The very good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, at all levels across the school, is already contributing to the further raising of standards. The scheme of work in science is modified using the latest national guidance. The science curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all aspects of the subject.
27. Very good schemes of work are in place for all the required subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education has a very good detailed scheme of work, which fully meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Cambridgeshire, which is approved by the Archdiocese of Ely. Lessons in physical education, art and music, as well as subjects taught within the school's topic web, provide a very good, broad curriculum.
28. Both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been very well introduced. The school's numeracy strategy has been very well supported through the professional development of all staff. The mathematics co-ordinator has monitored the teaching of the strategy in all classrooms and all class teachers have been given the opportunity to observe another teaching in the school teaching numeracy. This is a very good example of the thoroughness with which the school approaches the planning and teaching of the curriculum. Monitoring procedures, involving the literacy co-ordinator, unit leaders, other members of the senior management and members of the Governing Body, contribute very positively to raising standards of teaching and learning.
29. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which includes sewing, chess, conservation, gardening and French clubs. Sports clubs are offered by the school in hockey, netball, soccer and cricket according to the appropriate season. These are supplemented by gymnastics and athletics clubs offered by outside agencies, for which parents pay. The level of extra curricular music provision is very good with large groups attending recorder and choir clubs and the school orchestra is made up of over twenty pupils. Pupils receive individual tuition in violin, cello, brass and woodwind for which parents pay. There is pre-school and after hour's clubs run by the Buccaneers Club, for which parents also pay. All these activities have the effect of broadening the curriculum offered by the school and of raising the standards of pupils who take part.
30. The curriculum is appropriately modified for pupils with special educational needs. Together with the

very good support provided by learning support and general assistants, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

31. The planning of the curriculum is very good. Teachers in parallel classes plan co-operatively. Class teachers within each unit match their planning to the school's schemes of work. Across the whole school curriculum planning is monitored closely to ensure very good progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. A good quality equal opportunities policy is implemented very effectively to ensure full access to a very broad range of activities. The school closely monitors the attainment of pupils of differing ability and gender and is using good strategies to track and promote their standards.
32. The school's curriculum strongly promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. By the time they leave the school pupils of all abilities are very well prepared for their transfer to secondary school.
33. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' work. There are effective arrangements for administering National tests at the end of both key stages and statutory requirements are met. Learning objectives are linked to National Curriculum attainment targets and are used to provide achievable targets. Class teachers track pupils' progress through assessment sheets, which are based on those learning objectives. This assessment information is used in unit planning meetings to reflect on what has been achieved, to make predictions of targets and to match these to lesson planning. It is also used to guide pupils in identifying their own targets for improvement and to provide guidance for setting whole school targets for improvement. Assessment and the use of assessment information to guide planning are both very good and are strengths of the school. They are used very effectively to promote higher standards throughout the school.

#### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

34. The last inspection reported on the school's good quality provision in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since then the school has maintained and further developed this high quality and makes very good provision overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils. It is a strength of the school and makes a very good contribution to the high standards achieved by the school.
35. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is very good. The school promoted effectively its Christian values through lessons and assemblies. Spirituality is developed mainly through the religious education curriculum, which is wide based and includes the study of other religions. This gives pupils the opportunity to learn about religious traditions and to gain knowledge and insight into other values and spiritual beliefs. The school holds unit or whole school assemblies every day and these are planned on a half term or termly basis. Assemblies reflect the aims of the school and are used well to promote spiritual development. Spiritual aspects are promoted effectively through the musical introduction, the pupils' tuneful singing and their obvious pride and pleasure as they watch others succeed. For example, everyone who attended a Year 6 class assembly about Egypt, parents, staff, pupils and visitors all clearly enjoyed the high quality of performance. On occasions, assemblies are concerned with wider world events and pupils are asked to consider the effects of these events. Regular visits are made by the ministers of the Anglican, Methodist and Catholic churches. These are used well to extend pupils' understanding of spirituality, for example when Key Stage 1 pupils carefully reflect on the very large numbers of people who lost their lives in wars during this century.
36. The support for the moral development of pupils is excellent. The school has a very clear policy, which is based on four easily understood principles. Children under five are developing a good awareness that their actions affect others. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong and this is continuously reinforced by all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, who provide excellent role models. Pupils are fully aware of school and class expectations. Pupils discuss and review them

regularly and issues are sometimes considered in the school council. There are clear expectations that the behaviour policy will be followed.

37. Opportunities for pupils' social development are very good. From the time that pupils enter school they are encouraged to learn how to relate to each other and to adults and in this way make a positive contribution to the ordered life of the school. Pupils show great tolerance for each other and many examples of work co-operation both in academic and sporting areas were observed. All Year 6 pupils are monitors and all take their turn for being responsible for the various tasks that they undertake. These pupils take their responsibilities seriously and perform them with enthusiasm and efficiency. They set a very good example to younger members of the school. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and these are matched by the relationships between pupils. The school has an open ethos in which partnership between the school and parents is positively encouraged and many parents work as voluntary helpers. The elected School Council meets twice a term. Issues raised by the pupils are discussed and if it is not possible to respond to such issues a clear explanation is given to the council.
38. The very good cultural development of pupils is fostered through a range of activities. Pupils learn through cross-curricular links in music, history, art and religious education. The school has a large number of extra curricular clubs all of which provide the opportunity for pupils to further their individual development. Pupils visit museums, churches and other places of interest. Years 4, 5 and 6 go on extended residential visits and all pupils, regardless of circumstance take part. Cultural development is enriched by visits to the school of theatre companies and the occasional music ensemble. The school has a choir and an orchestra of twenty-two members and through its various dramatic and musical productions enriches cultural tradition. There is a good range of books which reflect both European and other cultures and the knowledge of other cultures is developed through the well planned school curriculum, for example, in history and geography. Opportunities in religious education to study the beliefs, rituals and practices of other religions, for example Islam and Judaism, contribute significantly to increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

39. The last inspection report indicated that the school provided effective support and guidance for its pupils. This aspect of pupils' education is now very good and parents feel Buckden is a very caring school. Academic progress, personal development, behaviour and attendance are all carefully monitored. Pupils' work is positively marked and used to provide feedback to the child. All subjects are rigorously assessed and the resulting assessment is very well used and makes a positive impact on standards achieved. Additional support is provided for able as well as less able children and this helps children of all abilities to make good progress. Emphasis is given to the importance of pupils' personal development. Personal, social and health education helps to enhance pupils' self-esteem. Sex education and advice about the misuse of drugs are given sensitively and with due regard to the dangers of peer pressure. Parents are pleased with the values and attitudes taught.
40. The behaviour policy is very effective and pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Rare instances of bullying are well dealt with. Attendance is carefully monitored and the school's procedures, which are rigorously adhered to, are effective.
41. Child protection procedures are secure and the policy is appropriate. A named governor takes health and safety issues very seriously and risk assessment is regularly carried out. There are no risks which currently pose a threat to children's health or safety. First aid provision is good. Several staff hold current first aid certificates and the most minor mishaps are treated with kindness and sensitivity. The school provides a secure and happy environment which enables all children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them, and very good learning to take place.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

42. At last inspection links with parents and the community were reported to be good. Now the quality of information given to parents is very good. The 'Happily to School' booklet is very helpful for new parents as is the prospectus. Unit newsletters are sent giving details of topics to be studied and educational visits and school events are appropriately publicised. Parents' consultation evenings are very well supported and the few parents unable to attend are always offered alternative appointments. Meetings have been held for parents to explain the new literacy hour and parents were invited to observe lessons. Similar meetings are planned for the numeracy hour. Parents' views are regularly solicited through questionnaires and the results are carefully collated. A draft home/school agreement was sent to parents to enable them to make their comments prior to signing. The vast majority of parents feel very well informed about their children's attainment and progress.
43. Relationships with parents and the extent to which they become involved in their children's learning are both excellent. Reading diaries provide a very good home/school link, particularly at Key Stage 1. The homework policy is shared with parents and homework diaries for Key Stage 2 pupils make parents aware of the school's expectations and also enable them to help their children. The newly established after school club, which was made possible through a grant from the New Opportunities Fund, is proving very popular and is much appreciated by working parents. All parents are warmly welcomed to Buckden whether it be to raise concerns, to help or even to have lunch with their children. The number of parents, grandparents and friends who work voluntarily in the school is exceptional. Their help is greatly valued and they are given choices as to the areas in which they would like to work. For example, a parent who is a professional musician runs the successful school orchestra. The Parent Teacher Association is an outstandingly hardworking and supportive organisation. Events, such as a summer barbecue, are very well attended. The school benefits enormously from the generosity of parents and friends who raise significant sums to enhance pupils' educational provision.
44. The school maintains good links with the community at large. Links with the local Christian churches are strong with ministers regularly addressing assemblies. Harvest gifts from pupils to local senior citizens always have an accompanying letter from the donor and many pupils receive replies. The harvest collection was sent to Mission Aviation Fellowship which supplies planes to help access very remote areas of the world. This year planes were to be given to Russia. Teacher training students are welcomed at Buckden as are secondary school students for both work experience and community service. Extra mural classes run by Huntingdonshire Regional College are held in the school and organizations such as the Women's Institute use the school hall. As part of the Buckden Festival Week the school held an open evening. Year 6 pupils showed round a number of people who do not normally have the opportunity to visit the school and they were rewarded with very favourable comments. Links with the receiving secondary school are good. The teachers are particularly helpful in suggesting extension work for the most able pupils in Year 6. Links with business and industry are mainly through offers of gifts and sponsorship. Generous donations have included a large screen television and the strip for the football team. Speakers and exhibitors are invited to complement topic work. For example, children from Year 1 and Year 2 recently enjoyed a visit of five owls and their trainers. They were able to see the birds fly, draw them and even dissect their pellets. Educational visits, both local and residential, all help to widen pupils' educational experiences.
45. The Headteacher and staff are well aware of the importance of the school's place within the community and the links made, together with excellent relationship with parents, make a strong contribution to pupils' attainment and their personal development.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

46. The management of the school is excellent and has maintained the exceptional quality reported in the last inspection. The school has made very good progress, particularly in the very effective use of target

setting to increase the number of pupils achieving the national average, and above average levels, in the core subjects. Strong and effective leadership is provided by the personal style of the Headteacher which gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school. Working closely with the influential Deputy Headteacher, very effective Unit Leaders, and an active and supportive Governing Body, he has been particularly successful in developing a dedicated and hard-working staff focused clearly on achieving higher standards. The school responded very positively to the key issues identified in the last inspection, with appropriate targets set to ensure that the action plan was focused and implemented well to make very good progress on each issue. Improvements in the teachers' planning, for example, by identifying learning objectives for each ability group, and the development and implementation of a policy for more able pupils have improved the challenge to more able and older pupils. Significant improvements in the range of assessment procedures and the use of the information to monitor and record pupils' progress ensure that teachers know and understand what pupils have already achieved. They plan effectively to build on this information to ensure good progress is maintained. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very successfully and these are contributing significantly to raising standards even higher. The improvements made since the last inspection, together with these effective literacy and numeracy strategies, have established a very good framework on which the school can continue to make very good progress.

47. The purpose of the school, set out clearly in its prospectus, is to provide a well thought out and planned education in a safe, happy and caring environment. This is clearly reflected in all aspects of the work of the school. The caring, supportive ethos is a significant influence on pupils seeking to achieve high standards. Parents are particularly appreciative of the calm and caring atmosphere and the very high quality of relationships between everybody in the school community. The Headteacher has a very good overview of the school and has established high quality systems for monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning. Unit Leaders are very effectively involved in evaluating standards and in providing good support and guidance to improve further the quality of pupils' work. Opportunities for teachers to observe and work with colleagues, for example, when implementing the National Literacy Strategy, contribute positively to the team approach and to the evaluation of the impact of different aspects of the Literacy Hour. An increasing range of assessment data is being used very well to focus upon improvement. Very effective use is made of target setting, both for individual pupils and for groups of pupils, to increase the number of pupils reaching the national average level of attainment and those achieving above the average level.
48. The school development plan has improved since the last inspection. It now has a very good three-year planned overview as well as a more focused yearly plan. The school's development aims are reviewed annually by the staff and Governing Body and provide clear and specific targets for priority issues. The development plan identifies the particular objective for each issue, indicates the key personnel involved in its development and links closely to the anticipated costs. It provides a well-structured focus for managing the school and ensures that finances are targeted effectively to support priority issues. The plan is reviewed regularly to monitor progress towards the objectives, although governors do not always evaluate the full impact of their spending decisions on standards of achievement.
49. The Governing Body is very supportive and increasingly involved in managing the school. They are kept fully informed by reports from the Headteacher which encourages discussion on school development and financial issues. Governors' committees are used well to discuss and plan improvement, for example when drawing up development priorities or agreeing the school's targets for literacy and numeracy. They work very closely with the Headteacher and his staff to ensure that available funds are used well to promote standards. Many governors visit school regularly to look at a particular development, for example, literacy and discuss their observations with staff and other governors at the next meeting of the Governing Body. This very effective partnership between the Governing Body and senior management in the school makes a significant and positive contribution to school improvement.

50. The education of pupils with special educational needs is managed very well by the co-ordinator, who is supported well by the Headteacher and by the governor responsible for this aspect. The provision has been maintained at the high quality reported in the last inspection. It fully covers all the required aspects of the nationally Code of Practice. The special needs register is maintained very effectively, with regular reviews of pupils' individual education plans and detailed records maintained. The time allocated to specialist support staff is managed well and good use is made of learning support assistants. The special needs co-ordinator works closely with class teachers and gives good guidance on writing individual education plans. These plans are used well to focus on identified weaknesses and raise the standards achieved. The Governing Body ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and all statutory requirements are met.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

51. The number of teachers in the school is broadly average for its size. The school has a good balance of experienced and comparatively newer staff. They have a good range of qualifications which closely matches the demands of the curriculum. Where original qualifications of staff do not match their curriculum responsibility, for example the curriculum leaders for English, mathematics and science, the staff are provided with professional support and training in areas where they feel they lack experience or expertise. This fits well with the school's detailed approach to recruiting new staff. All curriculum areas, the education of pupils with special educational needs, including more able pupils, and the library are well led by a co-ordinator.
52. The quality of support staffing is very good. The number of support staff, both special educational needs assistants and general classroom assistants is above average. They have good qualifications and or good experience in the areas of their work. They are effectively used and make good contribution to pupils' attainments. The number of administrative staff is broadly average. The number of dinner staff is sufficient to ensure effective supervision and they make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. The staff work well together at all levels and display a clear direction and sense of purpose. Each unit plans and provides parallel educational experience to pupils in each of the two-year-groups within the unit. All staff continuously try to achieve high standards of attainment. The high staff turnover is a consequence of many staff leaving the school to take up more senior posts in other schools. This is a highly positive rather than a negative feature and reflects very well on the school's supportive approach.
53. The school has very good arrangements for professional development of staff. There is very good induction system. The newly qualified staff are guided through a mentoring system and receive release time for their professional development programmes. The induction of supply teachers is overcome through employing teachers who have worked for the school for significant amount of time and know very well how the school works. Learning support assistants and general classroom assistants and the dinner supervisors are inducted satisfactorily through pairing with colleagues, dinner supervisor by pairing with the senior supervisor. The appraisal system is very well established and continues to happen regularly and efficiently. This has been further refined since the last inspection. The appraisal system, the school development need and individual teacher's own professional development need are met very well through the standards fund, for example, training in literacy and numeracy strategies.
54. The quality of accommodation is very good. The accommodation is spacious and there is a high standard of decoration, cleanliness and upkeep. The very hard working site manager makes a significant and positive contribution in this respect. The number and size of classrooms are very good. The classrooms and the rest of the school are decorated effectively with high quality displays of pupils' work or learning aids for current teaching topics. These provide a pleasant learning environment for its pupils. There is a good-sized activity room. This is used well for music teaching, audio-visual provision and assemblies for the youngest pupils in the school. There is a good-sized room for the children's

club. The spacious library is very well located and provides good access to all users. The size of the hall meets the school's need for assemblies and lunchtime use. At other times it provides very good facilities for various aspects of physical education. There is good-sized playing field. There are separate hard surface areas for each age. All of these areas are of appropriate size except for the upper juniors, which is rather small for play time activities. There is a heated open-air swimming pool for summer months, a green house and a nature garden. The accommodation makes a very good contribution to the learning environment offered by the school.

55. The quality, quantity and range of learning resources are good for each area of the curriculum, except information technology, which are satisfactory. Resources overall make a very good provision to support learning. The impact of resources for English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, religious education and special educational needs is very good. Elsewhere the impact is good except in information technology where the range of hardware and software is used soundly to promote skills in this subject. Plans are well advanced to improve the quality and quantity of information technology resources to be used by pupils. The library is well stocked with classified and colour coded non-fiction books, which are effectively organised. Its location, size and access make it a very useful resource for pupils to develop their library skills and non-fiction reading. There is a good stock of fiction and class textbooks in each classroom or unit area. Access to these is very good.

### **The efficiency of the school**

56. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the system of financial management and it is now excellent. The budget allocation process is well organised and supports the targets of the school through its school development plan. This is very carefully costed in terms of time and finance. Its implementation is monitored very closely. The Headteacher has a clear vision of the targets that need to be achieved and planning is clearly aimed at these. The Governors' Finance Committee takes a close and active role in monitoring the school's expenditure. The Headteacher collects and analyses data from assessment tests and also tracks trends relating to pupil progress, and numbers, over a period of time. This is used to assess the impact of any developments and to make sure that money is spent to support the most urgent areas of the school. The school spends its income very carefully so that the teaching and learning support staff are able to ensure that the pupils make good progress.
57. The Headteacher and governors are fully aware of the need to manage changing circumstances with regard to future school roll. Additionally, the school's share of the local education authority's devolved budget has also declined. The financial support of the Parent Teacher Association and local charitable and invested funds are very significant year on year. Careful financial planning, for example the internal coverage of staff absences, ensures that a reasonable balance can be carried forward each year. This enables the school to deal quickly with an urgent need to support new areas of development. A good example of this is the reserve dedicated to the purchase of a large amount of information technology hardware.
58. The last inspection report indicated that the day-to-day administration of the school was very efficient. It has improved further. The school administrator is responsible, with the Headteacher, for financial administration and budgetary control, as well as many day-to-day issues which arise. All the minor issues in the last school audit have been successfully dealt with. The roles of staff in the school office are very clearly defined. The efficiency of the financial control and school administration is now excellent. The administrative staff give excellent support to ensure the smooth running of the whole school. They are also very effective in supporting the school's pastoral aims in dealing with the pupils and parents.
59. The Governing Body maintains a good overview of the funding for pupils with special educational needs. It is fully aware that the school spends more on special educational needs than it receives in its allocated budget. Time and resources are used very efficiently to support the learning needs of these



pupils.

60. Taking into account the consistent trend of good progress made by pupils, the exceptional leadership and management, the outstanding attainment across the core subjects and the very low unit costs, the school is providing very good value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

61. Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they become five and join a unit of two Reception classes. During the inspection there were thirty children under the age of five. A very effective team of two teachers, supported by parent helpers and some use of support staff, provide high quality education for children under five. The school has maintained the good quality reported in the last inspection. It has improved the provision for children's physical development which was reported, in the previous inspection, as being limited.
62. All children have had some pre-school experience, mainly through local play-groups. They were gradually introduced into the school during the first three weeks of term, with teachers using the opportunity to settle the children in well and complete a baseline assessment on each child. The resulting assessment information confirms that attainment on entry is quite broad, although it is above the national average overall. The teaching team works very well together to plan in detail and provide a good balance between directed activities and those encouraging children to make their own choice. The range of activities is appropriately based on the nationally prescribed Desirable Learning Outcomes for children aged five. This effectively promoted children's learning and builds a good foundation of basic skills through play, direct teaching, conversation and enquiry. The Reception unit provides a happy, secure and caring learning environment. The very effective teamwork, supported by detailed planning, ensures that activities are matched well to children's needs. As a result children make good progress overall in all areas of their early learning with very good progress in aspects of language and literacy, numeracy and physical development. All children are expected to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning. Many are already exceeding standards expected at the age of five and are making good progress in aspects of the Key Stage 1 programme of work.

#### **Personal and social development**

63. Children settle very quickly into the routines of the Reception classes. They come in quietly on arrival and almost all leave their parents without any fuss. Children relate very well to one another and there are many example of them working and playing together, for example, in role play when acting out a story of a wedding or being in a fire-engine. They share toys and equipment very well, treating them with care and respect and behaving well, for example by waiting their turn sensibly and quietly to use the play-house and its 'magic key'. Children clearly enjoy coming to school and quickly settle to their activities. They concentrate for long periods, for example when looking very carefully at a range of teddy bears to try to describe the main differences between them. Good relationships are established with all adults and children pay appropriate attention to all members of staff. Children make good progress and by the age of five, it is likely that all will exceed the expected level.

#### **Language and literacy**

64. Children make good progress in developing their language and literacy skills and it is likely that, by the age of five, they will all reach the expected level. Many have already attained that standard, with a significantly high number achieving higher than the expected level. They develop confidence in their use of language. They all listen very attentively to stories and instructions and confidently talk about their ideas, for example when describing the appearance and texture of different teddy bears. Children enjoy books. All of them know how to hold the book correctly and that the print is read from left to right and carries the message of the story. Many are able to describe the main events of a story and put them in the correct order. Most know the sounds that letters represent and use this knowledge in their reading effectively. Some recognise simple words and are beginning to read whole sentences with a degree of fluency and expression. Some higher attainers are reading stories, for example 'Thumbelina' which are at a level which is already significantly higher than the levels expected of children at the age of five. Many children form their letters accurately and make good attempts to write

their own sentences with help from the teacher. Groups of children in the home corner hold long conversations about how to organise the kitchen area and what food they are to 'make' for their visitor!

## **Mathematics**

65. Children make good progress overall and are likely to achieve expected standards by the age of five. Many make very good progress in aspects of their understanding and use of number and it is expected that they will achieve standards which are above the national expectations at five years of age. Most count from one to ten, and back, with confidence. Many quickly recognise the number symbols and most place them in the correct order. Nearly half of the Reception children are counting and matching numbers from one to twenty. Some count back from twenty accurately without guidance or support and are beginning to add small numbers easily. Most children recognise and name shapes, for example, square, circle and triangle. Children join in enthusiastically with number rhymes and games.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

66. All children make good progress and, by the age of five, it is likely that they will achieve expected levels in their knowledge and understanding. They talk confidently to their teacher about everyday events in their lives, for example birthdays and visiting relatives. They are introduced well to computers and, with good support given from visiting secondary school pupils; they develop their keyboard and mouse skills. These opportunities are used well to reinforce letter recognition and, by typing their names, to link keyboard skills to text on the screen. Observational skills and a sense of past and present are developing soundly through looking carefully at a range of different objects, for old and new toys, and at appropriate pictures and photographs in 'fact' books.

## **Creative development**

67. Children make good progress in their creative development and by the age of five, all are likely to achieve the expected standards. They draw carefully using pencils and crayons. Many make a picture of a robot using adhesive shapes appropriately to represent different parts of its body, for example a circle for its head and triangles for its arms. They use their hands well to clap musical rhythms or to create sound effects, for example, when scraping their hands over the mat to create a sound of wind in the trees. They sing familiar rhymes and songs enthusiastically, such as 'One man went to mow?', to support musical and numeracy skills. Displays around the unit are colourful and interesting. The children respond very well to the good opportunities for imaginative and role play activities.

## **Physical development**

68. All children make good progress in developing their physical skills and are expected to achieve the nationally expected levels by the age of five. Many make very good progress, particularly when using opportunities in the hall to improve the range and quality of their movements. They show very good control in developing a broad range of different ways of travelling using hands and feet. They show very good balance when bouncing, on two feet, forwards, backwards and sideways. Children also improve their physical skills by accurately throwing bean bags to land in a particular place. They show a high degree of confidence and control when climbing, swinging and balancing on the outdoor climbing frame and using the other large outdoor play equipment. Children develop fine motor control skills through activities emphasising the use of finger-tips and through opportunities to use pencils and crayons.

## ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### English

69. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, 91 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above in reading; 89 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above in writing. Attainment was well above the national average in both reading and writing. Compared with schools from a similar background, pupils' performance was well above the national average for reading and writing. National test results for 1999 show that reading standards are well above average and standards of writing are above the national average. The number of pupils achieving higher than average levels in reading was well above average in 1998 and above average in 1999. It was well above average in writing in both 1998 and 1999. The school takes into account the differences that occur from year to year in their target setting, to reflect the differences in the ability levels of the pupils in different year groups.
70. Attainment in the 1998 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average in English and above the average for similar schools. 85 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 or better, which is above the national average, including 24 per cent who reached Level 5, which is well above the national average. In the 1999 national tests the school nearly met its challenging target and 87 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 or better, including 43 per cent at Level 5. This significant improvement has been brought about by the school's determination to raise standards in literacy, and confirms the trend over the last three years that attainment has been consistently well above average. The predicted figures for 2000 suggest that approximately 83 per cent will attain Level 4 or higher rising to 86 per cent by 2002. Clearly, even these targets have already been surpassed.
71. Inspection findings show attainment in English to be well above national average at both key stages. Progress throughout the school is consistently good through each key stage. By the time the pupils leave the school standards in English are well above the national average. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout both key stages. The very successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, coupled with good, sometimes excellent teaching, has made significant improvements in attainment.
72. Overall, standards of attainment in speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, many of the pupils listen well and respond confidently to questions, particularly in the literacy hour. For example when Year 1 pupils discuss the main characters in the story 'Owl Babies'; or respond animatedly to the story 'Please, Mrs Butler' in a Year 2 lesson. Key Stage 2 pupils listen very carefully and volunteer words and phrases in good poetic language when they construct Haiku poems in Year 5. In the literacy hour, for example, Year 6 pupils offer reasoned explanations for Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard III as a 'monster'.
73. Attainment in reading is well above average in Year 2 and good progress is made through the key stage. Pupils are already benefiting from the introduction of the literacy hour and the increased focus on literacy in the school. The pupils who work hard in these sessions enjoy the 'shared text' sessions. They usually make good use of phonics and picture cues, and use contextual cues to establish meaning. Most pupils express aspects they like in a story by a favourite author. They read simple texts with increasing fluency and enjoyment, and show in discussion that they understand them and can predict outcomes, as in the Year 2 session when pupils express ideas about Allan Ahlberg's poems and enjoy their rhythm in reading aloud.

74. Good progress continues, maintaining very high standards in reading, which are well above average in Year 6. During the literacy hour in Year 3/4, pupils are able to read their own poetry on 'schoolwork', often displaying imaginative choice of words such as 'pinging' or 'ferocious', to achieve rhyme. Pupils have very good memory of poems they know. In a Year 3/4 session, they read 'Jack and Jill' by John Sweetman, focusing on words with similar letter strings, identifying those that only look as if they rhyme. Year 5 pupils, when reading 'Slowly the fog' by F.R. McReary, use contextual clues to gain information about the personification of fog, 'It sounds like it has a grey face'. Year 6 pupils confidently read from 'Macbeth' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' when analysing the effect of words. Pupils with special educational needs work productively, with help, in group reading an account of Shakespeare's life. Higher attaining pupils meanwhile analyse 'Kubla Khan' for unknown words. Less able pupils can recognise nouns, verbs and adjectives, and use expression when reading Lear's 'The Owl and the Pussycat'. Pupils are taught library skills effectively and have a good understanding of classification systems for both fiction and non-fiction books. There are good opportunities for independent study.
75. In Year 2, attainment in writing was well above the national average for the number of pupils likely to reach Level 2. Good progress is maintained throughout the key stage. Pupils in Year 1 write words beginning with the letter 's' in response to a text 'What if a bear comes?'. Others write confidently and imaginatively within a familiar framework provided by 'Owl Babies'. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils can enter their answers about 'The Dinosaur Book' in a workbook, or identify 'indigo' in a rainbow mnemonic. Less able and pupils with special educational needs can, with help, competently copy the text 'Poppies in the field'. They demonstrate a variety of feelings associated with language in other subjects. For instance, in science in Year 1, pupils observe the effects of 'hot' and 'cold' and write, 'When I close my eyes I see red tulips shining in my eyes'. Pupils can write a survey of shopping in Buckden in Geography in Year 2. They write diaries, posters, labels and stories using appropriate language and format. They attempt to spell words using phonics and more able pupils are spelling simple and some common polysyllabic words correctly. Pupils use information technology to promote their literacy skills, for example, word processing simple sentences to build up word recognition and spelling skills.
76. Attainment in writing is well above average by the time pupils leave the school. Progress is consistently good for older pupils and for those with special educational needs. In Year 3/4, pupils' writing is well organised for a first draft in response to the text 'Poem about writing a poem' by Eric Finney. Some are very imaginative. Pupils in Year 5 use inventive language of personification in describing the seasons in their haiku. Year 6 pupils have very effective interaction with their teachers that promotes higher quality in descriptive content. They have lively and sustained ideas drawn from 'Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother'; or when describing the significant characters and events in 'Midsummer Night's Dream'. They can add their own ideas, 'the liquid dropped on the eyes meant that she would love the very next creature she sees, however loathsome'. Punctuation and spelling are usually correct. Handwriting is usually neat and legible, with careful attention to presentation. There is a good range of writing appropriate to different subjects, evidence was found of writing letters in history, scientific instructions, reading reviews, diaries and posters.
77. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good, including those with special educational needs. They have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy the shared text sessions in the literacy hour, as observed in many classes. For example, in Year 1 pupils are animated in discussing Billy's feelings 'he is an owl baby. He is missing his mother. In Year 3/4 pupils were enthusiastic in responses to the poems 'Jack and Jill' and 'Homework, oh homework'. Year 6 pupils get deeply involved in 'Midsummer Night's Dream'. Many pupils concentrate and work productively.

78. All teaching was at least satisfactory with almost three-quarters of the lessons observed good or excellent. The teachers have worked hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy, which they do with good understanding of the requirements of the strategy and a confident knowledge of English. The shared text work and plenary sessions are usually good or very good and promote independence in the group sessions effectively. Progress is good throughout the school because teachers have high expectations and make it clear to pupils that they should do their best. Pupils respond positively and work hard. Teachers establish very good relationships with the children, use questioning and answer sessions effectively and use praise and encouragement well. Teachers are effective models that support pupil attainment. They teach skills directly, promoting independent work.
79. Marking is underwritten by a clear, coherent code. It is supportive and developmental, and gives pupils a clear idea on how to improve their work. Planning is very good, and assessment opportunities are identified effectively. Indeed, at times, pupils do self-assessment when, for example, a Year 6 pupil stops writing and starts over, "because I can do it better". In most classes, the liaison between home and school via the reading records is very good. Pupils' progress is being conscientiously recorded. Tests to monitor progress are in place and with teachers' assessments, this enables the school to set targets for improvements for every child.

## **Mathematics**

80. In the last inspection report pupils were attaining standards in mathematics, which were in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Most pupils were achieving levels, which were appropriate to their abilities. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection. At the end of both key stages, inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve standards which are well above the national average.
81. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 tests and assessments in mathematics the number of pupils attaining Level 2, the expected level for seven year olds, and above was well above the national average. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was above average. The school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 since 1996 show a trend of steady improvement. Although there was a slight fall in results at the end of 1998 the school results recovered in 1999 and the trend of improvements is continuing.
82. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 tests and assessments the number of pupils attaining Level 4, the expected level for eleven year olds, and above was above the national average. It was average compared with similar schools. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above average. The school's results, at the end of Key Stage 2, since 1996 also show a trend of steady improvement. The school was disappointed with the slight fall in standards in 1998 but results recovered in 1999 and the general trend of improvement is continuing.
83. At the end of Key Stage 1 average pupils can add and subtract tens and units within 100 and have developed mental strategies for adding numbers up to 99. They multiply and divide using single numbers. Pupils identify and name a good range of two and three dimensional shapes, identify the seasons accurately, learn to tell the time, count money to totals up to £1 and use standard measures of length and weight. In investigations they use Carroll diagrams when sorting objects according to their properties and measure the time actions take to complete. Block graphs are drawn from the data pupils collect, for example when investigating their friend's favourite fruit. Work is modified for pupils of lower ability and extra challenge is set for more able pupils.
84. At the end of Key Stage 2 average pupils understand place value to hundreds of thousands, they can add and subtract to two places of decimals, multiply hundreds, tens and units by two digit numbers and divide by 10, 100 and by single digits. They learn to calculate the mode, mean and median of a good range of data and develop a very good range of mental strategies in calculation. Pupils use centimetres, metres and kilometres when measuring distances, calculate the area and perimeter of a good range of

shapes using formulae and calculate percentages of discounts in money. They have a satisfactory number of experiences of data collection using tally and frequency charts. These statistics are used to produce graphs which pupils are taught to interrogate for further information. Good quality graphs are seen, in displays around the school, which have been produced using computers. Mathematical skills are used in other areas of the curriculum such as science, history and geography and in a good range of investigations and challenges within the mathematics curriculum.

85. The very good planning by teachers in parallel classes and within units ensures progression and continuity across both key stages. The use of very good assessment information to enable setting by ability and to match work closely to what pupils already know and can do enables good progress in both key stages. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very well introduced. The subject co-ordinator has monitored the delivery of numeracy in all classes and each teacher has been able to observe a colleague teaching numeracy. This very good introduction of the strategy is already beginning to raise standards even further.
86. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Mathematical work is matched closely to pupils' knowledge and understanding and very good learning support and general assistants provide very good levels of guidance. Class teachers show high levels of teaching skills, which enable these pupils to make good progress.
87. Pupils in both key stages respond well to their experiences in mathematics. They work at levels appropriate to their abilities and from the earliest age they begin to develop skills as independent learners. When working co-operatively they respond well to each other's solutions and opinions. The very good relationships between pupils' supports their learning and all staff provide very good role models. Behaviour is almost always very good.
88. The quality of teaching observed was good or very good in all lessons in both key stages. In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching was good in three out of four lessons observed and very good in one. Nine lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in five of these was good and very good in the remaining four. When teaching was very good lesson objectives were not only clear but were shared with pupils and the use of time targets maintained a high pace level. In these lessons class teachers used very well focused questioning to assess and reinforce pupils' learning at the end of the lesson. In all lessons there was consistent building of specific mathematical vocabulary. Expectations of pupils from the very youngest upwards are very high.
89. The very good subject co-ordinator has contributed highly to the very good introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy by providing staff training and by monitoring the quality of teaching in all classes.

## Science

90. The school's 1999 results of the National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, were well above the national average for all schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 or above were also well above the national average. The pupils' attainment was above average for schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. These results show a very significant improvement in pupils' attainment since the last inspection. The school's results remained well above the national average in 1996 and 1997. These were broadly in line with the national average in 1998. The results of 1999, however, show a significant improvement both in the number of pupils achieving the average Level 4 and the number achieving higher than average. The school's results have also improved remarkably in comparison with similar schools. Very effective use of revision procedures to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of particular topics promoted high standards.
91. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national

average. It is broadly average compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was also above average compared to schools nationally and broadly average compared with similar schools. The 1999 results were slightly lower than 1998 at Level 2 or above and significantly lower for Level 3. The 1998 results indicated that performance of pupils at Level 2 or above was very high in all aspects except experimental and investigative science. In this aspect, the results were above average.

92. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2, taken together for the period 1996 to 1998, indicated no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls within the school. The observations of Year 6 boys and girls at work, during the inspection, show no significant difference between their performance. The 1998 results indicate that nationally, the performance of boys was above the national average, the performance of girls was well above the national average.
93. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards of attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 are above the national average. The difference between the test results and the inspection findings can be attributed to the difference between the two groups of pupils and to the revision, during the summer term, the benefits of which are not apparent at the time of the inspection. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' new learning and the good quality monitoring of pupils' learning to provide the support they need promote good standards. Pupils' good command of language skills and their desire to learn also contribute to pupils' above average standards and good progress in lessons.
94. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have above average knowledge, skills and understanding of areas studied. They use correct vocabulary to describe transparency, translucency and opaqueness of different materials. They contribute ideas for planning experiments and recognise and explain what makes a test unfair, for example when exploring materials to find out the extent to which extent these allow the light to pass through. Pupils know the characteristics of living things, for example that they move, grow, breathe, reproduce and feed. They know from their investigations on growing cress or beans that greenness (health) of plants is dependent on light.
95. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have above average knowledge, understanding of several elements of science. For example, several below average pupils make correct predictions about conditions that favour growth of mould. Pupils recognise the need for fair tests and apply this in their investigations, for example, conditions necessary for plant growth. The high attaining pupils justify why they predict their samples of food will grow mould in a warm and light or in a warm and dark place. The majority of pupils use their skills to set up investigations to develop their subject knowledge and understanding. For example from their work on circuits, they know how to make a bulb brighter or dimmer by altering the size of the battery or the length of the wire in a circuit.
96. Pupils make good progress in lessons in both key stages. In Years 3 and 4 pupils acquire knowledge of what is required to make a circuit and the purpose of a switch. Higher attaining pupils use a range of insulators and conductors including pencils of different lengths and develop some understanding of how a dimmer switch works. Year 6 pupils become more confident in turning ideas into a form that they can investigate and in their understanding of the principle of fair testing. Pupils with special educational needs in English are provided with appropriate language support by the class teachers or support assistants. Alternatively they are supported through carefully selected grouping. These support measures help them to make good progress in science lessons. Differentiated work and careful grouping also help higher attaining pupils to make good progress, for example in Year 3/4 classes, using pencils of different lengths to simulate a dimmer switch.
97. The links with other subjects are good. Teachers are aware of pupils' need to develop science vocabulary and a development towards formal writing of experiments. They make sure that pupils understand and make use of new terms such as evaporation and condensation. There is good emphasis



on links with mathematics. Pupils are aware of different measures, for example 'cm' for length and develop pupils' skills of drawing and interpreting graphs. Links with design and technology are well developed. For example pupils make games and toys using magnets. The use of information technology is sound for example, when Year 6 pupils were writing up their experiment on conditions that favour growth of mould.

98. Pupils' attitude to work, behaviour and relationships are very good. They enjoy science and respond very positively, for example discovering different ways of making a bulb brighter or dimmer. Boys and girls relate very well with each other and with their teacher. Their behaviour is very good and they are well aware of their responsibility to work with sustained concentration when engaged in various activities. All of these features make a very significant contribution to the creation of very good learning environment for all the pupils.
99. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Out of the eight lessons observed, it was very good in three lessons, good in three lessons and satisfactory in two lessons. Teachers set very high expectations of the quality of learning through differentiated activities and appropriate use of scientific terminology, for example translucent. They very closely monitor the progress of pupils and use this information very effectively to sustain good progress. The lessons have clear objectives and structure. Occasionally however, the good practice of writing the learning objectives on a flipchart is not used to check that pupils understand what they are trying to achieve. Teachers combine explanations, demonstrations, practical activities and individual, group, or whole class discussion to ensure effective learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on electricity, a clear explanation of the learning objective, appropriate demonstration of the different activities and an effective reminder of the time available to complete the work enables pupils to focus on what they are trying to achieve. The management of pupils is invariably good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which they use effectively in explanations. Plenary sessions are used very effectively to share ideas and findings and consolidate new learning.
100. The science curriculum is provided within a framework of topics, linked with history and geography, and taught on a two yearly rotation. Recent national guidance is currently being implemented to replace the existing scheme of work and blend into the topic framework in a more cohesive way. The science topics, as currently planned, do not always successively build on pupils' previous learning in a systematic way. For example, whilst the Year 5/6 topic on 'Planet Earth' allowed pupils to develop satisfactory knowledge of the Sun and its planets, it left gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in other planned areas such as gases and changing state. This does not enable progress to be consistent across the school, particularly at Key Stage 2. Whilst, progress is sound during the Years 3 to 5, it is good in Year 6 particularly when the pupils revise. Progress over time is affected by inconsistent allocation of time during the different terms. The overall allocation of time per year is also significantly less than the national average.

### **Information and communication technology**

101. It was only possible to observe two lessons in Key Stage 2 during the course of the inspection. In Key Stage 1, observations were made of individuals or groups of pupils using computers. Evidence was gained mostly from the scrutiny of work, teacher's planning and records and discussion with staff and pupils. Attainment overall is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, generally make sound progress in developing their skills.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use a mouse well, load a programme, save and print their work. Pupils retrieve information that has previously been stored in the computer memory and give commands to produce simple specified outcomes. Pupils also develop their word processing skills effectively. In Year 1 pupils were extending their keyboard skills by using fingers on both hands to type in their text. In Year 2 pupils were placing picture data in a correct sequence based on criteria identified on the

screen.

103. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have further extended and applied their skills. They access stored information and use this in the preparation of reports. They also incorporate graphical representations in their writings, for example, when Year 6 pupils use illustrations to improve the presentation of their questionnaires. Pupils classify and input information to be used by themselves or other pupils. Pupils in Year 4 had designed an electrical circuit, bringing in the elements to complete the circuit. In Year 6 pupils were designing a survey to ask specific questions about a topic chosen by themselves. Both the questions and answers were to be fed into the computer with the aim of writing a report. In word processing pupils change fonts and formulate paragraphs with correct spacing.
104. Pupils in both key stages have a confident and enthusiastic attitude. They clearly enjoy using computers. They co-operate well together to share the keyboard and mouse. Many pupils have an enthusiastic approach, often reflecting the positive attitude of the teachers and the number of pupils who have increased their skills using home computers.
105. From a small number of observations, the quality of teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers organise their computers well to make effective use of them. In Key Stage 1 pupils have some opportunity to work on the computer individually. Teachers plan this well throughout the day to enable them to directly teach individuals or groups of pupils. In Key Stage 2 computers have largely been grouped together and these have been timetabled amongst classes. Good support is given by classroom assistants and voluntary helpers and this promotes pupils skills.
106. The development of information and communication technology is in a state of transition. By the early part of the year 2000 the school will have taken delivery of a significant number of new computers with improved CD Rom facilities. These will be networked in Key Stage 2 and will give the school the opportunity to extend their teaching of information technology. The school has already given considerable thought to the best organisation of these new computers and how the teaching can be developed in Key Stage 1. Funds have also been allocated for the training of teachers. With this improvement in the range of hardware and the addition of specific subject software the school plans to extend the range of opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills across the curriculum.

### **Religious education**

107. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Attainment is above the standards expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of other faiths, for example, Islam and Judaism. Acts of collective worship are used well to promote standards and to support the caring, Christian ethos of the school.
108. At Key Stage 1, pupils know and understand about Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. They understand the purpose of different ceremonies, such as weddings, and contrast them well with those in other religions, for example a Muslim wedding. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that the Bible is a special book and contains stories about Jesus. Some recall aspects of these stories, for example, when Jesus helped the fisherman in Galilee to catch more fish. Many Key Stage 1 pupils have an above expected knowledge of the beliefs and rituals of Islam. They know details of the Muslim prayer ritual. They explain in detail that Muslims face Mecca, they use their prayer mat to pray five times each day and they wash carefully before praying as they want to be clean before speaking to their God. Most pupils know that Muslims pray in a mosque to their God Allah. Some higher attaining pupils explain that the Quran was written because the angel came to Mohammed to tell him. They talk about the contrasts with Christian practices, for example the way we pray. Some Year 2 pupils, with some guidance from the teacher, describe the symbolism of some of the rituals, for example when a Muslim's head touches his prayer mat.
109. This knowledge is built on very well at Key Stage 2. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know some details of

stories from the Old Testament, for example 'Jonah and the whale' and how Moses brought the Ten Commandments to his people. They discuss the meaning of commandments, and use their understanding well to develop their own 'rules' which would help the school community. Year 3 and 4 pupils show a good awareness of the personal qualities, such as kindness and consideration, which contribute to good relationships. Some talk of their love for God and of each other which would help everyone 'to get along together well'. Such group discussions make a significant contribution to the caring, co-operative, Christian ethos of the school.

110. Some Year 5 and 6 pupils have a good knowledge of Jewish beliefs and practices. They know that the sacred book of Judaism is called the Torah. They know that it is written in Hebrew and that it is read from right to left. Some Year 6 pupils know that the Jewish holy day is called the Sabbath. A higher attainer explains why it is a 'rest' day. They show a good understanding in contrasting some aspects of Judaism and Islam with practices in the Church of England. For example, Year 6 pupils describe the Bible stand in the local church with the stand for the Quran and not touching the holy book when reading the Torah. Pupils describe in detail their visits to local churches, for example Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist. They talk about the different features, for example the colours of the altar cloth and the different cassocks worn by the vicar.
111. Pupils' response is good and frequently very good. They have a positive and enthusiastic approach to their work. Pupils sit quietly, listen attentively and are keen to answer questions and join in discussions. They show very good respect for the different beliefs and practices of other religions. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 watch with keen interest as another pupil demonstrates aspects of the Muslim ritual.
112. The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge, for example in the knowledge and understanding of other religions. They use it well to improve pupils' understanding, for example, Year 1 and 2 pupils know how and when Muslims pray. Teachers use a very good range of resources to interest pupils and focus their attention. In a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher uses a Muslim pray mat and prayer beads to promote discussion on contrasts between Islam and Christianity. Teachers manage their classes very well to ensure that all pupils contribute to discussions. They use a range of questions effectively to encourage pupils to express their views. In a Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher used questions, for example 'Why did God bring in 'commandments'?' to develop a very detailed discussion on 'rules' and related it very effectively to the personal qualities which contribute to a caring community.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS**

### **Art**

113. Since the last report the school has maintained the good progress shown in art. Good quality pupils' work is displayed very effectively throughout the school. All exhibits are carefully mounted and help to create a visually rich and stimulating environment. This promotes high standards, providing encouragement and inspiration for pupils' art work.
114. The standard of art at the end of both key stages is good and pupils make good progress which builds on previously learned skills. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop their awareness of using different colour tones, for example using colour mixing skills well to obtain a consistent texture for a colour wash.
115. The comprehensive scheme of work identifies the priorities for ensuring developing skills and the curriculum provides for good links with topic areas. This is well illustrated by a range of artefacts, models and paintings produced to support the Egyptian topic. As pupils move up through the school they are introduced to a range of media and techniques. They also learn about some of the great artists

and are given the chance to work in different styles. One class in Key Stage 2 were shown examples of the work of some Impressionist painters with an explanation as to how the pictures were built up by the artists. They were then given the opportunity to try for themselves. Apart from the good work, pupils expressed satisfaction in understanding how a picture was constructed.

116. Learning at both key stages is characterised by the care with which pupils approach their work and by the ordered classroom environment obtained by the teachers. In a Key Stage 1 class pupils were colour mixing to achieve a gradation of tone from blue to white. Pupils approached the task with great concentration and without rushing. Not all were successful at the first try but were motivated to try again and showed that they had learned from their first efforts. Perseverance to produce work with which they were pleased was common to all classes.
117. Teaching is good. The very good planning and organisation of lessons creates a good working environment. In all lessons the necessary resources were prepared before the lessons started and no time was lost. Teachers achieve a good balance between the time taken for instruction and the time available for pupils to work. All lessons were characterised by the very good relationships between teacher and pupils. Pupils had confidence that their questions would be treated with respect and this helped pupils to achieve the good standards.
118. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a thorough grounding in art skills, a knowledge of different artists and know how to use a range of media and materials.

### **Design and technology**

119. At the last inspection, standards of achievement in design and technology were in line with the national expectations and appropriate for pupils' abilities. The quality of learning in both key stages was good. The current inspection shows that the situation has improved in Key Stage 1, where pupils make very good progress. The good progress in Key Stage 2 has been maintained. Progress overall in design and technology is good.
120. There were no opportunities to observe design and technology teaching in Key Stage 2. Evidence was gained from three lessons observed in Key Stage 1, through a scrutiny of the pupils' work on display, books and products, discussion with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of teaching plans. These show that the pupils' develop above average levels of knowledge, skills and understanding through designing and making products using good range of different materials. These provide good opportunities for pupils to develop designing skills, evaluating and refining, and making skills which include using of a wide variety of tools.
121. Pupils in Key Stage 1 design and make a good range of products which contribute to their very good progress in developing and refining skills. Year 1 and 2 pupils learn techniques of handling clay and designing, modelling and making clay owls. Year 2 pupils also design, make and finish products of high quality, for example swings and puppets. They also develop good evaluation skills. For example, a Year 2 pupil evaluates the puppet he made. 'I like my puppet because I did it *and* how I planned it. How, I could improve it ? *by* giving eyes and ears?.'
122. In Key Stage 2, pupils make a good range of progressively demanding products. These require wide ranging skills at different stages of their completion. For example, in Year 3 and 4, pupils design and make products such as magnetic toys and Tudor houses. They investigate materials to determine their suitability for toys. They also develop good understanding of how mechanisms work, for example a shadoof. Year 5 and 6 pupils design and make products such as a shadoof, a Viking longship and a moon-base of a complex structure. The good range of finished products indicates that pupils develop good skills in using tools and techniques and knowledge and understanding of materials and mechanisms.

123. Pupils have highly positive attitudes, good motivation and perseverance in learning design and technology. Pupils listen to instructions with very good levels of concentration and apply themselves with great interest and enthusiasm. In a lesson on modelling an owl using clay, pupils were totally immersed in listening to their teacher and developing their skills. Pupils work very well together and their behaviour is very good.
124. Design and technology is very well linked with other subjects. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to consider and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in science, for example designing and making a magnetic toy for a specific purpose. They develop and use an increasing range of technical vocabulary to extend their language skills. Marking and accurate measurements develop good understanding of mathematical skills in a practical way. Contexts of history and geography are well used to promote mutual understanding, for example when designing and making a shadoof. The close link with information and communication technology and design is less well developed.
125. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that teaching in Key Stage 2 is at least good. Teachers provide good range of activities that progressively build on pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding. However, specific judgements on the overall quality of quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 are not possible as no teaching was observed. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good. Out of the three lessons observed, it was excellent in one lesson and very good in one lesson. Teachers have very good knowledge and skills of working with clay. They use this very effectively for planning, setting very high expectations and teaching of skills. Teachers keep a very close watch on pupils' progress and are quick to provide effective support when pupils require it.

## **Geography**

126. The school has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection report. Geography resources have been increased in quantity and quality; skills development is now rigorously monitored throughout the key stages, and geography themes are now covered in some depth. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of work and the range of resources available in both key stages, because geography was not a focus of the topic cycle during the time of the inspection. In Key Stage 1, pupils can map the school grounds and have knowledge of local shops and amenities. They have satisfactory knowledge of location and the characteristics of places through fieldwork in and around the village, and know its relationship to the rest of the British Isles. They readily identify landmarks on maps, and begin to use appropriate geographical vocabulary.
127. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are keenly engaged in geographical enquiry. In Year 5, pupils compare England with Kenya. They make judgements about life in a city like Mombasa compared to the African village, Makinyani. The first has 'night life, lots of buildings, shops, cars and buses'. The latter has 'little huts, dusty roads' a place for a suntan! Year 6 compare and contrast life in a village in the Midlands with life in Scotland. They understand that places have good and bad aspects and express their own views. They make preferences between Cambridge and Scotland by reasoning out the incidence of rainfall or heat in summer.
128. Progress in geography is sound in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils are clearly developing their knowledge of places, features, maps and weather. They are learning to apply what they see in life, or from photographs, to maps, and to consider where people choose to settle.
129. There were no opportunities to judge the quality of teaching in either key stage. However, planning is excellent and supports attainment and progress. Marking is supportive and developmental. Arrangements for assessment are good. The range and use of resources are good.
130. The subject is enhanced by fieldwork locally and in places further away. Good opportunities are provided in residential visits. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. There are natural links with other subjects, like history and

mathematics. There is appropriate use of information and communication technology.

## **History**

131. The school has made good progress in addressing the weakness pointed out in the last inspection report. Continuity and progression between the key stages is now rigorously monitored and supported by excellent planning within the topic framework. In Key Stage 1, history was not a focus of the rolling programme during the inspection. However, progress is at least satisfactory by the end of the key stage. In examining previous work and the range and quality of the resources available, pupils clearly investigate changes in the lives of school children through the use of artefacts and good quality pictures. They develop a sense of chronology, for example, in studying babyhood photographs and comparing them with recent photos.
132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to use reference material to provide explanations in class. They enjoy showing their historical knowledge. Pupils can describe the governance of Sparta, 'Thirty old men rule the city'. Their writing, some word-processed, and artwork with historical themes is well displayed in class and around the school. For example, a life-size model of an Egyptian sarcophagus confronts visitors. The pupils show investigative skills when evaluating copies of artefacts from Ancient Greece or reporting an archaeological find in a qualitative statement, 'an iron shield boss with rivets, that would be very protective'.
133. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils are introduced to important historical concepts such as chronology, change and continuity, and historical enquiry. There is generally an appropriate balance between imparting information and encouraging pupils to find out for themselves. Pupils begin to use relevant study skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 produce a newspaper report of monks distressed when Viking raiders destroyed their monastery.
134. The subject is enhanced through visits to places of historical importance, maintaining a museum of artefacts; and by the use of appropriate information technology. History makes a valuable contribution to cultural understanding. For example, pupils working in art drew on their knowledge of the values and customs of the Ancient Egyptians as a basis for developing their models.

## **Music**

135. The last inspection report found that pupils' standards in music were average in both key stages, although too few demands were made of more able pupils. Progress was satisfactory in both key stages.
136. The school has improved in all these areas since the last inspection. The scheme of work for music covers all elements of the music curriculum and links assessment to the whole school assessment policy. It gives teachers a good level of support and guidance. There is a good range of instruments for pupils to play and the use of the activity room for the storage of instruments and the teaching of music lessons is very well managed.
137. In Key Stage 1 pupils' make good progress in composing and playing musical instruments. They show effective control of their voices, for example when singing in rounds in 'singing assembly'. Pupils listen carefully and develop knowledge of the sounds produced by various types of instruments such as strings, wind instruments and percussion. Many pupils in Year 2 learn to play the recorder. This enables good progress in their early abilities to read music, which is taught in class lessons.
138. In Key Stage 2 the good progress is sustained. Pupils are taught to extend the range of their singing and match their compositions to other areas of their studies, for example when a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils compose music to accompany ceremonial occasions being studied in religious education. They develop greater skills in maintaining a pulse, melody or rhythm and can sustain parts in three and four

part rounds.

139. Pupils are excited by their music. All levels of ability are catered for and supported including pupils with special educational needs. By the end of their time in the school pupils show good levels of perseverance and determination to present good quality work. They co-operate well in their rehearsals and performances.
140. The quality of teaching is dependent upon the individual levels of skills of teachers. The good scheme of work, the support materials available and the expertise and guidance of the effective subject co-ordinator supports the quality of teaching in both key stages. During the inspection five lessons were observed across both key stages. The quality of teaching in one was very good, in two good and the remaining two lessons teaching was satisfactory. In addition to these lessons the school orchestra was observed during a rehearsal, the Year 2 recorder club and the open singing club were seen which supports the judgement that the quality of teaching in music is good overall.
141. Lessons throughout the whole of the school provide a balanced range of activities that includes listening to music, appraising what they have heard, performing and composing throughout the school year.
142. The quality of the peripatetic music tuition provided for a significant number of pupils is an important factor which contributes to the very good quality of the school orchestra in which more than twenty pupils play. The range of instruments is very wide. Violins, trumpets, trombones, timpani and French horn are played by pupils of all ages. The subject co-ordinator is a music lover and works hard with other members of staff to maintain a broad musical education for all pupils.

### **Physical education**

143. At the time of the last inspection standards were good in both key stages. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils move around the hall well using a broad range of travelling movements. They use a good range of different body parts to support their body weight and effectively link these movements into a short sequence. For example, Year 1 pupils perform a short sequence on floor and apparatus, emphasising changes in the height of their different movements. They show a good awareness of the need for space for themselves and others around them. Pupils create good dance sequences, using a broad range of different stimuli to interpret and develop appropriate movements. For example Year 2 pupils use the poem 'Look! Look what I can do!' to create a variety of different, linked movements to interpret the words very effectively.
144. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a high quality, group dance sequence linked to their Egyptians topic in history. They work very well together to perform a good range of controlled, synchronised movements with appropriate changes in height to represent changes in the level of the River Nile. Standards in swimming are high. Most Year 6 pupils swim well with sound technique, particularly for front crawl. Games skills are developed well and enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities to extend their use into competitive sports such as football and netball.
145. Pupils are very responsive in lessons. They work hard and are encouraged by the enthusiasm of the teachers. Pupils listen attentively and watch carefully as teachers or other pupils demonstrate movements or skills. They co-operate very well together, for example in dance and gymnastic sequences. They clearly enjoy physical activity.
146. The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Lessons are very well planned and are characterised by the very good control by teachers which encourages pupils to improve the quality of their performance. Teachers clearly set out what the pupils are trying to achieve and the response of the pupils allowed very good progress to be made towards the clear learning objectives. Lessons are also very well paced. Teacher instruction is kept to a minimum. This allows pupils plenty

of opportunity to take part and to maximise the amount of time available for them to improve their skills. Teachers are skilful at identifying teaching points and in the way in which they use pupils to demonstrate these. This was clearly illustrated in a Year 1 games lesson, when effective use of pupil demonstration and teacher advice improved ball control skills. Teachers use pupil demonstrations well to illustrate the range of movement ideas, although opportunities are not always taken to look for ways in which the quality can be improved.

147. The school makes very good use of the resources available to them. Lessons are varied and pupils in Year 1 are trained to successfully set up and take down large apparatus. Good external resources of netball courts, an outdoor heated learner pool and a grassed pitch are also well used. With these facilities available, pupils are introduced to and practice a number of different sports including football, netball, hockey, cricket, athletics and short tennis. The school also makes occasional use of coaches in these areas to help increase the skill and enjoyment factor of the pupils.
148. Within the demands of the primary curriculum the school allocates a reasonable amount of time to the physical education curriculum. The timetable is flexible and is varied according to the weather and the suitability of outdoor areas. There is a very well balanced programme which covers all required aspects. A very good whole school scheme of work for gymnastics provides a central focus for much of the pupils' work. Added to this are well designed schemes for dance, swimming, outdoor activities, athletics and games. These schemes provide good advice and guidance for the non-specialist teacher and play an important part in enabling pupils to make good progress. Dance resources have been extended significantly over the past four years.

### **Swimming**

149. The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming which is reported below.
150. The standard achieved is very high. Almost all Year 6 pupils swim twenty five metres. They show good stroke technique. As pupils increase their range of strokes and distance swum this is recorded on an individual record. All pupils from Year 1 upwards have regular sessions for swimming and in all years except one, this are six sessions of thirty minutes.
151. Pupils swim at a nearby local authority indoor pool. This is a good facility with a lifeguard on duty throughout the session. Pupils are taken by coach on a specific afternoon and the coach makes a shuttle run between the school and the pool. There is no time wasted and pupils benefit from their full pool allocation. The school also has an outdoor heated learner pool which is used by pupils in Key Stage 1. New changing rooms have been completed. High attaining swimmers go swimming with Key Stage 2 pupils to ensure progress is not impeded.
152. The school has a very well organised scheme of work for the teaching of swimming which gives detailed guidance to the non-specialist teacher. Lessons are well planned and mounted on laminated card. At the pool pupils are normally organised into three groups. One group is taken by an instructor employed by the local authority, one by a member of staff and the third by a qualified volunteer. The member of staff holds an appropriate swimming qualification. All members of staff have successfully completed a resuscitation course. This course is repeated annually and is attended by all staff members.



## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

153. The team consisted of 6 inspectors, including a lay inspector, who spent a total of 24 inspector days in school. The inspection team:
- C. Spent over 69 hours observing 89 lessons and reviewing pupils' work.
  - C. Attended a sample of registration sessions.
  - C. Attended assemblies.
  - C. Had lunch with the pupils.
  - C. Observed pupils' arrival at and departure from school.
  - C. Observed all teachers at least once and most several times.
  - C. Had discussions with the Headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff, the Chairman of Governors, other governors and support staff working in school.
  - C. Reviewed all the available written work of a representative sample of three pupils from each class and heard these and other pupils reading.
  - C. Held informal discussions with many pupils.
  - C. Analysed a large amount of documentation provided by the school both before and during the inspection including; -
    - school prospectus; school policies; the Governors' Annual Report to Parents; minutes of governors' meetings; financial statements; the school development plan; subject policies and planning; pupils' records and reports, including those for pupils with special educational needs; the previous inspection report and action plan.
  - C. Held a meeting attended by 23 parents and considered 70 responses from parents to a questionnaire asking about their views of the school

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR ? Y6	354	2	60	18

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR ? Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	14.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

#### Education support staff (YR ? Y6)

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week	72.5

#### Average class size:

27
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### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
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	?
Total Income	561, 232
Total Expenditure	557,552
Expenditure per pupil	1433
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,936
Balance carried forward to next year	16,616

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

250

Number of questionnaires returned:

70

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	62.0	38.6	1.4	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	57.1	38.6	1.4	2.9	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	21.4	47.1	25.8	5.7	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	17.1	54.3	18.6	7.1	2.9
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24.3	54.3	14.3	7.1	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	38.6	44.3	14.2	2.9	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	44.3	50.0	4.3	1.4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25.7	55.7	11.5	5.7	1.4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	38.6	52.9	8.5	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	28.6	55.7	8.6	5.7	1.4
My child(ren) like(s) school	42.9	52.9	1.3	2.9	0

### Other issues raised by a small number of parents

- C. Some inconsistency in homework between classes.
- C. They are not always kept informed about what is being taught.
- C. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to extend their skills and knowledge.

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Desirable Learning Outcomes ? goals for learning for children under five by the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five. They mainly refer to literacy, numeracy and social education.