

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Caldecote VC Lower School**  
Biggleswade

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 109596

Inspection Number: 187589

Headteacher: Mrs H Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr Phil Mann  
14509

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706966  
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower School
Type of control:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manor Place Upper Caldecote Biggleswade Bedfordshire SG18 9DA
Telephone number:	01767 316206
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Day
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Subject responsibility</b>	<b>Aspect responsibility</b>
Phil Mann <i>(Registered inspector)</i>	Mathematics; Information technology; Design and technology; Music; Physical education; Religious education; Special educational needs.	Attainment and progress; Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Teaching; Leadership and management.
Bob Miller <i>(Lay inspector)</i>	Equal opportunities.	Attendance; Pupils' guidance and welfare; Partnership with parents and the community; Staffing, accommodation and
Wendy Jenkins	Children under five; English; Science; Art; Geography; History.	Curriculum and assessment; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The inspection contractor was:

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 in several subjects, including mathematics, science and music.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and they enjoy coming to school.
- The majority of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers' planning is particularly good throughout the school.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is a good feature of the school. Parent helpers work hard to maintain this level of provision.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture and that of others.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment in information and communication technology is below national expectations at both key stages.
- II. Curriculum co-ordination is underdeveloped.
- III. The support and monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour.

**The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be addressed. The plan will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils in the school.**

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

Following the last inspection in April 1996, an action plan was prepared which set out targets for future improvement. The staff and governors have made satisfactory progress overall in addressing the key issues, and their capacity for future improvement is good.

- \*. The governing body have worked closely with the school to improve the quality of the school development plan. It now provides a clear framework for school improvement;
- \*. There has been some impact on curriculum development by subject co-ordinators, but the monitoring of the curriculum is still unsatisfactory;
- \*. Good procedures for assessing pupils' progress are now in place, and information is used effectively to inform curriculum planning;
- \*. The allocation of teaching time now complies with national recommendations;
- \*. Teachers provide an appropriate range of activities and opportunities for pupils to become 'independent learners';
- \*. The school now has sufficient resources to support multi-cultural development;
- \*. Provision for extra-curricular activities is now a good feature of the school.

\* **Standards in subjects**

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

<b>Performance in</b>	<b>Compared with all schools</b>	<b>Compared with similar schools</b>	<b>* Key</b>
			<i>well above average</i> A
			<i>above average</i> B
			<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i> D
			<i>well below average</i> E
Reading	D	D	
Writing	E	D	
Mathematics	C	D	

Results of the National Curriculum tests for 1999 show that the attainment of the seven year olds is below average in reading, well below average in writing, and in line with national averages in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show that attainment is below average when compared with all schools nationally. When results are compared with those of similar schools, standards are below average in these subjects. These results are based on a small year group, in which over a third of the pupils had learning difficulties or special educational needs. If allowance is made for the circumstances of this year group, standards are broadly in line with the national average. When statistics for the previous three years are compared, standards in reading and writing have slightly fallen but those in mathematics have improved. Analysis of available data indicates that there is very little difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

Inspection findings indicate satisfactory improvement at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 when compared with these National Curriculum results. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above national expectations for seven and nine year olds. Attainment in reading and writing is broadly in line with that expected for these age groups. Attainment in mathematics and science is also in line with national expectations at seven and nine. Skills in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall. Standards in information technology are currently below that expected of seven and nine year olds. Attainment in religious education for both these age groups is in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards are at least satisfactory for all other subjects at both key stages, with good progress being achieved in many subjects in Key Stage 2.

The attainment of children under five on entry to the school is in line with the level expected of children of a similar age, except for speaking and listening and personal and social development, which are above the levels expected. The children make good progress in speaking and listening and personal and social development and satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning.

\*

### Quality of teaching

* Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 9 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Science	No judgement	Satisfactory	Good
Information technology	No judgement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	No judgement	Satisfactory	No judgement
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching for children under five is satisfactory. It is never less than satisfactory, and in an eighth of lessons it is good. Planning and the preparation of activities for children under five are satisfactory, and the staff work effectively as a team. The teachers' expectations of what children can achieve are appropriate and work is effectively matched to the ability of the children.

The quality of teaching throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory overall, with nearly a half of lessons good or better. Teaching is best in the Key Stage 2 class, where some very good teaching was seen. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and these standards in the quality of teaching have been maintained since the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects are satisfactory overall. They are good in the teaching of mathematics, science, music, and design and technology.

In all other subjects, knowledge is generally secure among the teachers, but some are less experienced in some subjects such as religious education, music and physical education. Teachers use vocabulary that is easily understood and introduce and use language that is specific to the subject they are teaching, as was seen in a good geography lesson for the Key Stage 1 class. Teachers' day-to-day planning is good.

Teachers plan interesting activities to motivate and stimulate pupils. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are appropriate, but are highest at Key Stage 2. Where teaching is very good, as seen in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson on fractions, teachers set out very clearly in their lesson plans what is to be taught and what pupils are to learn. A particularly good feature of teaching in the school is the effective use of time at the end of lessons to review what pupils have learnt. In the less successful lessons, time is not always used to good advantage, and the pace of work is too slow or the teacher talks for too long. In these lessons pupils can become restless and inattentive.

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

\*

\* **Other aspects of the school**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Satisfactory overall, but when guidance is clear the pupils respond well.
Attendance	Good attendance and punctual starts to the beginning of the day.
Ethos*	There is an appropriate learning environment in which pupils strive to achieve standards.
Leadership and management	Sound overall. The headteacher and staff work well as a team, supported by an effective governing body.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced, with good systems for assessing pupils' progress. Co-ordination of the curriculum has improved but is still undeveloped overall.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory provision overall, but multicultural development is a strength of the school.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There is adequate provision, both for meeting the needs of pupils and for the effective teaching of the curriculum.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

\* **The parents' views of the school**

<b>What most parents like about the school</b>	<b>What some parents are not happy about</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● They feel that they are encouraged to play a part in the life of the school.</li> <li>● The school encourages pupils to get involved in more than just their lessons.</li> <li>● The levels of homework set.</li> <li>● Their children like school.</li> <li>● The positive values that the school promotes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff are sometimes not easy to talk to, communication is not good.</li> <li>● Parents are not able to play an active part</li> <li>● The school's procedures for handling</li> <li>● The level of information about their</li> <li>● The pupils' behaviour at school.</li> </ul>

Overall, a satisfactory partnership exists between the school, its parents, and the community. The school has developed a sensible staged approach to homework, and most parents make a valuable contribution to their child's learning. A third of all parents come into school to help in classrooms with subjects such as information technology, art and reading, as well as accompanying pupils at swimming lessons. Many of these parents indicated that there had recently been a number of improvements in teaching and learning within the school.

A number of parents have in the past felt unable to approach the school with problems because of what they perceive as a communication problem with the headteacher. The governing body has already recognised this issue, identified it as an area for development and, together with the headteacher, has begun to improve the situation. When asked by inspectors, some of these parents indicated that there had been some improvement in communication with the headteacher since the parents' meeting and up to the period of the inspection.

Other concerns expressed by a significant minority of parents, such as the behaviour of pupils, the school's system for handling suggestions and complaints, and the involvement of parents in their children's learning, were not substantiated by the inspection team.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To further develop the effectiveness of the school and continue to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

\*. Improve attainment in information and communication technology at both key stages by:  
(*Paragraphs: 10, 158, 159, 163.*)

- \*. Completing a scheme of work that is fully matched to the national curriculum programmes of study;
- \*. Clearly identifying what skills should be taught to which pupils and when;
- \*. Improving resources for control technology;
- \*. Improve levels of staff expertise.

●. Improve procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning by:  
(*Paragraphs: 72, 136, 156, 163, 197.*)

- \*. Clearly defining the role of the curriculum co-ordinator;
- \*. Implementing cost-effective procedures for teachers to share expertise and support colleagues;
- \*. The headteacher monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously;
- \*. Ensuring that the curriculum is regularly reviewed and evaluated;

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

(*Paragraphs: 129, 123, 66, 67, 136.*)

- \*. Complete a scheme of work for English and review the teaching of reading;
- \*. Review the staffing arrangements and provision for outdoor play for children under five;
- \*. Improve communication between the headteacher and parents.

## \* **INTRODUCTION**

### \* **Characteristics of the school**

1. Caldecote VC Lower School has 70 pupils on roll, aged four to nine, and serves the village of Upper Caldecote and surrounding area near the Bedfordshire town of Biggleswade. The building is situated near the village centre and is surrounded by a playground, outdoor swimming pool and a substantial grassed area.

2. There has recently been a fall in pupil numbers. The average class size is 23 pupils. Most pupils live close to the school, and current socio-economic data suggests that their current circumstances are average. Only 5 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and there are no pupils from homes where English is an additional language.

3. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 children under five in the reception class, of whom six attend part-time by parental choice. The attainment of pupils when they start school is in line with national expectations for children of a similar age.

4. Sixteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. There are nine pupils at the early, school-based stages of assessment and provision, and a very small minority of pupils whose needs involve the support of outside agencies. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is below the national average.

5. The school's current aims and priorities are to:

- \* Implement the literacy and numeracy strategies;
- \* Develop the early years curriculum and learning environment;
- \* Implement the home-school agreement;
- \* Develop effective procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

1. The key issues from the last inspection were:

- \* Review the effectiveness of the school's development plan;
- \* Strengthen the roles of subject co-ordinators;
- \* Make more use of assessment to inform planning;
- \* Comply with the recommended length of the teaching week in Key Stage 2 and review the balance and use of the day;
- \* Further develop opportunities for pupils to become 'independent learners';
- \* Review the range of multi-cultural education resources available and extend the use of these material within the curriculum;
- \* Extend the range of opportunities for pupils during the lunch and after-school times.

1. The school is making satisfactory progress towards the targets it has set to raise attainment in reading and writing. The progress in achieving the target for mathematics is good.

## 8. Key indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	12	5	17

8. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	8	7	10
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	13	12	15
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	76 (92)	71 (83)	88(83)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

8. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	70 (92)	70(83)	70(92)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

8. **Attendance**

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.09
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.43
	National comparative data	0.5

8.

8. **Exclusions**

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

8. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	3
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

## 8. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 8. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 8. Attainment and progress

2. Results of the National Curriculum tests for 1999 show that attainment of seven year olds is below average in reading, well below average in writing, and in line with national averages in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show that attainment is below average when compared with all schools nationally. When results are compared with those of similar schools, standards are below average in these subjects. These results are based on a small year group, in which over a third of the pupils had learning difficulties or special educational needs.

If allowance for the particular circumstances of this year group, then standards are broadly average. When statistics for the previous three years are compared, standards in reading and writing have fallen slightly but those in mathematics have improved. Analysis of available data indicates that there is very little difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

3. Inspection findings indicate satisfactory improvement at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 when compared with these National Curriculum results. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above national expectations for seven and nine year olds. Attainment in reading and writing is broadly in line with that expected for these age groups. Attainment in mathematics and science is also in line with national expectations at seven and nine. Skills in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall. Standards in information technology are currently below that expected of seven and nine year olds. Attainment in religious education for both these age groups is in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards are at least satisfactory for all other subjects, with good progress being achieved in design and technology, geography and art in both key stages. Progress in music and history are particularly good in Key Stage 2.

4. Children under five are admitted either full or part time by negotiation with parents and in relation to the needs of the children. Attainment on entry to the school is in line with the level expected of children of a similar age, except for speaking and listening and personal and social development, which are above the levels expected. The children make good progress in speaking and listening and personal and social development, and satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning.

5. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall throughout the school, and good progress in Key Stage 2. Progress is satisfactory in all aspects of English at both key stages. Staff and pupils have developed positive attitudes towards the literacy hour, and literacy is encouraged across the curriculum. Specific vocabulary is taught and used well in other subjects. Progress in reading is satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils make sound progress in acquiring the skills of letter and word recognition. The Year 1 pupils who have only been in school a term know some sounds and letters, and most Year 2 pupils recognise simple word patterns and write new ones. Year 3 pupils are developing the more difficult reading skills and can locate words by scanning.

6. Higher attaining and average pupils read confidently and with expression, breaking down words into syllables and correcting their own mistakes. Progress in writing is enhanced by the support of the learning assistants, who help raise the level of pupils' work and especially that of those with learning difficulties.

7. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall but good in Key Stage 2. Good progress is being made in both classes in developing pupils' numeracy skills. For example, most pupils in Year 2 can add and subtract single digits up to 10 and higher attaining pupils can successfully solve problems with larger numbers and beyond. Their knowledge of numbers up to 100 is good, and many are confident in counting both forwards and backwards. Pupils make good progress at Year 4 as a result of the effective matching of tasks to pupils' ability. Attainment in numeracy is good and higher attaining pupils can undertake a good range of numeric calculations. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 identify simple fractions and are beginning to understand the concept of equivalence.

8. Progress is satisfactory in science in Key Stage 1 and good for Key Stage two pupils. Key Stage 1 pupils increase their understanding of the properties of materials, especially of substances that can be turned back to solids. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work, and the lesson, seen indicate that progress is good at Key Stage 2. The skills and concepts learnt in Key Stage 1 on materials are securely built on and extended at Year 4.

9. All pupils are making good progress in relation to prior attainment in the development of skills in information technology. Year 1 and 2 pupils have regular computer experience in the classroom and receive individual tuition from the learning support staff and headteacher. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed confidence in using the mouse to control operations on the screen. Year 1 pupils use art packages to design pictures of 'teddy bears'. Year 3 pupils can effectively create pictures by using a graphics package to explore a range of colouring effects. They can save their new file and select the appropriate function to obtain a printed result. Progress in other elements of the curriculum, such as data handling and control technology, are unsatisfactory overall.

10. All pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in religious education. Progress is enhanced by the way in which the curriculum is made highly relevant for pupils, firstly by relating it to pupils' own experiences, and secondly by developing strong links with other subjects in the curriculum, such as history and geography.

11. The pupils make good progress in art, design and technology, and geography at both key stages. In art, pupils design and make images and artefacts with skill. They experiment with printing techniques to produce attractive designs, and sketchbooks are used well in both classes. The pupils enjoy the practical nature of design and technology and the decision making it involves. They persevere with activities, seeing them through to a satisfactory conclusion from initial ideas to evaluation of the final products. This is particularly well demonstrated by Key Stage 2 pupils' evaluations of the freestanding picture frames they made this term. Pupils learn about farming methods of the past and visit a local farm to extend their knowledge in geography. In Key Stage 1, they identify physical and human features in the landscape, categorising them correctly. They make good progress in developing the concept of place and in learning specific geographical vocabulary.

12. Progress in history, music and physical education is at least satisfactory. Progress in history and music is good in the Key Stage 2 class. Pupils in both classes are developing a sound understanding of the concept of chronology and knowledge of past events. All pupils are developing their confidence in performing a variety of songs in singing sessions and

music lessons in Key Stage 2. The overall quality of singing in assemblies and music making is good. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in their physical education skills. In Key Stage 1, pupils perform simple gymnastics skills with some control, and those in Key Stage 2 are making good progress in the development of their dancing skills, through the impact of good teaching. For example, many can express themselves appropriately through dance when portraying a rocket taking off, exploding in the night sky, and sinking to the ground exhausted.

13. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and consistent with their overall attainment. These pupils make good progress in the development of self-esteem and feel valued within the school. They make appropriate and sometimes good progress in lessons in writing, reading and numeracy skills, making satisfactory progress towards their targets over time.

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

14. Children under five have positive attitudes to learning, and they respond well to appropriate provision for personal and social development. They are enthusiastic and persevere with their tasks. Children are attentive to adults and raise their hands when they wish to make a positive contribution to class and small group discussions. They wait patiently for their turn in a circle game when an instrument is passed round. Most sustain concentration in self-chosen activities such as role-play. They persevere in directed tasks. Children cooperate well with others in practical activities and role-play.

15. The pupils in both key stages are developing good attitudes to learning. This finding is consistent with those of the previous inspection.

16. Most parents express a satisfaction with the pupils' response to work and activities within the school. Pupils listen carefully and sustain concentration during lessons in both key stages. They reflect on what they learn generate good ideas, and enjoy solving problems. The pupils apply themselves well, and when given opportunities to manage their own tasks do so very successfully. For example, the Key Stage 1 pupils organised themselves and managed their tasks with a degree of independence in a geography lesson on human and physical features.

17. Key Stage 2 pupils confidently take charge of their own learning, as seen in a science lesson where they investigate changing materials through the melting of 'ice-pops'. When tasks are less challenging and lack time constraints, the pupils' interest does wane and their commitment to their tasks is less strong, as was evident in a personal, social and health education lesson for the Key Stage 2 class. Pupils take a pride in their work and presentation skills are satisfactory.

18. The pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. They are trustworthy and very polite and have a sense of pride in their school. There were no incidents of bullying observed during the inspection. The relationships within the school reflect a happy working environment where pupils work together with a satisfactory level of co-operation. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups, when given the opportunity to do so in lessons. Behaviour does, however, deteriorate slightly in some lessons in Key Stage 2 when some pupils hold their own conversations whilst the teacher is talking. There have been no incidents of exclusion over the previous years.

19. The pupils' response to provision for personal development is satisfactory. They are able to

show some initiative in the management of their own work or of group projects. They spontaneously applaud each other's achievements in dance lessons. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 respond well to a range of responsibilities around the school. For instance, pupils in Year 4 help in the management of the school library and operate the overhead projector for singing sessions in assemblies. The pupils raise money for charity, take part in school concerts, and participate in community events organised by the parent teachers association.

20. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the levels of support provided for them. For example, they are gaining in self-confidence and in their ability to use computers to support their learning. They value the individual attention they receive at the computer and feel integrated into all class activities. Their behaviour is satisfactory, but sometimes they become inattentive in class if activities are too difficult or the teacher talks for too long.

27.

### **Attendance**

21. Attendance at around 96 per cent continues to be good and above the national average. There are very few unexplained absences. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of the day and enjoy coming to school. Lessons start and finish on time. Attendance of under-fives is good.

22. The previous inspection report raised no concerns about attendance.

29.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

23. The quality of teaching for children under five is satisfactory. It is never less than satisfactory, and in an eighth of lessons it is good. Planning and the preparation of activities for children under five are appropriate and the staff work effectively as a team. The teacher's expectations of what children can achieve are appropriate and work is effectively differentiated according to the ability of the children.

24. The quality of teaching throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory overall, with nearly a half of lessons good or better. Teaching is best in the Key Stage 2 class, and some very good teaching was seen. No unsatisfactory teaching observed, and these standards in the quality of teaching have been maintained since the previous inspection. Some parents at the parents' meeting expressed concern about the overall quality of teaching, but inspection evidence shows that teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons. Some lessons are not always as vibrant as others, owing to the variations in subject expertise among the teachers.

25. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects are satisfactory overall. Their subject expertise is good in the teaching of mathematics, science, music and design and technology.

26. In all other subjects, knowledge is generally secure among the teachers, but some are less knowledgeable in some subjects such as religious education, music and physical education. A good feature is the way in which teachers use vocabulary that is easily understood, and introduce and effectively use language that is specific to the subject they are teaching, as was seen in a good geography lesson for the Key Stage 1 class.

27. Teachers' day-to-day planning is good. Teachers plan interesting activities to motivate and stimulate pupils. Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements are appropriate, but are highest at Key Stage 2. Where teaching is very good, as was seen in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, teachers set out very clearly in their lesson plans what is to be taught and what pupils are to learn. The pace of these lessons is brisk, and work is clearly matched to the ability and age of the pupils. In the subjects where teachers' expertise is less secure, the expectations of what pupils can do are not as high, and this results in some underachievement in both classes.

28. Teachers' methods and the organisation of lessons are satisfactory overall, but best at Key Stage 2. All lessons have a clear focus and resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers use an appropriate range of strategies to organise pupils and maintain interest and enthusiasm. Groups are chosen carefully to match the task to the ability of the pupils in English and mathematics lessons in both classes. All teachers use questions to good effect to challenge pupils' thinking and probe their understanding, as was seen in a science lesson on changing materials. Explanations are often interesting, and demonstrations are well matched to the age and interests of the pupils. For example, in a music lesson for Key Stage 2 pupils, the pupils sat attentively while the teacher demonstrated how to use their bodies to create the sound of a storm. In this session, the interest of the pupils was maintained, the work was challenging, the pace was appropriate, and activities were used to support co-operative and independent learning. Teachers support pupils appropriately at their work areas, and interventions are timed to support pupils' learning and to encourage pupils to explain what they are doing and why. Pupils' behaviour is managed satisfactorily in lessons, but sometimes pupils become inattentive when activities are too repetitive and the teacher is talking for too long.

29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers plan work appropriately to take satisfactory account of the targets of pupils. Teachers, the special needs co-ordinator, and the learning support assistants review targets regularly together as a team. This is enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress towards their targets, developing their literacy and numeracy skills and allowing them grow in confidence. A good feature is the targeted teaching of literacy skills to small groups of pupils by the newly appointed learning support assistant.

30. The teachers' use of time and resources varies. It is good in the Key Stage 2 class but sometimes unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1. In this class, time is not always used to good effect, and the pace of work, for example in physical education and music lessons, can sometimes be too slow.

31. However, in all literacy and mathematics lessons, the focus is clear, and work is appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. A good feature employed by all teachers is the allocation of time to review learning at the end of lessons. An appropriate range of resources is used satisfactorily to bring lessons to life. Information technology is used well to reinforce learning in both classes. The teaching of skills on an individual basis by the headteacher and learning support assistant is having a good impact on pupils' progress and standards overall. Classroom displays are attractive and effectively support and reinforce pupils' learning in all rooms.

32. The relationships between pupils and teachers and support staff are satisfactory. All lessons

have a calm atmosphere. Teachers use a range of useful strategies, such as praise, to maintain a good ethos for learning and to motivate and encourage pupils to do their best.

33. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. The quality of marking is generally satisfactory between classes but sometimes varies in overall quality, from just a series of ticks when work is discussed with pupils, to informative written comments by the teacher. All teachers however, provide verbal feedback to pupils, maintain detailed class records, and make good use of this information to plan future work.

34. The learning support assistants and volunteer parents contribute positively to the overall quality of teaching. They are appropriately briefed by teachers and have a clear understanding of their roles, but sometimes they are not used effectively at the beginning of lessons in supporting pupils and teachers.

35. The use of homework is satisfactory throughout the school. Inspection evidence indicates that many pupils take home a range of material to support their learning. The draft homework policy is being satisfactorily implemented and the quantity of work is appropriate. Homework and reading diaries provide good dialogue between home and school and are having a positive effect on home-school communication.

42.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

36. Curriculum provision is satisfactory overall at both key stages. At the previous inspection it was reported that the school should:

- \*. 'Comply with the recommended length of the teaching week in Key Stage 2 and review the balance and use of the day'.
- \*. 'Further develop opportunities for pupils to become independent learners'.
- \*. 'Extend the range of opportunities for pupils during lunch and after school'.

The first and third issues have now been fully addressed and there is a marked improvement in the issue related to independent learning, especially in science, where pupils are encouraged to hypothesise, make judgements and devise systems.

1. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory overall except for planned outdoor physical development. The staff have made a good start with long- and medium-term planning, and daily planning is generally clear. The recommended six areas of learning are followed and the curriculum in action prepares the children satisfactorily for the National Curriculum in Year 1. Relevant aspects of the literacy and numeracy strategy are sensitively introduced and implemented. Provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory. There is no specific designed area, and planning for this aspect is inadequate. Children are not being provided with enough focused activities to enhance and extend their learning in the outdoor environment. The document entitled 'long-term aims for the reception class' is a good basis to build on for producing a scheme of work.

2. The school is working hard to further develop links with the local playgroup. The children make several visits into school before they start, and the new staff plan to regularly visit the playgroup.

3. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 and at age nine is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Its aims and policies show a commitment to promoting pupils' intellectual, personal and physical development. Good links between subjects are made through a topic approach, as when work on owls is explored through art and literacy. Links with religious education and history are made through extended writing provision. The school has effectively introduced the numeracy strategy and continues to develop the literacy hour. The use of time at the end of lessons in Key Stage 2 to assess pupils' learning is especially effective. Health education and sex education are addressed mainly through the teaching of science. There is no drug awareness policy. This issue is covered by the 'Life Bus' which visits every two years. Satisfactory provision in line with the code of practice is made for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans identify appropriate targets, and pupils receive sound support from the special needs co-ordinator, teachers and learning support assistants.

4. There are policies for all subjects, and a timetable for the systematic review of documents. Some policies do not indicate when they were formulated, and dates for review are vague or not indicated. The main curriculum policy statement has not been reviewed for four years, is out of date, and does not include the under fives curriculum.

5. The school bases its curriculum on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy material. There are long- and medium-term plans for both key stages, which could form the basis for personalised schemes of work. This would help to ensure good progression, the specific identification of skills, and the opportunity to practise them regularly. The termly school plans are detailed and coherent. They clearly identify specific learning objectives, and make reference to the knowledge and skills which will be taught. They do not identify methods or organisational strategies. Daily plans relate specifically to medium-term planning and are detailed and effective.

6. The school has given a great deal of consideration to the progression of pupils in mixed age classes. Overall, the curriculum caters well for this. The school has thought through its two-year rolling programme carefully, and the match of pupil to task is generally good. Planning takes into account the specific expectations for each age group and ability. The higher attaining pupils are well catered for, especially in English, mathematics and science. The needs of the average pupils and those needing support are similarly addressed. The learning support assistants are used well, especially with pupils needing extra help. There is good liaison with the middle school. Co-ordinators meet on a regular basis to ensure continuity within the curriculum.

7. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is a strength of the school. There are recorder clubs, football coaching and a very successful Wednesday after-school club, run by the Parent and Teacher Association. These activities are enthusiastically attended by the pupils and enrich the curriculum. The school makes good use of the community, of trips, and of visiting speakers and experts to enhance the curriculum.

8. Assessment for children under five is developing. Staff are beginning to set up systems based on discussions with advisory staff and colleagues from other schools. Baseline assessment has been completed and the school development plan identifies that this will be analysed at the end of the autumn term 1999.

9. Effective systems are in place for assessing the attainment of pupils in both key stages. A good feature is the 'twice a term book' which builds up a picture of pupils' progress throughout their time at Caldecote. The school has made a good start in devising and implementing target setting for individual pupils. The information from Qualifications and Curriculum Authority tests at the end of Years 3 and 4 are increasingly used and compared with standard assessment tasks results. Assessment opportunities are identified in medium-term planning. Day-to-day assessments are used well. Teachers make detailed observations of pupils' learning in core and foundation subjects, using several monitoring grids for aspects of literacy and numeracy.

10. The school's policy for assessment is vague. It does not mention baseline assessment of pupils on entry, target setting, or Qualifications and Curriculum Authority assessment material. The marking policy is satisfactory but marking is not used consistently to help pupils to improve. The school's portfolio of moderated work is comprehensive but needs updating with more recent work. The quality of end of year reports is of a high standard. They comply with legal requirements, are informative, and set manageable targets for pupils. The school makes sound use of assessment results for grouping pupils and for informing planning in English, mathematics and science, including for pupils with special educational needs.

53.

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

11. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection.

12. Spiritual development is satisfactory. It is promoted well in assemblies and in some lessons where pupils are given the opportunity to marvel at the world around them. For example, children under five displayed amazement at reflections dancing on the ceiling and distorted in water. They expressed wonder when the Hanukah menorah was lit and were delighted that the hyacinth bulb was developing roots. Older pupils showed excitement in an experiment to see if ice-pops melted, and younger ones were fascinated by the properties of wax melting and reforming to the shape of the container.

13. Moral education is sound. There is a clear moral code and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. This was clearly demonstrated in the Key Stage 2 class assembly based on the theme of truth and lies. The pupils showed their understanding by telling a fable and a poem while the rest of the school listened attentively. School rules are understood by all, and pupils are taught to share and consider one another. They show respect for property and handle books and artefacts carefully.

14. The school provides appropriate opportunities for social development. Older pupils take responsibility in preparing the hall for assembly, keeping the library tidy, and doing jobs in the classroom. Circle work is used to explore feelings such as anger. In one lesson the pupils shared ideas effectively with a partner and understood the concept of controlling anger to avoid hurting the feelings of others. Pupils are taught the value of working together in lessons, and they socialise informally during extra-curricular activities such as the Wednesday after-school club. Staff and pupils alike value all pupils with special educational needs, but there is insufficient opportunity to celebrate pupils' achievement through strategies such as a structured reward system. The school encourages pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship through fundraising for charities such as the Macmillan Nurses and the Poppy

Appeal, and its links with the Over 60's club.

15. The school's provision for cultural development is good and is a strength of the school. The pupils are offered a rich and varied experience. They make educational visits to places of interest to enhance understanding of their own cultural heritage and traditions. These include visits to a farm, a large local supermarket, and a quarry. They participate in the annual folk and dance festival, and visit the Swiss Garden at Old Warden. Visitors are welcomed into school. A particularly successful session was held recently when an archaeologist brought in pieces of pottery for the Key Stage 2 pupils to investigate in their history lesson. Other initiatives include an 'Industry Week' and 'Careers Day'. Multicultural education has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are given a good insight into the rich diversity of other cultures, beliefs and ways of life. They are prepared well for life in our multicultural society through learning about Diwali, the Jewish New Year and Hanukah. They are given the opportunity to empathise with other faiths in extended writing activities in English. Attractive displays showing artefacts and posters of other faiths and cultures further enhance provision.

58.

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

16. The support and guidance given to pupils and the attention to their welfare is satisfactory and has a positive impact on pupils' attainment. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and there is a sound ethos of helping pupils to achieve.

17. The procedures in place for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are good, and an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers keep detailed individual records and set clear targets for each pupil in an effort to advance their academic and personal achievements. The opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills have also improved since the previous inspection. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils are able to search the 'Internet' for information on the computers in the library.

18. Parents who have children with special educational needs, are seen by the school as partners in the process of supporting the child's learning. They are fully involved from the first moment of concern and are adequately informed about what is being done to help.

19. The behaviour policy has been written following consultation with parents. Teachers use praise to acknowledge good behaviour but there is no consistent system of rewards to positively encourage pupils to behave well. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying, which are rare, are recorded in a book kept for the purpose. Appropriate and consistent action is taken by all staff when dealing with such incidents, but there is currently no written guidance for staff in the restraint of pupils.

20. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Monitoring takes place on a daily basis and any unexplained absences are quickly followed up. There is an effective liaison with the educational welfare service. Registers are completed, in the main, correctly and in accordance with statutory requirements.

21. The school has admitted a small number of pupils from the traveller community. These pupils are warmly welcomed and the level of support provided is satisfactory. There were no traveller pupils on the school's register during the term of the inspection.

64.

**Partnership with parents and the community**

22. Overall, a satisfactory partnership exists between the school, its parents and the community. The school has developed a sensible staged approach to homework and most parents make a valuable contribution to their child's learning. A third of all parents come into school to help in classrooms with subjects such as information technology, art and reading, as well as accompanying pupils at swimming lessons.

23. In the past, a number of parents have felt unable to approach the school with problems because of what they perceive as a communication problem with the headteacher. The governing body has already recognised this issue, identified it as an area for development and together with the headteacher has begun to improve the situation. Inspection evidence did not support the other concerns expressed by a significant minority of parents.

24. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are satisfactory. There are regular half-termly newsletters and the school prospectus is informative. The annual report from governors, whilst comprehensive, lacks certain legally required information such as access for disabled pupils and the professional development details of staff over the past year. There are appropriate home-school agreements and homework diaries. These enable satisfactory dialogue to take place between staff and parents. Whilst there are opportunities for informal meetings between staff and parents, these are restricted to the end of the school day. With the exception of those with children in the four-plus class, parents are discouraged from entering the classrooms at the start of morning lessons.

25. There is an active Parent and Teacher Association, which raises funds for school equipment as well as organising after school clubs. These are well attended by pupils of all ages.

26. Community links are satisfactory. The local environment is effectively used as a learning resource. The gravel pits for instance are visited for scientific purposes as well as providing an industrial link. The local police use them as an opportunity to talk about safety.

27. The school has held a 'Careers day' within an 'Industry Week' where a number of professions were represented, such as musicians and architects. The local vicar is a regular visitor and the church is used for events such as harvest festivals. All these links support the pupils' personal development and contribute to their attainment and progress.

70.

## 70. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### 70. Leadership and management

28. Management of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher and governing body have a clear view of the future educational direction for the school. The headteacher is appropriately supported by a small team of staff who undertake a range of curriculum and managerial responsibilities, such as the management of special educational needs. The day-to-day management of the school is satisfactory and the headteacher is well supported by the part-time secretary. The school has made a sound start in gathering and evaluating data, and it reflects critically on what it is doing and looks for ways to improve. The governing body is very supportive, and effectively fulfils its role as a 'critical friend' to the school. It is well organised and is discharging its legal responsibilities appropriately. All statutory requirements are being met except for some items of information in the governors' annual report to parents.

29. The monitoring of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory and co-ordination of the curriculum lacks rigour. All staff play a limited role in the monitoring of curriculum planning. There have been some improvements since the last inspection, but their roles are still underdeveloped and unsatisfactory overall. Teachers do, however, work as a close team and each holds several responsibilities. They are beginning to play an active part in the

development of some subjects, and they have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the curriculum, for example in mathematics, information technology and religious education. The procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning are at an early stage of development. They are beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching across the school, but the headteacher's procedures lack rigour. The governing body has implemented an appropriate programme for monitoring the curriculum and the findings are used to inform their overall management responsibilities.

30. Following the last inspection in April 1996, an action plan was prepared which set out targets for future improvement. The staff and governors have made satisfactory progress overall in addressing the key issues for action identified below, and their capacity for future improvement is good.

31. Key issue 1: Review the effectiveness of the school's development plan.

32. The governors have worked closely with the school to improve the quality of the plan. It now provides a clear framework for school improvement.

33. Key issue 2: Strengthen the roles of subject co-ordinators.

34. Roles have been further clarified. There has been some impact on curriculum development, but the monitoring of the curriculum is still unsatisfactory.

35. Key issue 3: Make more use of assessment to inform planning.

36. Good systems are now in place and information is now used effectively to inform curriculum planning.

37. Key issue 4: Comply with the recommended length of the teaching week in Key Stage 2 and review the balance and use of the day.

38. The allocation of teaching time now complies with national recommendations.

39. Key issue 5: Further develop opportunities for pupils to become 'independent learners'.

40. Teachers provide an appropriate range of activities and opportunities for pupils to become 'independent learners'.

41. Key issue 6: Review the range of multi-cultural education resources available and extend the use of these material within the curriculum.

42. The school now has sufficient resources to support multi-cultural development.

43. Key issue 7: Extend the range of opportunities for pupils during the lunch and after school times.

44. Provision for extra-curricular activities is now a good feature of the school.

45. Development planning, monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory. The school development plan provides a clear plan of action for the current year and an effective long-term

plan. It clearly identifies priorities that are appropriate and fully costed. The headteacher, staff and governors reflect critically on what the school is doing and are clear about what the school needs to do to continue to improve.

46.The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The governing body's monitoring procedures are appropriate and the linked governor for special educational needs works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator. The progress of individual pupils is carefully tracked and there is a sense of commitment; the pupils are given good support by all involved. Administrative procedures comply with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs, but the involvement of parents at review meetings lacks rigour. For example, parents are not always invited to make a written comment as a record of these meetings on the meeting record sheet.

47.The school's ethos is satisfactory and its aims and values are reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes to work. There is a sense of respect and caring for others around the school, and relationships between pupils and staff are productive.

48.The headteacher's style of communication has led to some difficulties with some parents, and relationships with parents overall have not been at their best. Inspection evidence indicates that the headteacher has made alterations to past practice and relationships have improved. A number of other parents however, believe that the school is improving, and they value the headteacher's positive impact on the quality of pupils' teaching and learning.

91.

91.

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

49.The school has sufficient staff. There are two full-time teachers, including the head teacher, who teaches part-time. There are two other part-time teachers who together are equivalent to 1.2 full-time teachers. There are three other teaching support staff and a part-time secretary. A caretaker is on the school premises at the start and end of the day and is complemented by one cleaning staff member. Peripatetic music teachers visit the school regularly.

50.All teaching staff are properly qualified and between them have a good range of experience at the school. Staff development is appropriately linked to the school's development plan, but there is insufficient monitoring to identify where the support is most needed. All support staff have received recent training and have the opportunity to increase and develop their skills.

51.The caretaker and cleaning staff are hardworking and ensure that the accommodation is clean and in a good state of repair. The school provides a satisfactory teaching environment. The issues in the previous inspection report related to more accessible storage space and the need for a more welcoming foyer. These issues have been addressed successfully. The school is currently liaising with the local education authority about the development of the extensive grounds, but the current provision for the outside play area and large equipment for children under five is unsatisfactory. The school is, however, doing its best to remedy this situation.

52.Resources generally are satisfactory and sufficient in all subjects. The school has identified the need for further non-fiction books in the library to encourage pupils' independent learning, especially those with special educational needs. Resources are mostly accessible to pupils, who use them appropriately.

53. The quality of resources is satisfactory overall but good in science, art, history and geography. The school makes good use of local resources to support the curriculum, such as a church, farm and gravel pit.

54. The previous inspection report raised concerns about the need for books to be updated and for more multi-cultural resources to be provided. The school has partly addressed these issues but some of the books in the library are worn and out of date.

97.

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

55. The financial planning of the school is satisfactory. The concerns raised in the previous inspection report have been addressed successfully. The headteacher initially prepares the annual budget in close co-operation with the chair of the finance committee. The budget is presented to the full governing body for approval and the finance committee monitors it at regular intervals throughout the year. The expenditure of the school is closely monitored and this ensures that the budget is not exceeded. The school secretary reconciles the budget on a monthly basis with computerised information provided by the local authority. The budget is planned to include longer-term forecasts and prioritises future developments. It is now linked directly to the school development plan, which is now more effective than it was at the previous inspection.

56. Day-to-day financial administration is smooth and efficient. The most recent school audit notes that financial controls are satisfactory, and the minor recommendations it made have been carried out. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively and the school provides extra support through its budget.

57. Income for staff training is used for this purpose and is related to curriculum needs. Subject co-ordinators oversee the allocations to support development in their respective areas but they are not sufficiently involved in the setting of these budgets.

58. The school has an adequate number of teaching staff. All teachers are very experienced and are deployed effectively. Support staff are used appropriately but staffing arrangements lack continuity for the children under five, and this has an impact on the quality of support they receive.

59. The use of the school accommodation is generally satisfactory. There is good use of the outside playground to ensure equality of use by all pupils. The playground also enhances social and creative play opportunities for most pupils, except those fewer than five, who lack a secure area and large outside play equipment. The use of resources is generally sound and is particularly good in music.

60. The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils overall. Given the high income per pupil, the circumstances of the school, and the good features within its overall provision for the pupils, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## 103. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 103. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

#### **Areas of learning for children under five**

61. Children under five are taught in the four-plus unit which opened in September 1999. Provision is at an early stage of development, but staff are working hard to establish systems and procedures to maintain and enhance the learning opportunities for the children in all areas of the curriculum. Children are admitted either full-time or part-time by negotiation with parents and in relation to the needs of the children. This policy does not fully ensure continuity within the curriculum and fragments the learning opportunities for some children.

62. Attainment on entry into school is in line with the level expected of children of a similar age, except for speaking and listening and personal and social development, which are above the levels expected. The children make good progress in speaking and listening and personal and social development and satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning.

#### **Personal and Social development**

63. Personal and social skills are developed well in the four-plus unit. All the children have settled in and work and play happily together. Children enjoy coming to school. All understand the concept of sharing and participate well in all activities. They wait patiently for their turn in a circle game when an instrument is passed round. Many sustain concentration in self-chosen activities such as role-play, and persevere in directed tasks. Children respond to the organisational patterns set up by the staff showing independence in fetching lunch boxes for the mid morning snack and sitting quietly in assembly. They enjoy the routines and the layout of the classroom, showing awareness of change, such as a space being cleared for a number activity.

64. Good relationships exist with the staff, who use all opportunities to respond to the needs of the children.

#### **Language and Literacy**

65. Attainment is in line with that expected of children of similar age except in speaking and listening, where it is good. Progress in language and literacy is satisfactory, and good in speaking and listening. Children are given many opportunities to talk, and to extend their language skills. Most take part in meaningful dialogue with each other and the staff, expressing themselves clearly and grammatically. They listen intently to a commercial tape during a music and movement session and to stories read and told by staff. Children remember parts of the Hanukah story and join in enthusiastically. They are eager to express their thoughts and knowledge to visitors, and do so with great confidence and enjoyment.

66. The children are beginning to understand the connection between print and meaning. They hold books correctly and pick out a few sounds. They recognise their own name and those of others. They begin to recognise the days of the week on flashcards. Children respond well to

books and enjoy sharing in the story as it unfolds. They memorise the words in 'We're going on a bear hunt' and repeat them with gusto, joining in the actions with the teacher. They relate to the pictures and pick out the characters.

67. Most of the children can write their name and are making marks on paper to convey meaning. Examples were seen of children's own writing in a display on Owls and in work scrutinised before the inspection. However, opportunities are missed for extending and developing writing. For example, the children did not write their own name for a chart and there is an overemphasis on worksheets.

## **Mathematics**

68. Attainment and progress in mathematics are satisfactory. Children are provided with the experiences of comparing, matching and counting. They experiment with capacity and volume through practical activities such as sand and water play, although their development is inhibited because these resources are not always available.

69. Mathematical language and the concept of taller and shorter are being developed through appropriate teacher-led activities when children build blocks of varying height and are invited to compare them. Children begin to understand the concept of time by changing the calendar and reciting the days of the week. They are developing an awareness of shapes and sequencing patterns.

70. Children are developing their numeracy skills appropriately. They count eleven beads in a game with the teacher during registration, and two children know that the number seventeen comes after sixteen. They begin to write numbers and count objects. The majority of children count to ten and recognise numbers to five. All children enjoy singing a rhyme associated with the days of the week.

## **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

71. Attainment and progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. Children begin to learn science concepts by studying hyacinth bulbs and learning about the cycle of plants. They show awe, wonder and delight at the root and shoot growth in the glass jar, hiding their eyes ready for the surprise and saying, 'We can't wait, can we?' They learn about the structure of the eye and ear in simple terms and explore the effects of light on bubbles in water.

72. All children under five are being introduced to the computer and devise pictures by using an art package with the mouse. They are increasingly aware of themselves and their place in the world through their journey to school, their position in the family, and where they live. They begin to understand chronology through talking about their relationship to parents and grandparents. This area of the curriculum is currently underdeveloped.

73. Children enjoy playing with construction kits and big bricks, but materials for making their own models from reclaimed materials are not available on a daily basis. This prevents children from developing skills in aspects of design technology.

## **Creative development**

74. Levels of attainment are in line with expectations for children of this age and progress is satisfactory. Children are given some opportunity to explore colour and texture, using a variety of media, including clay, plasticine, acetate and paint. They use paintbrushes carefully to decorate Diwali lamps. Sometimes the work is over-directed by staff, as in an activity where children were making musical instruments. This limits children's imagination and exploration of materials.

75. Children enjoy making music with untuned percussion and handle the instruments competently. They enjoy interpreting the music and are ably supported by the example of the teacher and parent helper.

## **Physical development**

76. The children enjoy physical activity, and attainment and progress are in line with national expectations for children under five. Children are offered an adequate range of indoor equipment but provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory. The Local Education Authority has not yet fulfilled its obligation in partnership with the school to modify and create a safe fenced area for outdoor play. This limits what staff can provide, but more could be made available. Children's opportunities to work on physical tasks outside are inhibited by the lack of suitable equipment, and the area not being defined. When outside, the children use bikes, trikes and trailers with confidence. They peddle vigorously, carrying out their movements in a controlled manner. They use the playground space well and cooperate with each other. They play imaginatively with dolls and the pram and enjoy the fresh air. In the hall they jump, skip and stride. All children are developing control of tools such as scissors, writing tools and construction toys.

77. The Early Years team work well together to provide a calm and caring environment. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop outdoor play and introduce a structured scheme for teaching sounds. A strong feature in the four plus unit is the involvement of parents. They support quietly, are always busy, and are generally well briefed. The school recently consulted parents by sending out a questionnaire. This elicited a good response and enabled the school to evaluate its performance within the unit. Limited contact with parents at the end of the school day within the classroom itself restricts the further development of partnership between staff, parents and the children.

78. Early Years education is a priority in the school development plan. Inspection evidence shows that targets are being achieved. For instance, planning is being developed appropriately and children respond well to the special assemblies.

79. The four plus unit classroom is bright and cheerful. The children's work is attractively displayed.

80.Resources for children under five have been gathered together or bought. Staff are aware that more outdoor equipment such as a climbing frame needs to be provided. Some equipment on order has not yet arrived. Paint, sand and water are not always available and reclaimed materials are not plentiful. The role-play area, which has been imaginatively turned into a cave, is a good focus for learning, as is the quiet area for looking at books. The staffing arrangements for the under fives are unsatisfactory. Appropriate planning ensures continuity between staff, but the lack of two professional adults in the unit on a day-to-day basis, always working as a team, lessens the impact of the learning opportunities.

123.

123.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **123. English**

81.The results of end of Key Stage 1 tests over the last three years indicate a steady decline in reading standards from above national average, and a decline in writing standards in 1999 from above average levels in 1998. In the 1999 end of Key Stage reading tests the number of pupils reaching the national target of Level 2 and above was below national averages, and the number of pupils attaining at the higher Level 3 was well below. Teacher assessments were generally accurate. In the writing tests and teacher assessments the number of pupils reaching Level 2 was well below the national average, with a similar picture for those reaching the higher Level 3. The decline in standards in reading and writing during 1999 is partly due to the high proportion of special needs pupils within this year group and the inclusion of a temporary pupil from the traveller community no longer present in the school.

125. In comparison with those of similar schools the results are well below average in both reading and writing. In 1998 the standard of writing was above that of similar schools. This fluctuation partly appears to reflect the difference in the ability of year cohorts, especially when the numbers are small. The school has set targets for raising attainment in reading, and writing. These are based on unreliable baseline data and are felt by the school to be over-optimistic. The school is, however, making satisfactory progress towards these targets in this academic year.

82.Inspection findings indicate that attainment is in line with expectations in all aspects of the English curriculum at both key stages, except in speaking and listening, where it is above. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1 and at age nine.

83.Pupils are developing good speaking and listening skills and standards are above expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils offer good ideas in literacy lessons and contribute effectively to whole class sessions when work is reviewed. At age nine they speak clearly and confidently in assembly, in choral speaking and as individuals. They discuss their work thoughtfully with the class teacher, listen to each other carefully and respond maturely. Oral skills are promoted effectively in all subjects, particularly when teachers pose challenging questions.

84.Progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils in Year 1 talk enthusiastically about stories they like, and pupils in Year 3 model their competent Year 4 classmates, offering, for instance, suggestions for non-technical words to replace 'downy' when describing a tawny owl.

85. Attainment in reading is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and at age nine. Pupils in Year 2 know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and average and above pupils read fluently. The commercial scheme used is not matched appropriately to these pupils who are able to read more challenging texts than their current reading books.

86. The range of books in general is too narrow and prevents good progress. Pupils working at a below average level read books appropriate to their ability but are unable to use a variety of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Knowledge of authors and preferences for types of stories is limited. At age nine, higher attaining and average pupils identify a wider range of authors and state preferences for different types of books. The majority of pupils read fluently and with good understanding. They understand and use the term glossary and the contents and index pages of books to find out information. Pupils of all abilities use the Dewey system in the library confidently. Lower attaining pupils have not developed the strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. This is partly reflected in the results of the tests at age 7.

87. Progress in reading is satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils make sound progress in acquiring the skills of letter and word recognition. The Year 1 pupils who have only been in school a term know some sounds and letters, and most Year 2 pupils recognise simple word patterns and write new ones. Year 3 pupils are developing the higher order reading skills and can locate words by scanning. Higher attaining and average pupils read confidently and with expression, breaking down words into syllables, and self-correcting.

88. Attainment in writing is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and at age nine. Attention is paid to developing sentence construction and spelling during the literacy hour and in writing linked to other subject areas, such as religious education and history. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils begin sentences with capital letters and answer comprehension questions in whole sentences. The structured spelling programme is effective and simple words are spelt correctly. At age nine, pupils know many subject-specific words, such as prefix and synonym. They suggest examples for prefixes such as 'unhappy' and 'disallow'. They understand the functions of nouns, verbs and adjectives, suggesting sentences where 'telephone' and 'ring' are used as verbs, and 'fight' is used as a noun. They have a good vocabulary, substituting 'wide' for 'broad' and 'attacked' for 'mobbed'.

89. Progress in writing is sound throughout Key Stage 1 and at age nine. Pupils' work and displays around the school show that they enjoy the challenge of writing for many purposes, including poetry. Particularly effective work was seen in the pupils' writing in the style of a newspaper report during the Second World War. This was neatly presented and showed maturity and empathy. Presentation of written work ranges from good to unsatisfactory. A cursive style is developed well by the end of Key Stage 2 and most pupils take a pride in their work, but some pupils are careless and frequently cross out. Pupils do not use pen to enhance their presentation. Progress, is enhanced by the support of the learning assistants who help raise the level of pupils' work, and especially that of pupils with special educational needs.

90. Pupils respond well in lessons, and their attitudes are positive. They listen attentively, tackle work promptly and maintain their concentration. Pupils' interest and motivation is occasionally reflected in their reluctance to cease a task, particularly at Key Stage 2. They are eager to answer questions and work well together in pairs. In a few lessons in Key Stage 1 pupils are restless and noise levels are high.

91. Teaching is always satisfactory and was good in the one lesson seen in Key Stage 2. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and implement the literacy hour well. Teachers plan meticulously. There are clear learning objectives, and activities are mostly well matched to the needs of pupils of differing abilities including those with special needs. Challenging tasks are set for higher attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 2. For example, in one good lesson seen the teacher set a brisk pace and moved pupils on with clever questioning which demonstrated good subject knowledge. The pupils' own work was used to extend and improve progress at the end of the lesson, and the teacher demonstrated the use of open and closed questions with clear examples. In some lessons judged to be satisfactory overall, teachers set mundane tasks, which do not sustain the interest of the pupils, and time is not used effectively. In one lesson observed a guided reading session was rushed and the review session at the end of a lesson was cut short, which prevented the development of the pupils' learning. The quality of marking of pupils' work varies and does not always follow the policy.

92. The subject is managed by two new co-ordinators. They fully recognise that the subject needs to be developed and have made a good start with the review of the English policy document. There is no scheme of work and insufficient formal monitoring and evaluating arrangements by co-ordinators. The literacy governor made a detailed observation early on this term. His report is evaluative and demonstrates good monitoring by governors.

93. Literacy is a priority in the school development plan. Good progress is being made on the actions listed, but the plan does not identify as priorities a scheme of work or in-service training on the co-ordinating role.

94. Good assessment and record keeping arrangements are in place. Reading records are updated regularly and individual target setting is being trialled in both key stages. There is a detailed portfolio of examples of pupils' work but it does not contain recent examples or Level 4 work.

95. The quality and range of resources are satisfactory. The library is attractively laid out but is underused for individual research. Many books are old and out of date, but there is a renewal policy for replacing books based on the Dewey system. The parents run a successful book club, and Book Fairs are held annually to enhance the English curriculum.

### 139. **Mathematics**

96. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that standards are broadly in line with the national average, but very few pupils attained the higher Level 3, which is well below the national average for seven year olds.

97. When compared to that in schools with similar circumstances, attainment is below the average. Teacher assessment results indicated that attainment was low in comparison with that for all schools. This variation is partly due to the larger proportion of special needs pupils within this year group and the better than expected performance of some of pupils in the tests.

142. Trends over time indicate a steady rise in performance from 1997. This has been supported by the introduction of a new scheme of work and effective implementation in the National Strategy for Numeracy in both classes. The number of higher attaining pupils is still below average and this is currently restricting the overall performance. The school has set targets for raising attainment in mathematics. These are based on unreliable baseline data but the school is making satisfactory progress towards achieving the targets set during the last academic year.

98. Inspection findings indicate that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and at year 4 is in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils in Year 2 can add and subtract single digits up to 10, and higher attaining pupils can successfully solve problems with larger numbers and beyond. Their knowledge of numbers up to 100 is good, and many are confident in counting both forwards and backwards. All can name several common two-dimensional shapes. Some are able to recognise simple fractions and understand their relative values. By Year 4 many pupils are attaining standards in line with national expectations for pupils of a similar age. Attainment in numeracy is good and higher attaining pupils can undertake a good range of numeric calculations. Most pupils identify simple fractions and are beginning to understand the concept of equivalence. Most are clear about the properties of three-dimensional shapes such as a cuboid. Skills in data handling are appropriate, and pupils are able to interpret data in simple graphs.

99. Progress is satisfactory overall across the school, with good progress in Key Stage 2. Good progress is being made in both key stages in numeracy skills as a result of the effective teaching of mental arithmetic. Pupils in Year 1 are making satisfactory progress in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and in the consolidation of skills. Pupils make good progress at Year 4 owing to the effective matching of tasks to pupils' ability. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are provided with satisfactory opportunities to undertake investigative work in numeracy lessons and data handling in other subjects such as science. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

100. The pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good. Much of the work in books is neat and well presented. Pupils are particularly keen to improve their numeracy skills and many take part with enthusiasm in the mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of lessons. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 display an enthusiasm for the subject and respond well to challenging problem-solving activities which involve manipulation of numbers on the whiteboard.

101. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory, with some very good teaching in the Key Stage 2 class. Subject knowledge is secure, and expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Planning is very clear at both key stages and learning objectives are effectively identified. All teachers use good questioning skills to challenge pupils' thinking. Teachers at Key Stage 2 make good use of visual aids to illustrate mathematical ideas. For example, in the one very good lesson, number cards were used very effectively to categorise possible solutions to addition problems into three groups.

102. In this activity, all pupils were fully involved, and higher attaining pupils effectively challenged in more difficult tasks. The management of pupils is good at both key stages and teachers effectively match tasks to abilities of the pupils. Lessons are paced well but sometimes the use of time is inconsistent when maintaining the flow of the lesson and some

tasks can be repetitive, as was seen in one lesson in the Key Stage 2 class. The review of

work at the end of lessons to assess what pupils have learnt is a good feature in both classes. The quality of marking is inconsistent but satisfactory overall. Sometimes it is a series of ticks in pupils' books, but where it is at its best the teachers' comments clearly indicate to pupils how they can improve. The provision for homework is satisfactory, and it is used appropriately to support learning in class.

103. The curriculum is satisfactory, and this represents an improvement on the previous inspection. There is an appropriate draft scheme of work matched to the National Numeracy Strategy. It clearly identifies what should be taught to which groups of pupils and when. Attempts are being made to raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 this year through the structured teaching of numeracy skills. Procedures for ongoing assessment are good. The recording of pupils' progress is consistent between classes, and assessment information is used effectively to plan for the next stages of pupils' learning.

104. The co-ordinator provides appropriate leadership and has a clear view of what needs to be done. The policy gives suitable guidance to staff but is in need of review. Monitoring and evaluation of developments have taken place, but systems are insufficiently rigorous to have had a significant impact on standards overall. Resources are satisfactory and there is an appropriate range of books and structured apparatus.

## **Science**

105. In the previous inspection standards of attainment were judged to be at least sound. In the National curriculum assessments for science for 1999, results indicate that attainment has dropped from above average in 1998 to below average. The number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is well below national averages. These results reflect a cohort containing several children of below average ability.

106. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the difference between solids and liquids and that some everyday materials change when heated. The higher attaining pupils relate this knowledge to everyday life. They begin to understand the principle of making moulds through observing that heated wax solidifies to the shape of the container as it cools. By the end of Year 4, at age 9, pupils are recognising the need for a fair test and can devise a system to set this up. They know technical vocabulary such as 'suspension' 'expand' and 'temperature'. They use timers and thermometers competently and make predictions.

107. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. They increase their understanding of the properties of materials, especially of substances that can be turned back to solids. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work, and the lesson seen, indicates that progress is good at Key Stage 2. The skills and concepts on materials learnt in Key Stage 1 were securely built on and extended at Year 4. Pupils carry out experiments competently and use prepared charts accurately. The higher attaining pupils devise their own sophisticated chart which clearly shows the result that sawdust prevents the ice-pop melting. They explain it succinctly. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

108. Pupils enjoy science and sustain interest. Their response is always satisfactory or better, even when noise levels are high. The older pupils discuss sensibly in-groups, collect their resources quietly, and organise them well. All pupils use equipment carefully and treat it with

respect. They show excitement as the experiments progress and marvel at the results.

109. The quality of teaching is sound with good features. Teachers plan in detail and have clear learning objectives which are fulfilled appropriately.

110. Work is matched well to age and ability except in the case of some Year 3 pupils who struggle with a work sheet, which they find too difficult. At Key Stage 1 suitable extended work is given to Year 2 pupils and helpers are usefully deployed. The teacher helps pupils to make good connections with every day life, for instance in describing chocolate Father Christmas moulds. In both key stages teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge, and use subject-specific language to good effect.

111. There is a detailed, dated policy document for science. The curriculum is based on the Bedfordshire Scheme and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority material, but the subject would be enhanced by a personalised scheme of work. There is a detailed portfolio of pupils' assessed work. This is out of date and would benefit from more recent work being added. Long term plans are a series of headings only. Medium term plans are more detailed and support teachers in what they teach, when, and to what level. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans and the coverage of the National Curriculum but there are no formal monitoring and evaluating systems. Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress, based on the Bedfordshire scheme, are satisfactory. There are adequate resources for science and they are stored appropriately.

156.

## 156. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### **Information technology**

112. Very little teaching was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, talking to pupils and teachers, and observing pupils working on the computer in lessons or with staff individually.

113. Attainment in information technology at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Year 4 is below the national expectations for pupils of similar ages. Overall, standards have been consolidated since the last inspection, and pupils are making good progress in some elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils in general are attaining at an appropriate level in word-processing, graphic art work and computer knowledge, but skills in control technology and data handling are still underdeveloped. The provision for information technology in the school is at least satisfactory and pupils are making good progress overall in a wide range of skills.

114. Some pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 type simple text and stories direct on the computer, using an appropriate word-processor. Most use the mouse correctly and select the appropriate menu command to obtain a printout of their work. Pupils' use of technical language is generally satisfactory and they explain what they are doing and demonstrate their explanations at the computer with some confidence. By Year 4, pupils use the correct terminology appropriately and their competence in some information and communication technology skills is sound. They display satisfactory attainment in the way they manipulate text and graphics to produce attractive and informative work in their writing. Some use their skills appropriately to search the 'Internet' for information. Higher attaining pupils are able to draw geometric

shapes on the screen by entering a series of commands into a Logo program. Their knowledge of using a database is, however, limited.

115. Progress is good overall throughout the school. Year 1 and 2 pupils have regular computer experience in the classroom, and through individual tuition from learning support staff. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed confidence in using the mouse to control operations on the screen. Year 1 pupils use simple art packages to design pictures of 'teddy bears'. Year 3 pupils effectively create pictures using a graphics package to explore a range of colouring effects. They save their new file and select the appropriate menu function to obtain a printed result. Pupils with special educational needs attain skills appropriately and are making at least satisfactory progress. They are gaining in self-confidence and in their ability to use computers to support their learning.

116. Pupils' response to information technology is good. They are enthusiastic and show enjoyment while they are working. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 display confidence in being able to log on to the programs they are going to use. Many pupils are good at explaining what they are doing and they are eager to show their results to others. They work well in pairs when at the computer by sharing and discussing the tasks. Pupils are also good at helping one another when difficulties arise. They are showing a developing sense of independence and responsibility for their own learning.

117. Very little direct teaching was observed during the inspection. However, teachers have the necessary confidence and competence to demonstrate skills and solve problems. Their knowledge of the subject is satisfactory and they are enthusiastic in what they do. Teachers in both classes make satisfactory use of time and resources for pupils to use computers. Teachers develop pupils' computer skills in order that they can be used effectively in other subjects of the curriculum, such as English, art, history and religious education.

118. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. All areas of the information technology curriculum are addressed, although at present the pupils are not given enough experience in data handling and control technology. There is a satisfactory policy and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's materials are used to guide weekly planning and skill development. Planning is appropriate for the age of the pupils but there is no clear progression in the development of important skills over each key stage. Procedures for assessing the progress of pupils are, however, being developed well and teachers are using them to build a clear profile of pupils' experience and competencies. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory but there is no systematic monitoring of standards. The quantity and quality of resources are adequate but some systems are old and out of date. They are well organised, and the recent connection with the 'Internet' is having a positive effect on the overall curriculum. The use of learning support staff and the headteacher to provide extra individual tuition for pupils is a positive feature that is having a significant impact on standards.

## **Religious education**

119. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work observation of some teaching and discussion with staff and pupils.

120. Attainment in religious education at the end of both key stages is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Improvements have been made in curriculum planning since the last inspection and themes and topic are covered with regularity. The pupils in Year 4 know that the Bible and the Koran are sacred books. They have good knowledge of

the characteristics of Christian places of worship. They are beginning to

understand the concept of pilgrimage both for Christians and for people from other major faiths such as Islam. Their ability to record and reflect on their learning is exemplified by good work on the Jewish Passover and Bar Mitzvah ceremony. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are familiar with stories about Jesus and other people in the Bible, such as the Nativity. They know about religious celebrations of Christians, Jews and Hindus through the study of special festivals, such as Easter, Rosh Hashanah and Diwali. They are aware of the need for rules and can give some reasons for their importance, and have a clear understanding that all people are of value.

121. All pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is enhanced by the way the curriculum is made highly relevant for pupils, firstly by relating it to pupils' own experiences, and, secondly by developing strong links with other subjects in the curriculum, such as history and geography.

122. The pupils respond well to this subject overall. They produce a good quantity of work and have opportunities to respond to what is taught in a personal way; for example, in writing their own prayers. Most pupils take a pride in the presentation of the work in their books, and the quality of handwriting is good at Key Stage 2.

123. It is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in this subject as only one lesson could be seen during the inspection. However, teaching in this one lesson in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory. The teacher made appropriate use of resources and demonstrated sound teaching skills when reading an account of the Jewish Rosh Hashanah festival.

124. The teacher's management of pupils was good but not enough time was allocated at the end of the lesson to assess the pupils' grasp of the new vocabulary introduced.

125. The subject is taught through an appropriately planned two-year rolling programme and in accordance with the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. There is a good balance between study of stories in the Bible and the study of the other major faiths. This represents an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The school's own resources are good and there is a wide range of artefacts to support teaching and learning. Good use is made of local churches but the school is exploring links with religious leaders from other faiths.

## **Art**

126. Pupils are developing useful skills in art, and progress is good throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 they use pencils carefully to make representation of different textures and experiment with effects and techniques. They develop technical vocabulary such as 'rough', 'smooth', 'shading' and 'hardness'. They use wax resist to recreate firework pictures and a software program to create pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock. They draw lively portraits. At Key Stage 2, pupils make detailed observational drawing of feathers, using a variety of media including paint, crayon and pencils. They make three-dimensional structures and plan individual fantasy birds based on the shapes they have practised.

127. The scrutiny of display around the school shows that pupils design and make images and artefacts with skill. They experiment with printing techniques to produce attractive designs, and sketchbooks are used well.

128. These show colour shading, press printing and work with fabrics. Pupils enjoy art and work enthusiastically as individuals or collaboratively. They become absorbed in their work and find it exciting. They watch and listen intently when teachers demonstrate techniques, and evaluate their own work critically because they wish to improve.

129. Teaching is good in both key stages. Daily planning is very good and the detailed learning objectives are effectively fulfilled.

130. Teachers have extensive subject knowledge and high expectations, and manage time and resources competently. They give clear explanations, using subject-specific language. They set targets for completing work and provide good opportunities for pupils to put learning into practice and express their ideas and feelings.

131. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the enthusiastic, knowledgeable co-ordinator. Advice has been sought from advisory staff within the local education authority, and areas for development informally identified. The long-term plan shows a variety of activities to access the art curriculum, and medium term planning contains elements of a scheme of work.

132. The co-ordinator has rightly identified that planning for continuity and progression will be further improved by identifying the skills that pupils should acquire. There is no specific time allocated for this review and the policy document has not been updated for four years.

133. Resources for art are good. The pupils' artwork is carefully mounted and attractively displayed. A current three-dimensional display of birds is especially striking and provides a stimulating focus for the understanding and enjoyment of visual forms. An interesting activity is the 'Christmas decoration-day', when staff, parents and pupils decorate all the display boards. All these features contribute to the good progress made by the pupils and enhance the subject.

## **Design and technology**

134. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of some teaching, and discussion with staff and pupils.

135. The pupils make good progress in this subject in both key stages. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The pupils enjoy the practical nature of the subject and the decision making it involves. They persevere with activities, seeing them through to a satisfactory conclusion from initial ideas to evaluation of the final products.

136. This is particularly well demonstrated by Key Stage 2 pupils' evaluations of their free standing picture frames, which they made this term. Many of these pupils show details of their designs in labelled sketches. They make realistic suggestions about how they can achieve their intentions, and measure, mark out and cut simple forms, joining them by the use of a range of techniques, such as cutting and gluing. Their products are similar to their original ideas. These plans are reviewed, and pupils make appropriate changes as they identify what works and what does not. In Key Stage 1, the pupils practise focused skills and join materials in a variety of ways, as when they learn to design and make finger puppets. These pupils used

labelled pictures effectively to develop and communicate their designs.

137. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching overall. Design and technology clearly has a place within the curriculum, and skills are taught competently by all staff. The subject is planned effectively through units of work. Resources are satisfactory, and the curriculum is enhanced through work on textiles and structures and by links to other subjects. The recently introduced 'Industry Week' is a positive feature of this subject. Visits made to local places of interest such as to the gravel quarry, and the involvement of other visitors and professionals to the school, make the subject very relevant to pupils.

## **Geography and History**

138. Evidence was collected through lesson observations, scrutiny of work from pupils' books, teachers' planning and conversations with the subject co-ordinator and pupils.

139. Pupils make satisfactory progress in history in relation to their prior attainment at Key Stage 1, and good progress at Key Stage 2. They make good progress in geography at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into all class activities and make satisfactory progress at appropriate levels.

140. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn about farming methods of the past and visit a local farm to extend their knowledge. They identify physical and human features in the landscape, categorising them correctly.

141. They make good progress in developing the concept of Place and in learning specific geographical vocabulary. Pupils continue to refine and develop their geographical and historical skills well in Key Stage 2. They draw their own maps; devise symbols and use four-figure grid references. They study Viking culture, using their previous knowledge and pictures of artefacts to make deductions. They use sources of information which go beyond simple observations, such as reference books and real pieces of pottery to find answers about the past.

142. Pupils are interested and keen to learn. They persevere with tasks and make good reference to the visual aids supplied by the teacher. They work well in pairs and are keen and eager to participate, showing disappointment when the class discussion is completed.

143. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers plan effectively and provide a variety of stimulating activities to motivate pupils. They challenge pupils with skilful questioning and use whole class discussions to move pupils on in their learning. Work is carefully differentiated for all ability groups and support staff are used well.

144. There are adequate policy documents for geography and history but no schemes of work. Planning is based on the Qualifications and Assessment Authority material. Medium term planning identifies learning objectives and assessment opportunities. Assessments for aspects of geography are recorded in Key Stage 2.

145. Resources for history and geography are good. They are clearly labelled in topic boxes. A good feature is the educational visits made in connection with subjects. Visitors to the school, such as the archaeologist who brought original pottery for Year 3 and 4 pupils to investigate, help to contribute to the good progress pupils make.

## Music

146. Progress is satisfactory overall and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils at Key Stage 1 can sing a range of familiar and unfamiliar songs with confidence. For example, they are able to sing songs well in assemblies. Most pupils can successfully count the beat to a rhythm and copy it, using percussion instruments. Singing is satisfactory and the maintenance of rhythm and pitch is appropriate when pupils sing to the accompaniment of a CD. Progress is good at Key Stage 2, where many pupils can sing well and their understanding of dynamics is good. For example, most can sing a song in a round developing the dynamics through variation in overall volume of singing and choice of percussion instruments for accompaniment.

147. These pupils are developing their ability to appraise the music of others and their knowledge of famous composers is satisfactory. All pupils are developing their confidence in performing a variety of songs in singing sessions, and the overall quality of singing in assemblies is good. The progress of pupils receive peripatetic tuition is good, and these pupils are learning to play stringed instruments to an acceptable standard.

148. The teachers give tuition in playing the recorder for many pupils at break times, and these pupils are making good progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory.

149. The response of pupils to music is good. Pupils enjoy making music and they are attentive in lessons. They persevere with their singing and playing of instruments. Pupils throughout the school enjoy singing hymns and songs in assemblies. Pupils who receive individual or small group tuition respond well to instruction and endeavour to play tunefully and correctly. The confidence of older pupils in making music is clearly demonstrated in taped recordings of their compositions.

150. Teaching is satisfactory. Planning is satisfactory throughout both key stages, and questioning is used well in lessons to challenge and motivate pupils. Subject expertise is satisfactory overall but best at Key Stage 2, where the most teaching was observed.

151. In this lesson, activities are challenging and the teaching moves at a brisk pace. Instruments and audio visual aids are used effectively to promote learning and pupil behaviour is managed well. Peripatetic tutors make a valuable contribution to the subject.

152. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate policy statement providing useful guidance to staff. The school makes effective use of a commercial scheme to provide structure to the curriculum but there is no school scheme of work to clearly identify what should be taught to which group of pupils and when. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to compose their own music at both key stages. The allocation of teaching time is satisfactory, and pupils are given opportunities to listen to and appraise the music of famous composers in assemblies. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall, but subject co-ordination is underdeveloped and the monitoring of the curriculum has been limited. The provision for individual tuition in recorders, brass and violin, is good.

## **Physical education**

153. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of teachers' plans, discussions with pupils, and the observation of two lessons. Standards of work in physical education are in line with what is expected for nine and seven year olds and similar to those identified in the previous inspection.

154. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. At Key Stage 1, pupils perform simple gymnastics skills with confidence. Many can use space carefully and travel in a variety of ways to jump, and land into a balanced shape.

155. Most pupils can hold a bridge shape for their partner to move carefully under, and then work co-operatively with their partner to create a larger bridge shape. Key Stage 2 pupils are making good progress in the development of their dancing skills, through the impact of good teaching. For example, many can express themselves through dance when portraying a rocket taking off, exploding in the night sky and sinking to the ground, their flame exhausted! These pupils responded very well to the teacher's effective guidance and structure of the lesson.

156. All pupils are enthusiastic about physical education and are keen participants in lessons and after-school activities. They listen carefully and follow instructions with due regard for safety. Pupils often work together in pairs or small groups trying hard to improve their performance.

157. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' aims and objectives to lessons are clear, and planning is clearly linked to a commercial scheme. Subject expertise is generally secure across the school but best at Key Stage 2. In the one lesson seen at Key Stage 1, pupils worked at a satisfactory pace. The teacher monitored pupils' activities, giving them pertinent advice, support and encouragement when needed.

158. There were, however, missed opportunities in this lesson for pupils to effectively appraise the work of others and use simple apparatus such as mats and benches to challenge their skill development. Teachers are appropriately dressed for physical education in all lessons, and good regard is shown for health and safety.

159. Physical education is appropriately represented in the school curriculum. A commercial scheme of work for gymnastics provides a clear structure for the development of pupils' skills. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a range of physical activities, including gymnastics, dance and playground games, and swimming in the outdoor pool. Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular sessions provided by parents and a local football coach after school

204. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

204. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

160. The inspection was carried out over a period of two and a half days by a team of three inspectors, including a lay inspector.

161. The total time spent in direct observation of teaching and learning was 25 hours and 45 minutes.

162. Twenty-nine lessons or parts of lessons were observed.

163. Registration sessions were observed.

164. Samples of work and pupils' records were examined.

165. A number of pupils were spoken to about their work, and a sample were heard reading their books.

166. Inspectors had discussions with each member of staff in connection with their responsibilities.

167. Written statements recently produced by the school, including development plans and the teachers' lesson notes, were examined.

168. A questionnaire was distributed and a meeting was held with 15 parents.

169. Discussions were held with parents and governors.

## 215. DATA AND INDICATORS

### 215. 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 – Y4	67	0	10	3

### 215. Teachers and classes

#### 215. Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	3.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	21:1

#### 215. Education support staff (YR – Y4)

Total number of education support staff:	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	37.16

Average class size: 23

### 215. Financial data

Financial year: 1998/99

	£
Total Income	153149.00
Total Expenditure	146115.00
Expenditure per pupil	1826.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	10582.00
Balance carried forward to next year	17616.00

215. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

65
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Number of questionnaires returned:

25
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Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	215.	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	8	52	12	16	12
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	24	24	8	28	16
The school handles complaints from parents well	4	24	24	28	20
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	0	44	36	12	8
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	4	36	24	24	12
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	8	48	32	4	8
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	16	40	28	8	8
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	12	56	24	4	4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	12	56	20	4	8
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	0	56	20	16	8
My child(ren) like(s) school	16	60	12	4	8

215. **Other issues raised by parents**

A significant number of parents expressed a concern that they felt unwelcome in the school and that communication with the headteacher is difficult.