

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RISELEY VA LOWER SCHOOL**

Riseley

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109624

Headteacher: Mrs Lindsay Fraser

Reporting inspector: Lynne Wright  
22398

Dates of inspection: May 14th –16th 2001

Inspection number: 193497

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	1 Church Lane Riseley Bedford Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK44 1EL
Telephone number:	01234 708218
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lynda Simister
Date of previous inspection:	28 – 30 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22398	Lynne Wright	Registered Inspector	Science, Art and Design Information and Communication Technology Foundation Stage Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school' results and achievements. How well the pupils are taught. How well the school is led and managed. What the school should do to improve further.
1305	Brian Rance	Lay Inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils. How well the school works in partnership with parents.
10611	Martin James	Team Inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical Education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
4262	Tony Taylor	Team Inspector	English Design and Technology Music Special Educational Needs English as an additional language	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Riseley Voluntary Aided Lower School is a small rural school for boys and girls aged three to nine. It has 114 full-time pupils of compulsory school age, and 34 pupils in the nursery class, 29 of whom attend part-time. The school serves Riseley and other adjacent villages. Almost one fifth of the pupils come from further afield. Their main ethnicity is white, and no pupils have English as an additional language. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. The number of pupils taking free school meals is below the national average. The attainment of children entering the school in the Foundation Stage is average overall. The school is under-subscribed, reflecting population trends in this area. Children are admitted three times each year, so there is movement of some pupils to other classes midway through the school year. The ~~older~~ children in the Reception year are taught with the Year 1 pupils. There are more boys than girls, and this imbalance is concentrated in classes with the younger pupils. The twenty seven pupils identified as having special educational needs is low compared to the proportions found nationally. Of these, the percentage of pupils having statements of special educational needs is broadly in line with the average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good, effective school. Good teaching helps pupils achieve well and current inspection findings show that standards of their work are above average in all subjects, except Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Key Stage 1, where it matches expectations. Pupils attitudes to school are good. Their behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. The overall quality of education being provided is good and the school shows good care for its pupils. The school had been through a challenging period between the previous headteacher leaving and the present headteacher taking up her post. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to ensure a common sense of purpose within the school. Leadership and management of the headteacher, and that of other senior staff are good. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are above national expectations, in all subjects except ICT at Key Stage 1. Standards in history and music are particularly high.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good, and much of it is very good, so that the pupils make good progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum provided at all stages is rich, relevant and interesting.
- The school's care of all its pupils is good, and it always has their best interests at the heart of its decisions.
- Links with parents are very effective through regular, very good quality information.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and management.
- The governing body is very knowledgeable, supportive and effective in carrying out its responsibilities.

#### **What could be improved**

- The behaviour of a small ~~core~~-number of pupils.
- The assessment of what pupils know and the progress they are making in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Consistency of teachers' marking so that pupils know the strengths and weaknesses in their work, and what they need to do to improve.
- The awareness of pupils of how well they are learning and the progress they are making.
- The awareness of pupils that they are living in a multi-cultural society.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The previous inspection of January, 1997 found 'a good school with a strong caring ethos'. The school

has made satisfactory improvement since then and maintained the good levels of care. The 2000 National Curriculum tests and tasks for pupils aged seven showed that good standards in reading had been maintained, but there had been a drop in those for writing and mathematics. The school has addressed perceived underachievement energetically, and standards in work now match those found at the last inspection. Good teaching has been maintained. Areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled, mostly successfully. The introduction of new curriculum requirements has been managed well. An improved geography curriculum is now in place. Provision for learning in history and music is now very good. Pupils' confidence in mathematics has increased. The range of extra-curricular activities provided has been improved by the introduction of a residential experience for Y4 pupils. Good leadership and a shared commitment to improvement amongst governors and staff mean the school is well placed to achieve further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
reading	B	B	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	B	A	B	C	
mathematics	B	B	C	E	

The results of the 2000 national tests show that attainment is high compared to schools nationally, in reading and writing, and matches the average in mathematics. This represents a fall in standards in writing and mathematics from the previous year, although fluctuations reflect normal variations between different groups of pupils. Compared to similar schools, standards were not so high and were well below average in mathematics. The school was concerned that its pupils were underachieving in English and mathematics. The effectiveness of their remedial action is evident by the current good progress of these pupils, now in Y3, where attainment is above expectations. The present Y4 pupils had average attainment overall on entry to Key Stage 1. They have made good progress and achieved well to attain above national expectations in all curriculum subjects. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and those approaching the end of the stage show standards slightly above average. All pupils at Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, are making good gains in their learning to achieve well in all subjects except ICT, where standards match national expectations. Attainment in history and music is particularly high throughout the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; most pupils are interested and involved in their work and approach it enthusiastically.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; while most pupils behave well at all times, a small number of pupils <del>are</del> deliberately <del>disruptive</del> <u>misbehave</u> in lessons, and in less formal situations.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; pupils generally respond well to the increasing amount of responsibility they are given. Relationships are good between most pupils.
Attendance	Good; the pupils like coming to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
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Lessons seen overall	Good, with much very good teaching.	Good	Good
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*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The overall quality of the teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Of the thirty lessons, or parts of lessons seen, 17% were satisfactory, 60% were of good quality, 20% were of very good quality, and one lesson (3%) was excellent. The combination of good planning, which takes account of the learning needs of all groups of pupils, and the good teamwork amongst all staff, has helped maintain high standards of teaching. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught to good effect so that pupils are making consistently good gains in their learning in all aspects of English and mathematics, and applying their knowledge very well in many different contexts. Additional support is used very well, and is increasing significantly the pupils' opportunities for learning, especially those that experience difficulties in concentrating or acquiring new knowledge. All these factors lead to most pupils concentrating hard, completing a lot of careful and thoughtful work and achieving well. The high standard of presentation of work in English is not applied with equal effort to work in other areas. The pupils are not involved enough in evaluating their own achievements.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; it is rich and interesting, meeting the needs and interests of the pupils well, and is effective in raising standards. An appropriate statutory curriculum is firmly in place.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, high expectations and regular good quality support ensure the pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' spiritual development in lessons and other activities is satisfactory*. The provision for their moral and social development is good. For their cultural development provision is satisfactory, but pupils are not given enough experiences of life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's care of its pupils is good. Good systems are in place to ensure the health, safety and protection of the pupils. Procedures for assessing and monitoring academic performance in English, mathematics and science are good, but in other curriculum subjects they are not detailed enough. While there is some very good marking of pupils' work, it is inconsistent. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good.

\*The school is subject to a Section 23 inspection that looks in more detail at the pupils' spiritual development through learning in religious education and worship.

The school has established a very good partnership with parents. Parents support the school strongly, and are involved in its work. The school provides very good quality information to parents about all aspects of school life.

### HOW -WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher has a very clear sense of direction for the future work of the school and is supported well by all the staff.



How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They are very well informed and involve themselves fully so that they provide very good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good checks are made on areas of priority and findings are used well to guide effective action that continues to bring about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Careful planning results in good use of resources. Finances and other school matters are very efficiently administered.

The staffing level is good. The school has a comparatively large number of classroom support staff and helpers, and they make a very effective contribution to the teaching and life of the school. The accommodation is used efficiently. Learning resources are of good quality and are in good supply. They are efficiently and effectively used due to good planning and management. The school is currently replacing much of its computer equipment, which will enhance the quality of the work in ICT at Key Stage 1, where pupils' attainment is not as good as at Key Stage 2. The principle of ensuring best value from all services and purchases is firmly embedded in the school's culture. Good leadership has ensured that teachers new to the school are supported well so that they share the school's aims and have high expectations of themselves and their pupils.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
Parents are pleased with many aspects of the school, but they are especially content that their children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• like school</li> <li>• are expected to work hard to achieve their best</li> <li>• become more mature and responsible and that the school</li> <li>• is well led</li> <li>• provides good teaching</li> <li>• helps their children make good progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of information they receive about how their child is getting on</li> <li>• the range of interesting activities provided outside lessons</li> </ul>

The inspection team's judgements support the parents' positive views of the school.

The quality of information provided for parents, and in particular about progress through newsletters, personal contact and annual reports, is very good.

Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Clubs and activities offered change according to the skills of available adults, and the interests of the pupils.

The recent introduction of a week-long residential experience for Year 4 pupils has been of great benefit to them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. There is a range of attainment amongst the children who join the school in the Nursery class, but it is broadly average, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The current cohort of children in the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, enter with well-developed speaking and listening skills. In the use of mathematical language, and in aspects of early reading skills they are below average. Consistently good teaching within a very well-planned and stimulating curriculum enables the children to make good progress in most areas of learning, irrespective of their prior attainment, gender or social circumstances. Very good systems for tracking the progress of individual children ensure that any difficulties they have are quickly identified and addressed. This is particularly important when new children enter each term and the spread of age, experience and maturity is wide. Staff are skilful in offering learning activities well-matched to each child and the stage they are at in their learning. By the time they start Year 1 most children have attained securely the early learning goals expected nationally for children of this age in most aspects of their learning. As a result of recent initiatives, some children make better progress and are working on some aspects of the National Curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 1. Overall, standards are just above average with the exception of personal and social development, and some aspects of reading, where they are average.
2. The results of the end of Key Stage 1 national tests and assessment for 2000 in reading and writing showed attainment to be above average compared to schools nationally, but average compared to schools in similar circumstances. However, these results showed a large 'tail' of pupils who were achieving at the lower end of the average band. At the higher levels standards were well above average in writing, and average in reading, nationally. Attainment in mathematics was similar to the national average, but well below average when compared to similar schools. At the higher levels, attainment was below average. All pupils did very well in the science teacher assessments and all met expectations. However, none attained at the higher levels. Teacher assessment was moderated fully by the Local Education Authority and the school's results were found to be accurate.
3. The trends of results of tests and assessments from 1996 to 2000 show a steady pattern of above average attainment, with some fluctuations, as is normal with different cohorts of pupils.
4. The 2000 results caused the school concern, as they indicated underachievement within subjects and by groups of pupils, and the school thought they could do better. Since September, individual targets have been set for attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 in English and mathematics, and vigorous action has been taken in the planning and teaching to support all children in progressing towards these targets. Further work remains to be done in extending the learning of more able pupils in English through including them in evaluating their own work, and in providing consistently challenging activities for higher attainers in mathematics. Individual pupils are given their own targets for work in English and they keep these on their desks to remind them of the focus of their work. Although targets are not set for science, teachers identify, in their planning, the pupils of whom they have higher expectations and match the work accordingly. The school now analyses the results of tests and assessments by gender and pupils' backgrounds as well as by the term in which they entered the Reception class. Pupils' work is collected regularly so that teachers can check that progress in learning is being made, and that pupils are progressing towards meeting their targets. Recently a governor has been tracking a sample of boys in the school to see whether they are offered appropriate learning experiences and how well they are doing. The information has yet to be formally evaluated, but indications are that these boys, chosen at random, are doing as well as the girls. Inspection findings confirm this. Further research is planned. Targets are revised in the light of all the information thus gathered.

5. This prompt and well-focused action has been effective. Inspection evidence shows that attainment at Year 2 is above national expectations in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and geography. National expectations are matched in information and communication technology (ICT). Attainment is well above expectations in history and music. At Year 4, the year in which pupils transfer to Middle School, the pattern of attainment is similar to that for Key Stage 1, except in ICT where it is above expectations. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, and those in geography have improved at Key Stage 1. Attainment in history and music has improved at both key stages. Although attainment in ICT at both key stages appears to have dropped from the position at the previous inspection, requirements are now more rigorous. Pupils are performing similarly to that described in the previous report.
6. This indicates good achievement for all groups of pupils. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. They make good progress based on their clear and developmental individual education plans, due to the well-planned support and the good care they are given.
7. The present Year 3 has made good progress in subjects that were the focus of national tests and assessments in 2000. The present Year 4 was noted as entering Key Stage 1 with broadly average attainment at the time of the previous inspection. Since then they have made good progress to attain at above expectations. Learning is consistently good or better in all subjects except ICT at Key Stage 1. Here problems with old and faulty equipment has limited what the pupils can do, and the school currently awaits the delivery of new equipment. All groups of pupils make good progress in their learning in all aspects of their work, and apply their knowledge and understanding consistently and successfully in the many different contexts that the rich and varied curriculum affords. A high proportion of pupils in each class is working consistently at expected levels and many pupils are now attaining at levels above expectations in most subjects.
8. Progress is good in reading, writing, speaking and listening and handwriting. The pupils are good listeners, and confident speakers when presenting their ideas, although opportunities to develop further are limited. Pupils develop into fluent and knowledgeable readers and have well developed creative writing skills which they apply equally successfully to their poetry, fiction and non-fiction writing. They develop a well-formed, cursive handwriting style. In mathematics, learning is good across all curriculum strands including the development of knowledge and skills, and pupils are given many opportunities to acquire both at higher levels. In art and design, and design technology pupils show a willingness to explore and develop ideas and are critical of their own work, suggesting ways in which it could be improved. Pupils have a good knowledge of a wide range of contrasting geographical localities. Progress in history and music is very good. The range of research opportunities the teachers give the pupils and the good use of artefacts ensure very good knowledge and understanding of a wider range of historical periods than is usually found at this stage. In music, standards are equally high in singing, and other musical performance, due to the very good teaching and good range of opportunities that are offered to the pupils.
9. Although standards in personal and social development are satisfactory overall, they are good for the majority of pupils, with a small number of pupils whose behaviour and attitudes give cause for concern despite the best efforts of their teachers.
10. The good achievement and progress noted at the previous inspection has been maintained and, in some cases, has been improved. This reflects the determination of the headteacher and staff that perceived underachievement should be addressed quickly. Also the headteacher, governors and staff have ensured that curriculum provision remains broad and interesting at a time when priorities required additional time and effort in developing school approaches to the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. The attitudes of nearly all pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, to school are good, as are the relationships they establish. Pupils' behaviour, overall, and their personal development are satisfactory.
12. Pupils, generally, have good attitudes to their learning. Most pupils enjoy school and are happy to be there. During lessons most listen carefully to their teachers, make thoughtful observations and answer sensibly, sometimes providing extended answers. They apply themselves to their tasks with interest and good concentration, and persevere with their work until it is complete. They undertake practical activities with enthusiasm. In a number of lessons, however, at both key stages, a small number-proportion of pupils shows more negative attitudes to their work. They fail to listen carefully to their teachers, talk to other pupils when they should be concentrating, call out answers and, in some cases, deliberately attempt to spoil the flow of the lesson. Teachers usually deal well with these situations and maintain the pace of the work. Occasionally the lesson is disrupted for a short time, despite the best efforts of the teacher. Pupils, on occasions, successfully take responsibility for the organisation of their work, particularly in art and design and design and technology. A significant number of pupils are keen to remain after school, to take part in the good range of extra-curricular activities.
13. Pupils' behaviour in and around school is satisfactory, overall. There have been no recent exclusions. Most pupils are polite and considerate to one another, as well as to staff and visitors. Most are well behaved during lessons, and, for example, during assemblies. Pupils show respect for the school building and the school grounds, as well as for equipment and property. There are times, however, when the behaviour of a small number of pupils is less than satisfactory. This applies sometimes in lessons, but is more evident during break-times and especially lunch-times. Many pupils are noisy in the dining hall, and some pushing and jostling was observed during the inspection, whilst pupils were lining up for their meals. This behaviour went unchecked by supervisory staff. Once outside, the behaviour of some pupils became boisterous and lacking in control. Some pupils were observed frequently running in and out of classrooms, with little awareness of others. At the end of break-times, and lunch-times in particular, a minority of pupils continue to run around after the bell is rung, and need reminding more than once to come to attention. The sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are not spelled out clearly enough. The school is well aware of this issue, and has planned further professional training to help them overcome it with more success.
14. The quality of relationships is good, and apart from a minority of pupils who do not relate well to others, a caring ethos is evident, both in the classrooms and around the school. Teachers and other members of staff relate well to each other and to the pupils, and pupils respond by usually forming good relationships of their own. In class, most pupils work well collaboratively, supporting each other and sharing resources and ideas. However, a minority of pupils are inclined to respond less well and to argue with others. Around the school, most pupils work and play well together. Older pupils are particularly caring of younger ones, and they are very keen to look after them, whenever the opportunity arises.
15. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most readily take on responsibilities in their own classrooms, and they carry out their tasks most efficiently. Pupils in Year 4 help with lunch-time and assembly arrangements in the hall, and they do so effectively. Whenever the chance arises to help either the headteacher, or other members of staff, most pupils are quick to offer their services, and they carry out the tasks willingly. Regular and more extensive opportunities for pupils to further develop their personal skills around the school, however, are limited, particularly in developing their independence.
16. Pupils attendance at school is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. It is similar to other schools in Bedfordshire, which is better than the national average. In 1999/2000 the rate of unauthorised absence was double that of Bedfordshire, and worse than the national figure. The school and parents have co-operated successfully to reduce the number of unauthorised absences

significantly. Nearly all pupils arrive at school punctually so that the day gets off to a prompt start, but there is a very small number of families who regularly send their children to school late.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS ~~OR STUDENTS~~ TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of the teaching is good across the school, and is a strength. Much of the teaching has many very good aspects. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In over eighty three per cent of lessons it was good or better. Overall standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, but the percentage of very good lessons (20%) has increased. One excellent lesson was observed.
18. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is good, and this is having a beneficial impact on other curriculum subjects. Good concentration on the development of general literacy skills, combined with emphasis on creative writing enables the pupils to research and write in detail on a wide range of history topics, for example. Numeracy and ICT are taught very competently, enabling the pupils to use data effectively, as in geography and science.
19. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception Year, is particularly effective due to the teachers' good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn, their very good planning and their good teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. In this, the very close working relationships between all adults supporting the children's learning are very beneficial in helping the children make good progress. At both Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, the teachers have good knowledge of the concepts and skills that are to be developed in each subject, and they use this knowledge to good effect to promote high standards of attainment and learning. These features, combined with a consistent whole-school system of planning, enable lessons at all stages to be well-focused and effectively delivered. The purpose of most lessons is clearly communicated to the pupils, so that they know what is expected of them. The pace of lessons, the quality of the questioning and the correct and appropriate use of technical vocabulary signals the teacher's high expectations to the pupils. Nearly all pupils respond well. The quality of their learning is good and they usually acquire new knowledge and skills at a rapid rate. As they get older they are encouraged to make links in their learning in subjects and this helps them to deepen their understanding and contributes to good progress in all year groups. Teaching judged to be satisfactory has many of the characteristics of good teaching, but the pace varies and during those periods, the impetus of the pupils' learning also slows, so that progress is not as good as it might be.
20. The teachers employ a variety of questioning techniques effectively in order to extend the learning of all groups of pupils. They are particularly aware of the need to do so for higher attaining pupils in their efforts to raise standards of attainment even more. They often use plenary sessions well to reinforce and extend the pupils' learning.
21. The needs of the pupils with special educational needs are met well. Assessments are carefully compiled, involving all staff, and learning objectives for the pupils are clearly identified. The teachers regularly, and beneficially, define specific tasks in lessons to match the needs of the pupils.
22. Teachers' verbal comments in lessons frequently give pupils a good idea about their work, and what needs improving. However, there are inconsistencies in the marking systems, and a general lack of regular pupils' involvement in assessing their own work. Consequently the pupils have a limited idea of how well they are doing and the progress they make over time. There are few

collections of class or school work to help the pupils, teachers, parents and visitors to celebrate its quality and range and to set a standard for the pupils.

23. The teachers use a good range of teaching methods and have high expectations for the pupils in approaching their work independently and developing their own ideas. The Year 3 class built on an earlier discussion of vandalism to think about care of the environment. As they walked around the school grounds they showed confidence in discussing the problems litter causes. The teacher successfully involved all pupils, and those who were less confident were expected to contribute their thoughts and ideas, so that they made good progress in environmental awareness. Across the school, most pupils work at a good pace and are very productive. They concentrate well over long periods and apply intellectual and creative effort in their activities. The teaching is often stimulating, interesting and thorough, and encourages the children to do their best, so that they become involved and interested in their learning. This was particularly so in an excellent art and design lesson where the teacher's very good knowledge enabled pupils in Year 1 to attain very highly. The younger children were engrossed in what they were doing, working with care and delicacy to make pictures of great beauty. The older pupils wove fabric very successfully onto garden trellis to reflect the mood of the sea. Both groups were rightly proud of what they had done and wanted to talk about it, and how they had done it. They demonstrated very good use of shape, pattern and colour to produce works of originality and flair.
24. There is a small percentage of pupils who wilfully misbehave and have little self-discipline in their approach to lessons, despite the best efforts of staff and the interesting work. The teachers' good classroom management and good use of learning assistants and helpers ensure that these pupils make progress and do not disturb others. In a very good music lesson, the teacher used ensemble work within a whole class setting to ensure attentiveness. The lesson remained purposeful and the pupils' learning was moved on effectively.
25. All staff work together very effectively to ensure that the pupils receive good quality teaching and care. The support staff and helpers are briefed well and they contribute much to the pupils' experiences and learning.
26. Homework is used satisfactorily to reinforce what the pupils are learning in school. Parents were consulted on the homework arrangements, and they, and the school feel they have 'got it right'.
27. A 'missing link' in the procedures for teaching and learning is that there are no formalised systems in place at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 to enable the teachers to make thorough assessments of the pupils' attainment and progress across the range of the non-core curriculum. This is restricting the school's effectiveness in promoting even better progress. Teachers are now evaluating the impact of their teaching, and plan accordingly on a weekly basis, and this system is developing well so that teaching is becoming more focused according to the identified needs of all groups of pupils.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

28. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school are very good for children at the Foundation Stage and good for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. All statutory requirements are met.
29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage in both the Nursery and Reception classes is very good. It is planned very well to cover all areas of learning effectively in an interesting and stimulating way. Activities are structured effectively, within themes, to give children a rich variety of experiences in formal and play contexts, enabling each child to make good progress intellectually and emotionally.

30. The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is appropriately broad and balanced, and suits the pupils' needs and interests very well. The provision in many subjects goes well beyond that expected, and a rich and exciting curriculum is provided for all pupils. That for art and design, design and technology, history and music is particularly extensive and stimulating, as it is for the scientific enquiry aspect of science. This contributes significantly to the high standards achieved in these subjects. Good use is made of the time available for teaching, and time allocations to each subject enables pupils' work of worth and depth to develop.

31. Appropriate and relevant policies and schemes of work contain detailed and extensive information to provide for a very full coverage of all subjects. The plans ensure a steady and progressive development of each subject through the school. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with considerable success. Numeracy has been implemented most effectively, with an appropriate use of mental activities in lessons and a ready use of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum, such as design and technology. The success of this implementation has helped to restore the high standards in numeracy previously achieved, at the end of Key Stage 1. In literacy, many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills, both within English itself and across the range of curriculum subjects, such as history and geography. This has helped the school maintain the standard of work in English at a high level.

32. Teachers' curriculum planning helps to ensure the steady and effective development of pupils' knowledge and skills as they move through the school. Planning does not, however, always make adequate allowance for the various needs of pupils, particularly higher attainers, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school makes good provision for the equality of pupils' access to the whole curriculum, with the staff making sure that all pupils are involved in a full range of activities. Good provision is also made for pupils' personal, social and health education, with aspects of sex and drugs education being fully covered within lessons, when appropriate.

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33. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities for the pupils with special educational needs in order to match their interests and aptitudes, and to ensure their good progress.

34. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including gymnastics, football,

gardening, drumming, and art and craft clubs, which are supported ably by teachers, and the church based '45 club'. The nature of these activities changes throughout the year, according to the interests of the pupils and the help available. The school welcomes many visitors, including the police, fire officers and local clergy, as well as drama and music groups. A wide range of educational visits is arranged to places such as Whipsnade Zoo, West Stow and the Shuttleworth transport museum. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects.

35. The contribution of the community to the life of the school remains good, as at the previous inspection, and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The vicar, who is also a governor, and other members of the church, regularly take assembly and assist in RE lessons. The pupils go to church for a service at the end of each term and to celebrate Harvest Festival. At Christmas and on several occasions through the year pupils entertain senior citizens either by visiting an old people's home or inviting others into school. ~~Through the parents' association~~ the school, the church, Riseley village and a neighbouring village mutually support each other's summer fete or fun day. Last year the pupils enjoyed a 'Jim'll Fix It' day organised by the Rotary Club. All of these activities and events foster a strong sense of belonging to a school, village and church community.
36. The school is an active member of the local cluster of lower and middle schools. Whilst this is used primarily for staff training and co-operation on curriculum matters, there are a number of joint activities. For example, the school hosted a special World War II day and pupils from other schools were 'evacuated' to Riseley. The teacher in Year 4 works closely with the headteacher and teacher with responsibility for children with special educational needs from the Middle School to which pupils transfer to ensure that the move is as smooth as possible. Effective liaison takes place on curriculum topics as well as in the transfer of information about pupils, both from an academic and pastoral point of view. These good arrangements benefit all partners in the education of the pupils at Riseley School.
37. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. Overall, provision is good.
38. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are planned well, and delivered thoughtfully, with a clear theme developed each week. Pupils are helped to gain knowledge and insight into their own, and other peoples' values and beliefs. In particular, they are encouraged to respect and value the opinions of others. Moments of quietness are often provided for pupils to reflect on what they have heard. Fewer occasions are provided, or planned, for pupils' spiritual development in other subjects of the curriculum. Those opportunities that are provided in, for example, music and art, allow pupils to express their feelings, and are used most effectively.
39. Provision for moral development is good. The headteacher and staff, as well as providing good role models themselves, remind pupils regularly of the correct forms of behaviour and give reasons for them. Discussions often take place in lessons, such as those in personal, social and health education, and rules of conduct are displayed clearly around the school. Expectations of pupils are appropriate, and they are praised and rewarded regularly for maintaining those standards. Pupils are encouraged to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong, and to treat staff, visitors and other pupils with courtesy, and property with respect. Almost all the pupils do so, but there is a small proportion whose behaviour is challenging. The school recognises this problem, but sanctions to deal with disruptive and challenging behaviour are not clearly enough defined, or rigorously enough applied.
40. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to form good relationships with each other, their teachers and other adults. As they progress through the



school, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively, to take turns and to share resources, such as when taking part in experimental work in science, or in working together on computers. Older pupils are particularly caring of younger ones, and they relate well to them during lunch-times and break-times. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities within their classrooms, and they carry them out effectively and efficiently. Pupils in Year 4 undertake a variety of tasks around the school, such as helping at lunch-time, and acting as librarians. There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to take an increasingly independent approach to organising themselves and their learning. The social development of all pupils is further enhanced by the quality of the school's extra-curricular activities and community links.

41. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They are taught about aspects of British culture in subjects such as English and history. An appropriate emphasis is laid on the knowledge and understanding of other cultures during lessons in subjects such as art, geography, music and physical education. Few opportunities are provided, however, for pupils to develop an understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live.

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## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The steps taken by the school to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are good and continue to be a strength of the school, as at the previous inspection. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commented on the high level of care each child receives. Child protection procedures are good. Procedures for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents, including notifying parents, are well established. Health and Safety risks assessments are carried out by the governors' building committee. Checks on potentially dangerous equipment and practice evacuations of the premises take place regularly. The school provides a caring environment, where the teachers and all the support staff know the pupils very well in an extended family atmosphere.
43. The procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are good. In previous years there has been some difficulty, but now most parents co-operate fully with the school by notifying the reasons for pupils' absence. The great majority of pupils arrive at school in good time and are settled ready for registration which is taken promptly. The school is supported well by the local authority's welfare officer who visits the school regularly.
44. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, as well as dealing with oppressive behaviour, are satisfactory overall. There is a published behaviour policy and the rules of good behaviour are clearly displayed throughout the school. However, these procedures are not used rigorously by all the staff in the school and do not have sufficient impact on the pupils as a whole, and particularly on the minority of pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour.
45. The school provides satisfactory support and guidance for all pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory. The caring ethos of the school and the personal, social and health education programme underpin these procedures. The staff know pupils well, and suitable and appropriate information is kept. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting indicated that they were very confident in the school's good level of care.
46. Assessment made when the children enter the Nursery, and very good tracking systems to inform

the Foundation Stage staff how pupils are progressing in their learning, enable the staff to plan a learning programme that suits the needs of all the children. This helps to ensure that all pupils make good progress throughout this stage. -needs a space

47. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science they are good. Assessments in these are undertaken at suitable points within topics, and teachers keep informative records of pupils' current attainment. Samples of pupils' work are also retained in individual portfolios, providing further evidence of attainment. The information is generally used appropriately, to provide work suited to pupils' individual needs, especially lower attaining pupils. It is not used consistently well, however, in providing suitable work for higher attainers. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through the school, in English, mathematics and science, are good. Extensive records are kept, pupils' progress is plotted and, in English and mathematics, targets for improvement are set regularly.
48. The school has good systems for the early identification of pupils who have particular needs, for overseeing and managing their development, and for ensuring that relevant information is readily available to the teachers and the individual pupil's parents or carers. Efficient records are kept, within a programme of continuous assessment, and these are used effectively.
49. Pupils' are not involved in formally assessing their own progress, identifying the strengths in their work and setting targets for improvement. Many are capable of doing this and an opportunity is being missed to help the pupils learn even more effectively.
50. In the subjects of the curriculum other than English, mathematics and science, assessment opportunities are listed in teachers' planning, and general evaluations are produced. At present, however, these assessments are mostly informal, and evaluations do not provide enough information about the performance of individual pupils to identify either their current attainment or the progress they have made. The information does not help enough in the planning of further work suited to pupils' particular needs.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

51. The great majority of parents are very satisfied with the quality of care and the education provided by the school. The school has very good links with parents. Their relationship with the school is open and friendly, and the strong partnership continues to add to the pupils' learning, as it did at the previous inspection. Parents are welcome in the school. They find that the teachers are approachable and they are prepared to discuss any concerns that they may have.
52. The information provided to parents is very good, and they are well informed about the school. Regular newsletters keep them informed about school activities and any special functions and events. Consultation evenings are held every term and the annual reports on each pupils are of consistently very good quality, indicating how well the individual pupil has progressed during the year and outlining areas for further improvement. Two or three targets for the coming year are set. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are of very good quality and written in an open and friendly style.
53. Children entering the school, in the Foundation Stage, are helped to settle quickly and securely, due to the good induction procedures. The parents complete a profile of their children's capabilities, and thus are encouraged to be full partners in their children's learning.
54. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. Following full consultation with parents, homework expectations are set out clearly. Almost all parents have signed and returned the home-school agreement for each pupil. The support of parents and the local community for

events arranged by the Parents' Association is good, and they are regarded as village occasions. A significant number of parents and other members of the local community come into school to help on a regular voluntary basis, for example, with listening to reading and generally helping in the classroom. Their support is well-planned, and much appreciated by the teachers. It has a significant impact on maintaining high standards throughout the school, and the good progress made by its pupils.

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## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

55. The previous inspection found that the management of the school was good. It continues to be so, despite substantial changes to staff, including the headteacher. Between the previous headteacher leaving and the present headteacher taking up her post the school experienced a period of staffing difficulties. Parents report it was a challenging time. The present headteacher has successfully united the staff into a dedicated and united team whose central purpose is clear; it is to enable all pupils to achieve their best, both academically and personally. To this end the pupils' welfare and happiness is given much thought and a rich and stimulating curriculum emphasises the belief in the importance of an all-round education. This contributes in no small way to the high standards attained. The aims of the school are clearly shared by the governing body, staff and most parents, and are apparent in everything the school does. The headteacher has developed a similarly clear vision of the future work of the school, but is only now ready to articulate it so that it can be shared by all partners in the school's work. The headteacher has a very clear idea of how the school needs to develop, and in this her leadership is very good. She and the senior teacher work closely together to ensure that the priorities for development are appropriate.
56. The criticism in the previous report that the role of curriculum co-ordinators was underdeveloped has been addressed conscientiously, and delegation is now good. Co-ordinators are managing their subjects to an agreed plan, and they all have a clear idea of what the standards of teaching and learning need to be. Some have yet to monitor formally what is happening in the classrooms, as implementation of the plan is continuing, but all work hard to support other teachers, either through helping with planning or sometimes in teaching demonstration lessons. Staff appreciate the boost this gives to their confidence and expertise. This is apparent in the positive way in which they teach subjects they say they feel less confident in, thereby ensuring the pupils' attainment remains high.
57. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching is good. Her clear focus and good analysis of strengths and weaknesses indicate professional development needs and set priorities for further development in the school improvement plan. The school is now looking at increasing its expertise in a range of teaching styles so that the learning of all pupils is enhanced, whatever their preferred way of learning. This demonstrates the school's strong commitment that pupils of all abilities should have the best possible chance to learn successfully. The specific grants for pupils with special educational needs are used efficiently, and are supplemented, according to need, from the school's own funds. The recent major initiative of employing additional classroom assistants is

having a significantly beneficial impact on the level of care being provided, and on the pupils' opportunities for learning.

58. The school is not always able to acquire support for pupils with special educational needs quickly, due to reorganisation within the support agencies.
59. The school defines its educational priorities well. It also plans very well to meet them. The governors, in harness with the headteacher, play a very significant supportive role in ensuring that the staff have sufficient resources to do their job. Finances are allocated carefully, and despite the current situation, in which the roll is falling, very good planning has enabled numerous initiatives to be developed. Among these has been the increase in the number of classroom support staff. The employment of a part-time music specialist has also enabled the special educational needs co-ordinator to have periods of non-teaching time in order to tackle the time-consuming tasks of record keeping and liaison. Grants for specific purposes are used well, and the school is swift to involve itself in local initiatives that can incur additional funding. The benefits of this good leadership and management are evident in the increased opportunities the pupils have in their learning.
60. The contribution of the governing body to the management of the school is very good. The governing body is very knowledgeable about the school and its work. Governors have a strong philosophy of education and development of the 'whole child', and they see this as the central purpose of all their decisions and actions. They work very well together and continually evaluate what they do in order to become even more effective in giving good value and raising standards across all aspects of the school.
61. The match of the teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. All staff have job descriptions. Appraisal procedures are firmly in place and are being used to aid staff and school development. Newly appointed staff are successfully inducted so that they can make a positive contribution to the school's work. All staff have opportunities for in-service training, and the timing, activity title and costs are carefully noted as part of the management procedures and linked to the school's development plan.
62. The administration procedures are very efficient. The teamwork of the part-time secretary and part-time finance officer, and the headteacher, is very good. Communication is effective, and good care is taken to ensure that all those involved in the school are kept well informed. Financial procedures are detailed in a comprehensive policy document and are followed efficiently. The school has acted firmly on the recommendations of a recent financial audit (October 2000).
63. The accommodation is satisfactory for delivery of the curriculum, and available space is used well. The recent addition of a very good quality adventure play area has done much to improve the pupils' playtime activity.
64. The supply and quality of learning resources is good, and they make a significant impact on the learning opportunities provided for pupils. Resources are generally of good quality and appropriate to the ages and the needs of the pupils, and they are readily accessible to staff. The present problems of outdated computer hardware and incompatible software are being addressed.
65. The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues arising from the previous inspection. Close analysis of the results of national assessments have resulted in all groups of pupils making good progress so that standards remain high, and have improved in some subjects. The school's effective leadership and management, the commitment of the staff and the very good involvement of the governors gives the school a good capacity to achieve further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

With the aim of improving further, and continuing the positive work already begun, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) improve the behaviour of the small number of disruptive pupils so that it matches the good behaviour of the majority of the pupils by clearly defining sanctions and applying them more rigorously. (Paragraphs: 9. 12. 13. 14. 24. 39. 44. ~~889~~. ~~912~~. ~~1212~~)
- (2) introduce formal assessment procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the non- core subjects. (Paragraphs: ~~1023~~. ~~1078~~. ~~1112~~. ~~1156~~. ~~1223~~. ~~12930~~)
- (3) review the practice for the marking of pupils' work so that there is greater consistency, in order for the pupils to gain a clear idea of what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve. (Paragraphs: 22. 50. ~~889~~. ~~956~~. ~~1104~~. ~~1223~~. ~~1334~~)
- (4) introduce systems by which pupils are involved in evaluating their own attainment and progress so that they gain a better understanding of how they learn. (Paragraphs: ~~224~~. 49. ~~7980~~. ~~8990~~. ~~978~~. ~~1223~~. ~~1323~~)
- ~~(5)~~(5) ensure that the pupils gain an awareness of the multi-cultural society in which they live. (Paragraphs: 41. ~~1012~~. ~~1112~~)
- (5)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	20%	60%	17%	0%	0%	0%

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	114
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2	5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	27

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	12	27

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	25	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	93 (96)	93 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	25	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	93 (88)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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



***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	110
Any other minority ethnic group	4

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

***Teachers and classes*****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8:1
Average class size	27.3

**Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	238637
Total expenditure	253443
Expenditure per pupil	1850
Balance brought forward from previous year	43278
Balance carried forward to next year	28472

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	141
Number of questionnaires returned	51

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	47	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	45	6	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	57	10	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	47	12	0	21
The teaching is good.	57	31	8	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	39	6	10	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	12	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	29	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	50	35	4	8	3
The school is well led and managed.	39	50	9	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	47	2	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	27	14	6	10

Most responses in the 'Don't know' category were from parents of the youngest children who had not been in school very long.

## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

#### FOUNDATION STAGE

66. Children start compulsory schooling at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. Prior to this they have a variety of experiences, many of them in the Nursery class. The time they spend at school is increased gradually, if parents wish, so that some Nursery pupils are full time. At the time of this inspection there were thirty-four pupils in the Nursery, twenty-nine of whom attended part time. In the Reception class ~~eight~~<sup>13</sup> children share a classroom and teacher with the younger Year 1 pupils. Staff have very good relationships with the parents. The basis for this is laid down before the children start school, during home visits. The parents are encouraged to be partners in their children's learning, by completing a profile of their capabilities. This helps the children to settle quickly and securely into school routines. The school informs parents regularly of what is happening in the Foundation Stage, through newsletters and meetings, and parents value this. Most children enjoy coming to school and quickly and happily join in group and class activities, due to the very good support offered by the teachers, classroom assistants and helpers. The same situation pertains as at the last inspection; a good start is made to the children's education. They are well prepared for the increased demands of the subjects of the National Curriculum, when they enter Year 1.
67. There is a range of attainment on entry to the Nursery, but overall it is average, with strengths in speaking and listening skills. They make steady overall progress in all areas of learning, except in personal and social development where it is slower. The most assured progress is in writing, and reading for meaning and enjoyment. By the time they enter Year 1, most pupils meet the requirements of the early learning goals, and a few are working confidently within the next teaching programme. This good progress is due to good, and sometimes very good, teaching in all areas of learning. The curriculum is very well planned around themes and topics that interest and involve the children. New, very good systems for tracking pupils to check the extent to which they are progressing, and good knowledge of each child, enable the teachers to match next steps in the children's learning to appropriate activities. This is especially important in the Nursery in order to ensure that each child is offered developmental experiences irrespective of how many sessions they attend. In the mixed age class the younger children are provided with teaching activities which preserve the intentions of the Foundation Stage curriculum and signal the school's aim to safeguard their need for time to develop through play. The teachers are making good progress in implementing the new Foundation Stage curriculum and are working hard to see what it means for their children. A book of photographs, exemplifying activity within stepping stones for each area of learning, is helping all staff to gain a good idea of the requirements of the new curriculum, and the standards the children are attaining in it.

#### Personal, social and emotional development

68. Children enter the Nursery with well developed personal and social skills. They are encouraged to have an independent approach to their own environment, choosing milk and fruit when they want it. They undress and dress for physical activity independently. They are taught, through Nursery Rhymes, to be kind and helpful to others, and that it is wrong to take other people's things. Health awareness week encourages them to keep dolls, and themselves, clean. They learn to take turns and share through buying goods in the 'Post Office' and 'shop'. Their sense of belonging to a family is developed soundly through 'show and tell' sessions. One parent, a doctor, came and talked about her job. Children new to the Nursery class work and play confidently along side their peers and adapt their behaviour appropriately for different situations, such as playing outside, and attending whole school assemblies. This confidence reflects the good relationships the children

have with their teachers, and other adults. As they move through the Reception class, the children's concentration span increases and they often work with absorption and effort, and have a positive attitude to work. However, by the time the children enter Year 1, they have not made as much progress in this area of learning as they have in the others. More opportunities could be planned to develop the children's independence in learning.

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no paragraph break here, so all the paras from her on will be minus 1

~~69. More opportunities could be planned to develop the children's independence in learning.~~

### **Communication, language and literacy**

70-69. The development of the children's literacy, language and communication skills is given high priority and staff take every opportunity to extend learning in this area through careful and detailed planning, and through their own careful use of language and questions. In the Nursery, this is done through choosing, sharing and saying rhymes and the children composing their own versions of familiar rhymes in a class book. The use of finger mice puppets aids the development of speaking and listening skills. Pupils are encouraged to join in 'reading' the class big books and to create their own stories, with help. In the Reception class, the children are gradually introduced to the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. They are encouraged, and given many opportunities to write emergently and do so with confidence. This soon merges into standard patterns of spelling and sentence construction; 'it had shrp cornes'. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use full stops and capital letters correctly in their own sentences. The teacher has high expectations of neat, joined handwriting and letters are generally correctly formed and oriented. The teacher supports the children in their reading of simple, unknown texts. In the literacy lesson observed, very clear and well-focused teaching and the teacher's very high expectations of the children's effort enabled them to make very good progress and attain highly. All groups of pupils talk confidently about books and handle them easily. They use a number of strategies for reading unfamiliar words, such as picture and phonic cues. The newly introduced Warwick University Early Reading Research (ERR) is beginning to make an impact on children's writing, spelling and reading. Standards in reading are very high, due to very effective teaching, and many children are attaining above expected levels of the National Curriculum.

### **Mathematical development**

71-70. Due emphasis is placed on mathematical development in the Nursery. The children are confident in joining in number rhymes, such as 'I've Got a Body' to teach the concept of twoness and pairs. Many familiar contexts are planned to help them count reliably, and to say and order numbers to ten. For example 'Hickory Dickory Dock' helps them to use number words

confidently. They pair animals to go into the Ark and sort pairs of socks as they peg them on a line. Staff are very encouraging and, consequently pupils remain interested and concentrate well. In one lesson observed, the NNEB assistant gave good support and encouragement to children wanting to write the number 2. She allowed them maximum independence in orienting and forming the number correctly but balanced that with the need for every child to experience success. Practical activities develop the children's mathematical concepts and vocabulary of most/least and heavier/lighter. In the Reception class the mathematical concepts continue to be developed alongside other areas of learning, such as social and language skills. This is effective in continuing good progress. The children 'shop' in order to recognise a variety of coins and count them correctly. The teaching of mental mathematics becomes more structured as the children are prepared for the National Numeracy Strategy. They attain well, and often exceed the early learning goals for their age.

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

72-71. Many contexts and activities are planned to stimulate the children's interests and increase their knowledge of the world around them, so that they make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals. They are encouraged to use all their senses to investigate materials and objects, such as exotic fruits. They cook and taste plants they have grown in the garden. Many opportunities are planned for the development of children's early science ideas, such as blowing boats through the water to see the effects of wind resistance. They investigate weight and balance and apply their understanding of balance to the park see-saw. They interview people who help them in the school, such as the office manager and the headteacher. An adult visitor shared her memories of her nursery experiences at Riseley School, giving the children a good idea of time past and passing. This experience is applied to old and new toys. They are helped to follow instructions to make a hairy monster, with hair of grass. They use the computer mouse, and a paint programme, confidently and accurately to paint their own pictures. These experiences are developed effectively in the Reception class through the teacher's very detailed and thorough planning. The children's experiences of information and communication Technology are extended to look at bar codes on packaging and 'scanning' them through a play till. All these experiences and good teaching support the children in attaining securely the early learning goals for their age.

### **Physical development**

73-72. The children make good progress in their physical development through good teaching and interesting environments provided in the outdoor play area. Nursery children explore a train theme showing good physical control as they move, increase and slow the pace to a stop as the 'signals' change colour. Further opportunities for physical development are afforded by ring games, and marching and skipping to music. Reception class children show appropriate control using a full range of small equipment, including balls. They are aware of other pupils as they move around the space. Both groups of children move confidently at different levels. Teachers plan carefully for the children to develop fine hand control and co-ordination through, for example, making jam tarts and carefully cutting and sticking to make the Queen of Hearts' crown. They match the expectations of the early learning goals.

### **Creative development**

74-73. To encourage their creative development, the children are given many good opportunities to draw natural and man-made items, sometimes using magnifiers. They experience three dimensional work in clay and, for example, in making robots and experimenting with textures. Through role play they use their imagination to develop characters and situations, playing alongside each other in the Nursery within a theme, such as the Three Bears. By the time they leave the Reception class they take part in more complex scenarios, sometimes with puppets. Reception children demonstrate good pre-weaving skills in matching threads to sea colours to make a piece that reflects sea moods. Their paintings have a vigour and movement through the range of marks

they use and their art work is of very good quality. This reflects the very knowledgeable teaching and high expectations of the teacher in this aspect. They attain firmly what is expected for their age, and sometimes exceed it.

## ENGLISH

75-74. The previous inspection in 1997 found that, at both Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, the pupils' attainments in English were above the national standards and that the pupils made good progress. Attainment in speaking and listening was above the national standard at all stages, and these skills were used effectively throughout the curriculum. The pupils' reading skills were also above expectations, as were the pupils' writing skills. This was due to the good and often very good teaching, which was supported effectively by clear and detailed policies. The position now is similar.

76-75. Standards remain high at Key Stage 1, and in Years 3 and 4, in both reading and writing compared to all schools and they are average when compared to schools of similar type and context. Good standards have been maintained consistently since 1997. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were positive in their praise for the school and confident in the general levels of academic achievement. The current inspection findings indicate that their confidence is well-founded.

77-76. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Most are articulate and enter into conversation readily and confidently, and express their ideas and thoughts openly. They listen well and can follow instructions and make thoughtful contributions to discussions in lessons. At the earlier stages, the school provides many very good opportunities for the children to express themselves verbally. The school's good work in drama is also helpful in this regard. However, there is a tendency for these opportunities to be less expansive in the later years. Here, the opportunities to develop speaking skills in lessons are based largely in question and answer situations. In order to further raise standards, there is a need to offer more opportunities for discussion in smaller groups, so that less confident pupils can participate more effectively.

78-77. Standards in reading are good overall. The majority of the pupils are learning to read fluently and with expression. They show increasing confidence as they mature, attempting new words through effective use of their phonic skills. They often use the text and illustrations to help them to tackle more difficult words. Most can predict what might happen next in a story, and some have favourite books and authors. Again, the excited response to books and reading was noted as being more emphatic amongst the younger pupils. Despite their evident general enjoyment in reading, the older pupils showed less excitement and involvement in the characters and events of stories and in a love of books. Discussions with pupils indicate that the school library is used in only a limited way, and that the pupils' reference skills are under-developed. The school is currently, and beneficially, engaged in a university research project into early reading skills.

79-78. Overall, standards in writing are good at all stages. The pupils write well in many forms, whether in letters, diaries, accounts of events, or in imaginative stories. They are establishing a wide vocabulary, and they often put words and phrases together in a thoughtful way, creating interesting word pictures. Most use simple punctuation correctly and effectively. Spelling standards are satisfactory. The school has recently started to place more emphasis on this important aspect of language development. The school's 'Key Issues for School Improvement 2000-2001' document notes the need for improvement in standards in reading and spelling, following detailed analysis of last year's test results, which showed some pupils to be underachieving. The teachers try to ensure that much of the vocabulary work, such as learning and practising spellings, is targeted towards the needs of individual pupils rather than being too general. This is beginning to pay off, but there is still a substantial amount of work to be done before standards in spelling rise to a higher level. Scrutiny of the pupils' work during the

inspection indicated that the spelling of numerous simple words is often incorrect, (for example, 'gon' for 'gone', or 'comeing' for 'coming' at Year 4). The recent change of policy on handwriting is having a positive effect. Pupils at all stages, and of all ability groups, are steadily acquiring the skill of writing in a joined, cursive hand. This is commendable. In order to continue the good progress, attention should be paid to enhancing the presentation of the pupils' handwriting across the range of the curriculum.

80-79. The teaching of English is good. It is sometimes very good. The lessons are planned thoroughly. Good attention is paid to ensuring that pupils of differing abilities have work that is matched to their needs. The pace of lessons is usually crisp. Learning objectives are communicated clearly to the pupils, and the resources are carefully chosen and utilised. The teachers' expectations for thought and effort are high, and they offer considerable encouragement to ensure the pupils' success. The pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported, and the carefully structured programmes of work are aimed at pupils of all abilities. Standards are not higher, because the pupils are not yet sufficiently encouraged to be more responsible for their own learning. The teachers' marking of work is good generally, but would be improved by asking questions of the pupils about how successful the work was in increasing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Also, a greater level of challenge would ensue if the pupils themselves were asked, on occasions, how a task should be tackled and what they might need to achieve success. This applies particularly to those pupils who are more able.

81-80. The support provided by the classroom assistants and voluntary helpers is used well to help maximise the pupils' learning opportunities, and an effective balance is maintained between whole-class and group activities. However, insufficient use is made of the resources for information and communications technology to advance the pupils' learning in English.

82-81. The consequence of the good teaching is that the pupils are interested in what they are doing. They try hard and work amicably together. They listen well, behave appropriately, and get through a considerable amount of work to good benefit of their learning. There is often a distinct working 'buzz' in classrooms during English lessons. On occasions, however, this reaches a pitch that becomes distracting.

83-82. The school's careful and considered adoption of the National Literacy strategy is helping to increase the pupils' literacy skills generally. Unusually, the school has ensured that the pupils' imaginative writing skills have not been diminished under the considerable pressure to fulfil the national programme. This is also commendable.

84-83. The school's systems for assessing how well individual pupils are doing in the various aspects of their English work are firmly established and are good. Individual targets for improvement are set. A system of 'Traffic Lights', where aspects of the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are indicated in their workbooks, is proving to be an effective method of ensuring that pupils, teachers and parents are aware of the stages the pupils have reached in their learning. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting indicated that they found the system useful and informative. Good use is made of the information gained from National Curriculum test results and other data. For example, a recent initiative to improve spelling has arisen from the assessment and evaluative procedures.

85-84. The co-ordinator for English is hard-working and informed. She is aware of the standards the pupils achieve, and the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. The monitoring of teaching and learning is an area of the school's work which is being developed steadily and effectively, in an effort to raise standards further.

## **MATHEMATICS**



~~86.85.~~ Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time the pupils leave the school, are above the national average. Pupils' progress is good. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, in 2000, the standards achieved by pupils in the school were broadly in line with the national average. When compared to the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the schools' results were well below average. This was because, whilst the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was broadly average, the percentage reaching the higher level was below average. Since that time, the school has carefully and effectively implemented the Numeracy Strategy, with the result that standards have now improved. Current standards are now similar to those achieved by pupils between 1998 and 1999. Present inspection findings show that the high standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been restored.

~~87.86.~~ At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils carry out a range of practical and problem solving activities successfully, sometimes selecting their own equipment, and they try confidently to discover their own ways to find solutions. They are confident in handling numbers and, for example, readily find a variety of ways of producing the same answer. Pupils have a clear understanding of addition, including carrying figures, and subtraction. They know the multiplication facts relating to 2, 5 and 10. They have a clear understanding of place value to three figures, and they recognise odd and even numbers. They identify halves and quarters successfully. Pupils confidently and correctly carry out addition and subtraction of money, in the context of shopping bills. Most pupils correctly identify right angles and two and three-dimensional shapes, and they have a good understanding of time on the quarter hour. In measuring activities, pupils use both standard and non-standard units of measure with confidence. The pupils collect data, for example, on where people live, and they represent their findings carefully in simple bar graphs.

~~88.87.~~ At the age of 9, pupils successfully organise some of their own work, and they readily check whether their results are correct. Pupils confidently undertake work in addition and subtraction, as well as in a range of multiplication and division forms. They have a clear knowledge of place value to six figures, and most recognise negative numbers. Pupils have been introduced to decimals to two places, and they use them confidently in the context of measurement and money. Most pupils have a clear understanding of fractions; they identify a range of equivalent fractions and they find a fraction of a whole number. Most pupils use and interpret co-ordinates in the first quadrant. Pupils tell the time accurately, both in analogue and digital display. Most pupils name a range of triangles, readily identify and calculate perimeters and areas of regular shapes and recognise reflective symmetry. Pupils collect data on a variety of issues, such as their favourite crisps, and they successfully produce a range of graphs to display their findings. Pupils also use Carroll diagrams confidently, to display a range of information.

~~89.88.~~ The quality of teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned carefully, based on the pattern of the National Numeracy framework. In particular, teachers make careful allowance for the provision of practical and problem solving activities. All teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons. They are fully aware of the need to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary, and are careful to address this issue during lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear instruction and give much well-directed support and, as a result, all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Lessons are often brisk in pace, with pupils being kept busy throughout. Pupils clearly enjoy the work, the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm. They work well with other pupils when required, they know what they are expected to do, and they make great efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are nearly always well behaved, and sometimes very well behaved. This enables them to concentrate well and make considerable progress. Occasionally, a small number of pupils lose some interest, and are slow to settle to their work. This slows the pace of the lesson as the teacher stops to check them. Teachers hold very appropriate plenary sessions to check pupils' understanding and celebrate some of the work done. Whilst a small number of pupils are careless at times, most take great care with the appearance of

their work. Teachers mark pupils' work promptly, but, although some teachers provide regular comments of advice or praise, others do not carry out the practice consistently.

90-89. The school uses the National Numeracy document as its scheme of work, and teachers use it well to produce good quality planning. Careful allowance is usually made for the varying needs of pupils, although challenging activities are not always provided for higher attainers. The strategy itself has been implemented effectively, and high standards have been maintained at Key Stage 2, and restored at Key Stage 1. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She monitors carefully work being undertaken in the school, an improvement since the last inspection, as well as occasionally supporting her colleagues in their classrooms. She has played an important role in implementing the Strategy, and maintaining the high standards. Assessment procedures are good, and they are being used effectively to identify pupils' current attainment, to set suitable work, in most cases, and to help set targets for the future. However, the pupils are not encouraged to assess their own attainment and progress in a regular and more formal way. Mathematics is used appropriately in other subjects, such as science and design and technology, but limited use is made, at present, of information and communication technology, to further develop pupils' mathematical skills.

## SCIENCE

91-90. Scrutiny of work and observations of science lessons show that the pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. Attainment is above the national average. This judgement is supported by the end of Key Stage 1 2000 teacher assessments, which showed that every pupil, including those with special educational needs, attained at the expected level. The results compared very well with schools both nationally and in similar circumstances. However, no pupils attained at the higher levels, comparing poorly with other schools' results. These findings and results are similar to those of the previous inspection.

91. The school has taken prompt action to remedy perceived underachievement of higher-attaining pupils. Teachers are careful to plan and ask higher order questions that probe pupils' understanding and extend their application of knowledge and skills over a wide range of science contexts and activities. The pupils are confident in this, organising and reorganising previous learning to fit new situations. Teachers' often high expectations are met by most pupils. Despite the good teaching and pace of most lessons, and interesting content, there is a small number of pupils who have difficulty controlling their behaviour, especially in practical situations. The vigilance of the teachers and good use of classroom assistants and helpers ensures that these pupils make progress in their learning. Other pupils remain unaffected by disruptive, or noisy behaviour, and concentrate well, which aids their good progress.

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93-92. The teaching programme is particularly successful in weaving together the knowledge, understanding and skills that must be developed. This leads to the pupils having a particularly relevant and interesting learning programme which matches well their interests and needs. Teachers work well together in curriculum planning so that science concepts and skills are built on effectively in succeeding lessons and year groups, further contributing to high standards and good progress.

94-93. Pupils identify common materials successfully, and match them accurately to objects, suggesting their suitability for a purpose. They investigate a range of malleable materials and change their shape by twisting, rolling and pulling. Their descriptions and drawings indicate good understanding of the forces involved in this activity. They have good knowledge of electrical safety and use their knowledge of circuits well to identify why components do not work. Attainment in science enquiry is slightly higher than that in the other strands. The pupils are beginning to quantify their observations by measuring time, height and length, increasingly recording the information gathered as tables and charts. The amount of detailed information gathered is extended in depth over the key stage, and pupils demonstrate their familiarity and understanding of science terms and vocabulary in their written work. They increasingly use more abstract ideas in recording, such as charting zones of plant growth around the school. They make good progress in planning their own investigations and have a secure knowledge of fair testing and manipulating variables. They are beginning to draw conclusions in their work, although these are not often linked to the predictions they make.

95-94. The assessments at the end of Year 2, of pupils now in Year 3, showed their understanding of materials and their properties was well below average. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that attainment in this aspect now matches that of the other knowledge-based strands. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, the pupils have a good knowledge of the symbols for, and the functions of electronic components. They have good knowledge of static electricity and explain it clearly in terms of particle charge and electrical conductivity. They identify correctly the different states of water and other materials and explain them in terms of evaporation, condensation, melting and solidification. Their science skills are further progressed by the good teaching of prediction, so that all pupils understand the purpose of prediction in planning an investigation. They are increasingly independent in the tests and observations they carry out. Much of the work is at a higher level than usually expected for this age group.

96-95. Teaching of all groups of pupils is equally thorough. Classroom assistants and helpers are used well to support pupils according to their particular needs, which are clearly identified in the lesson plans. Much work is recorded on worksheets, but the teachers prepare most of these for specific lessons, and care is taken that they allow all pupils to show what they know and can do. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. At its best, it extends and clarifies the pupils' science thinking and indicates the teachers' high expectations, especially of the higher attaining pupils who are increasingly expected to explain their results in scientific terms.

97-96. Mathematical and ICT skills are developed soundly in science lessons. Pupils' literacy skills are used well to record and develop their science thinking in a variety of ways; observation, instructions and explanations. Pupils' recording of their work is often untidy. Diagrams and drawings are too small and not enough attention is given to detail.

98-97. Assessment procedures are good, and give teachers an accurate picture of how well the pupils are doing and the progress they are making. There are no formal systems for including the pupils in evaluating their own achievements. This is a missed opportunity to further develop their learning, as nearly all pupils show interest and enthusiasm for science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99-98. All groups of pupils make good progress in art and design throughout the school, and achieve standards that are higher than those expected nationally. The pupils' ability to record their artistic observations, to experiment with different media and to apply their increasing knowledge of techniques is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, because the teachers take great care to plan interesting and challenging lessons within wide-reaching themes. The ideas suggested in the teaching programmes are extended with flair and imagination. The use

of sketch books in some year groups encourages pupils to experiment with ideas and styles. The pupils concentrate hard on their work and regard art as an intellectual activity. They talk about it with confidence and enjoyment and even the youngest pupils can describe how they are developing their work. This, and the good teaching makes a significant contribution to the achievement of high standards.

100.99. A further contributory factor is the hard work and skill of the co-ordinator. She supports staff wherever possible, either by helping with planning, or teaching demonstration lessons, giving them confidence in the development of their own skills.

101.100. At Key Stage 1 the pupils show very good control of the medium in their pencil portraits of their friends. These have character and style. In other work, such as undersea pictures, they show confidence in colour mixing and use brush strokes very effectively to depict the swirling and wavy motion of the sea. Experience with multi-media enables the pupils to contrast shape and texture thoughtfully to produce well-composed and balanced work. At Years 3 and 4, the pupils' development of their drawing skills is good, as is their progress. The theme of portraits is developed with maturity, in great depth. Based on the Hockney picture, 'Mr and Mrs Clarke and Percy' the pupils pose and photograph their own groups, showing a clear understanding of the style, which they then translate successfully into their own portraits. Later, the pupils scan portraits into the computer and alter them. They make repeat images and give each a different colour treatment in the style of Warhol. This theme is developed most effectively across the school, to extend techniques taught in a variety of media. Adults are vigilant and helpful, giving support but encouraging pupils to 'have a go', so that all are successful in producing something of worth. The work is carried out with much care and concentration, and the pupils speak of it, justifiably, with pride. The theme supports the exploration of relationships in personal and social development sessions.

102.101. Careful teaching of specific vocabulary enables the pupils to talk about art, artists and styles confidently. The art curriculum makes a good contribution to the development of the pupils' cultural awareness within their own culture, but does not extend fully enough to explore, in any depth, approaches and styles within other cultures.

103.102. Informal assessments made during the course of lessons enable the teachers to pitch the work at an appropriate level, to ask questions that challenge the pupils and develop their thinking, and to plan further activities. No formal assessment is made of the pupils' work in art. Their displayed art work and collections of work from different year groups are not used sufficiently to inform the pupils, staff or visitors about the high standards, or to help describe progress throughout the school. This is more an omission than a weakness, but it is a significant feature in the need for the school to assess how good it is.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104.103. Standards in design and technology at the time of the previous inspection were good. This position has been maintained, despite the pressures of the numerous national initiatives in other areas of the curriculum. While it was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection, scrutiny of the pupils' work at each stage indicates that their progress is good and that standards remain above expectations.

105.104. In the Year1/2 lesson seen, which involved making a small garment related to work on the Bible story of Joseph and his coat, the work was carefully planned so that the pupils could use the skills they had learned previously. The theme was being developed over a period of several weeks. This enabled the pupils to gain skills and knowledge in an incremental way. The pupils knew what they were doing and why, and were able to confirm this in discussion. The teacher

worked hard to ensure that the pupils remained 'on task', and established their confidence in making their own decisions about how to do things, and what the next steps might be. Good support was provided for those who were less confident, through the efforts of voluntary adult helpers.

~~106~~.105. The teaching is good, and, in consequence, the pupils are interested. They use a range of small tools efficiently, taking great care in cutting and pinning and applying their designs. They say why sewing seems to be the most effective way of joining certain materials, and explain how their choice of decoration will be applied, for example, by appliqué or colour wax.

~~107~~.106. While most of the pupils are self-motivating, there is a concern that a small minority seem wilfully to misbehave. They offer a direct challenge to their teachers. This is overcome by the teachers' continued patience and care, and firm insistence that the learning objectives are followed. Such situations are dealt with efficiently. While the progress of other pupils is not affected, it makes the task of the teacher harder unnecessarily.

~~108~~.107. Nevertheless, scrutiny of the pupils' work, and the teachers' effective and comprehensive planning, indicate good overall development taking place throughout the school. The examples of making 'towers' from newspapers, working models of landscape scenes, and of food technology, show that the curriculum is lively and developmental and offers good opportunities for individual and group working. Good use is made of information and communications technology to support the work in design. The pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate what they have done, and how successful they have been. However, teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is informal, so that their efforts to maintain and extend good standards are not based on a firm foundation of knowledge of how good things are, and where they could be improved.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

~~109~~.108. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and at the time the pupils leave the school, are above national expectations. Standards have improved at Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is good. During the inspection only one lesson was seen, at Key Stage 2. Evidence for Key Stage 1 was gained through talking to pupils and studying their previous work.

~~110~~.109. At Key Stage 1, the pupils successfully identify physical features of places, such as houses, roads, shops and the church. They undertake fieldwork in the local area, and they draw simple maps of the school and the area around the school. The pupils in Year 1 identify a range of places and geographical features through following the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', and they find these places on a map accurately. In Year 2, pupils readily name the countries of the United Kingdom, and they place Bedford correctly on a map of England. The pupils identify appropriate differences in, for example, buildings and animals, when comparing the locality where they live with villages in Tanzania. Pupils show a concern for the environment, and, in undertaking a traffic survey, identify the problems caused, particularly by cars. At Key Stage 2, pupils are confident in identifying features on an appropriate range of maps, and, for example, pupils in Year 3 have made a close study of geographical features of Riseley. The pupils in Year 4 accurately name a variety of countries and continents on a world map. The pupils in Year 3 undertake extensive work on weather patterns, and they record the differences in the weather in the United Kingdom confidently, using appropriate symbols to display their work. The pupils in Year 4 study a contrasting location, in Trinidad, and they are confident in comparing features, such as climate and landscape, with those found in England. They show a concern for the problems caused by litter, and readily suggest ways in which people should respect the environment.

~~111~~.110. The quality of teaching and learning, in the one lesson seen, was good. The evidence of pupils' work suggests that it is good at other times also. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and planning shows a most suitable provision of work for pupils, with maps, in particular, being

introduced with success. Geographical terminology is emphasised consistently, to help develop pupils' knowledge in this area. The pupils find the subject interesting. Most are well behaved, work well with others and concentrate well on the tasks set. Teachers give pupils a variety of learning opportunities, including fieldwork and using computers to find and record appropriate information, and this enables them all to make good gains in their knowledge and skills. Most pupils take care with their work, and make every effort to complete the tasks set, for example, drawing maps and plans neatly. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and they sometimes include written comments to add to the verbal advice they provide in order to help pupils improve. However, this practice is not consistent.

111. The school has a suitable scheme of work, which provides a secure basis for the areas to be covered. The school is also well resourced, so that pupils have many opportunities, for example, to study maps and develop their knowledge in this aspect. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues well, as the need arises, and she checks the standard of pupils' work by seeing samples of books. She does not, however, have any opportunity to observe lessons taking place as yet. There are no assessment procedures in place, and other than that gained through informal observations, no information is available to either judge pupils' current attainment, or to provide appropriate future work. The written work in geography, together with various measuring and counting activities, make useful contributions towards the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The use of computers to find information, for example, in Year 3, about the weather in different parts of the United Kingdom, enhances pupils' skills in information and communication technology. At both key stages, pupils develop an understanding of ways of life of people of other cultures, through studies of contrasting areas. However, there is little opportunity for pupils to understand the different cultures found within our own society.

## **HISTORY**

112. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and at the time the pupils leave the school, are well above national expectations. Standards have improved since the time of the school's previous inspection. The curriculum is now very extensive, covering many historical periods in great depth, and pupils' progress is now very good.

113. At Key Stage 1, the pupils know very many details about the past. Through looking at pictures and photographs, and handling a wide range of artefacts, pupils identify successfully some of the changes that have taken place in such things as household appliances and hospitals. By sequencing items, such as washing and cleaning equipment in Year 1, and the events of the Crimean War in Year 2, pupils are developing a very good understanding of chronology. Pupils are also very confident in using appropriate historical terminology, such as 'old' and 'new', and 'past' and 'present', in discussing their work. The pupils have a secure knowledge of a number of historical figures, such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, as well as of important past events, such as the Great Fire of London. At Key Stage 2, pupils know much information about an extensive range of historical periods. They have a very clear understanding of the Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Victorians, as well as the period of war-time Britain, and they speak with confidence about each period. The pupils are particularly knowledgeable about many aspects of the Victorian period, much of their information coming from a computer simulation of life in those times. For example, pupils in Year 3 know many details about Riseley School, and the ways in which the pupils were taught there in the nineteenth century. Pupils in Year 4 have extensive knowledge about life in the village in general, such as the jobs people had, and how big families were. Pupils throughout the key stage are confident in identifying the changes that have taken place through history, and they are most confident in placing the periods they study in a proper chronological framework, using time-lines for this purpose. The pupils explain accurately some important events that have taken place, such as the Roman invasion of Britain and the Battle of Britain, and they can recall the lives of famous people such as Dr. Barnardo. Pupils throughout the key stage readily undertake research, including using a computer, to find relevant information.

114.114. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers provide a very wide range of information for pupils, and they successfully use photographs, and particularly artefacts, to support their teaching. They also use a range of strategies, for example, receiving visitors, arranging visits and providing opportunities for undertaking research, to foster the pupils' interest further. The pupils enjoy the subject, study artefacts, books and photographs with enthusiasm, settle very well to the variety of tasks provided and they all make very good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure. They make most appropriate use of dates, events and time-lines, to help develop pupils' understanding of the past. Almost all pupils show consistently very good attitudes, and this enables them to concentrate on their work and to make significant progress. Teachers provide pupils with help throughout and pupils readily turn to them for advice where necessary. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are high, with much challenge also being provided in the work. Pupils throughout the school generally take care with the presentation of their work, both writing and drawing, and most take a pride in work they produce. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, with appropriate comments of praise often being provided. Teachers also take the opportunity to further encourage pupils by providing colourful displays of their work.

115.115. The school's teaching scheme provides very extensive coverage of the National Curriculum, and is contributing significantly to the standard of work being achieved. The co-ordinator, who has considerable interest and expertise in the subject, studies samples of pupils' work to judge standards, and provides help to colleagues if requested. She has less opportunity, as yet, to observe classroom practice. She has provided a wide range of resources for teachers, and this has contributed towards the raising of standards. Assessment is only undertaken informally, and little information about pupils' attainment and progress is recorded at present. The writing activities undertaken, in many aspects of the subject, make a significant contribution towards the development of pupils' literacy skills. The pupils also develop their skills in information and communication technology, through using computer programs and accessing the internet for historical information, for example in Year 4 work on World War 2. Studies of aspects of both their own and past cultures contribute well to the pupils' cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

116.116. The attainment of pupils in information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 meets expectations. At Years 3 and 4 attainment is above expectations. Although this appears to represent a decline in standards at both key stages since the previous inspection, recent curriculum requirements have become more rigorous, and pupils' achievement is similar to that reported previously.

117.117. Throughout the school, teachers plan for ICT to extend learning in other subjects. Staff confidence is high and they practise their skills on their own home computers. This enables them to give clear and accurate instructions during ICT lessons, giving pupils confidence in applying computer technology to real situations, so that they make good progress in many different contexts. For example, they write travel brochures for the Caribbean Tropics to support a geography topic, and use branching sort programs to identify characteristics of types of animals in science. The use of ICT to support work in English and mathematics is not yet extensive enough and during these lessons the computers are underused. Also, better use could be made of computers to aid the learning of pupils with special educational needs. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to remedy the shortcomings with new software.

118.118. In Year 1, the pupils use the computer as an integral part of the 'Travel Agency' to book holidays. They transfer pencil drawings into large, colourful images, showing confidence and good mouse control. They gather information on the colours of cars in the High Street, and display it as bar and pie charts. In Year 2, they write shopping lists and word process their own sentences,

using the correct keys and procedures appropriately. They create their own imaginative pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock, using thin, wiggly lines.

120-119. Pupils cover all the requirements of the teaching programme, and there is sufficient, though ageing hardware and software. The older equipment is about to be replaced and at the time of the inspection, work could not always be printed out. This led to some frustrations on the part of the pupils, but many use their home computers to good effect.

121-120. By the time the pupils transfer to Middle School at the end of Year 4, their attainment is above national expectations and, despite the current limitations of the resources some of the work is at higher levels. In Years 3 and 4, new computers have been introduced recently. Whilst this enables pupils to carry out Internet searches and send emails they are not able to complete the music compositions they started on the old computers, as no programme is currently available. Pupils in Year 3 send and receive emails confidently. They use a simulation adventure program to good effect to 'time travel' back into Victorian times so that they gain a better insight into what life was like then. Pupils in Year 4 show increasing control and sophistication in their use of the keyboard and functions to demonstrate their understanding of symmetry, and to design their own 'passports', with scanned and imported photographs. Information is entered into boxes in different fonts and sizes to make good quality products.

122-121. The arrangement of computers in most classrooms makes teacher demonstration physically difficult. Classroom assistants and helpers are used well to ensure that all pupils can see and remain focused on the teaching, so that all are involved. This is particularly important for the small proportion of pupils who take any changed circumstance as an opportunity to try to be noisy and disruptive. The lack of centralisation of machines in a computer suite means that most pupils have no opportunity to practise new skills during the lessons. However, teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils have an equal amount of time and whatever help they need, before the next lesson, to practise and become confident in their new learning.

123-122. The co-ordinator gives support to colleagues where required, further increasing their confidence and skills. She has yet to find a manageable system of recording pupils' progress and attainment, which is done informally. Although teachers keep a check of general progress on 'can do' tick sheets the pupils are not involved in evaluating their own progress or recording the range of programs and experiences they have had. Teachers' marking is supportive, but does not consistently help the pupils understand the strengths and weaknesses in their work.

## MUSIC

124-123. Standards in music were good at the time of the previous inspection. They are now very good. The school has recently introduced a programme of development for music that is paying significant dividends. The headteacher and governors have carefully planned and funded the employment of a part-time music specialist who works with classes across the school. As well as directly enhancing the musical education of the pupils, it is supporting and extending the quality of the school's ethos by helping to provide the rounded education for the pupils to which the school is committed.

125-124. The teaching is very good. The range of work is very well planned and the activities provided in lessons are varied and interesting. The teachers' instructions are always clear, and good control is maintained. The work is progressively developmental. Very good attention is paid to the development of listening and performing skills. The chosen activities are carefully matched to the stage the pupils have reached, while fresh challenges are offered to their thinking and understanding. For example, in a lesson with Years 1 and 2, the pupils were asked to listen to Vaughan William's 'March of the Kitchen Utensils' as preparation for their practice and performance of a musical illustration of the tale of the 'Elves and the Shoemaker'. In this activity,



the pupils were encouraged to create another night-scene, using percussion instruments to create the sounds of a clock, and the hammering of the elfin cobblers. This was interspersed by the singing of a work song. Every pupil was encouraged to make a contribution.

~~126.~~125. In a further lesson observed in Year 4, the learning objectives were very appropriate, and the teaching was authoritative and purposeful. By ensuring that all the pupils had an opportunity to contribute, using very good quality resources which were well organised, their skills were advanced in both listening and performance. Additionally, the pupils' musical creativity and knowledge was extended through the task of 'layering' of sounds and creating contrasts. This was based on listening initially to some African style music. In a previous session, the pupils had reflected on the style of some South American music, and they were encouraged to discuss similarities and differences between the two. It is evident that this use of 'World Music' has a beneficial impact on the pupils' cultural development.

~~127.~~126. The pupils throughout the school sing well. A visitor could rarely fail to be alerted by the strong, clear, singing in lessons and in assemblies. It is enthusiastic and controlled and makes enjoyable listening.

~~128.~~127. As a consequence of the good teaching and the value given to the subject, the pupils enjoy music-making. They work hard and are enthusiastic. They play and sing accurately and tunefully as individuals, and share in performances with good team work.

~~129.~~128. Additional music provision is made through music clubs, such as the Drumming Club, and peripatetic tuition for those who want it. Pupils learning to play the clarinet, and those playing recorders make good progress. Links with local schools for musical events provide further sources of challenge and enjoyment.

~~130.~~129. Overall, music is a strength of the school. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting confirmed this, and were very positive about its value. The significant investment made by the headteacher and governors, in view of the other pressures on the curriculum and upon finance in general, is very beneficial and worthwhile. It is having a very good impact on the pupils' general educational development. However, the pupils' progress in music is assessed only informally, so the school has no way of judging how good it is.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

~~131.~~130. During the inspection only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1, and only a part of a lesson was seen at Key Stage 2, and so no overall judgement is made on standards. The evidence of the lessons seen, however, together with a close scrutiny of teachers' planning, suggest that all appropriate areas of work will be covered during the year. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and at the time pupils leave the school, are likely to be at least in line with national expectations. At the previous inspection, standards were judged to be above national expectations.

~~132.~~131. At Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 move around the ~~yard~~playground confidently, showing suitable awareness of space and other pupils. They control a variety of large and small balls well, travelling with them along lines and around cones. They work confidently with a partner in kicking the balls accurately from one to the other, successfully stopping the ball and passing it back. The pupils understand the need to warm up for, and recover from, exercise. In Year 3 pupils successfully develop a sequence of dance patterns, sometimes working in groups, moving rhythmically to music. In their movements, pupils show suitable changes in speed and direction, and they introduce appropriate gesture when necessary. The pupils recognise some of the effects that exercise has on their bodies. Pupils in Year 4 develop their outdoor and adventure skills well during a residential visit to Shropshire.

~~133.~~132. The quality of teaching and learning, in the limited number of observations made, was good. Teachers' planning is detailed, and they provide an appropriate range of resources, to help pupils develop their various skills. Clear instruction is provided, and this allows all pupils to make good gains in their learning during those lessons. Members of staff join in and demonstrate well to help pupils improve. They have sound subject knowledge and make suitable demands of the pupils' performance. Pupils join in appropriately, enjoying themselves, concentrating hard and making a satisfactory physical effort. Lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace, with pupils being kept busy throughout. Teachers show good control and management skills. They often use pupils to demonstrate good practice, but opportunities are sometimes missed to allow pupils to discuss the quality of the work seen, which would help them identify the areas where they might improve themselves. Teachers provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work, and, in particular, they emphasise the need for safety. In turn, almost all pupils show good, and often very good, attitudes, behave well overall, work well alone and with a partner or group, and carry items of equipment carefully and safely.

~~134.~~133. The school has an appropriate teaching scheme, with all aspects of work being suitably listed and covered, an improvement since the previous inspection. There are no assessment procedures, however, and little information is recorded to identify either pupils' present attainment or the progress they are making. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, and she supports her colleagues well when requested. At present, however, she has no opportunity to observe lessons taking place. Activities involving counting and measuring, especially in games lessons, give support to the school's development of numeracy. The school's good arrangements for the provision of extra-curricular activities give pupils the opportunity to further develop their physical skills. The performing of dances from, for example, the Indian tradition helps enhance pupils' cultural development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

~~135.~~134. This area of the curriculum was subject to an inspection under Section 23 of the Education Act 1996.