

INSPECTION REPORT

CALDER HOUSE SCHOOL

Chippenham

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126542

Principal : Mrs S Agombar

Reporting inspector: Mr Tom Smith
21044

Dates of inspection: 12–15 February 2001

Inspection number: 230117

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	5-13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Calder House School Thickwood Lane Colerne Chippenham
Postcode:	SN14 8BN
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Appropriate authority:	Calder House Ltd.
Name of Principal:	Mrs S Agombar
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21044	Mr Tom Smith	Registered inspector	Science : Art : Modern foreign language : Music	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
19639	Mrs Gill Anderson	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1224	Mr Graham Todd	Team inspector	Mathematics: Information technology: Physical education: Religious education : Equal opportunities :	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
18206	Ms Elizabeth Mildner	Team inspector	English : Geography : History : Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Calder House School is an average size privately owned and independent special school that caters for the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties (SpLD). It is both recognised by the DfEE and registered with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils (CreSTeD). There are currently 32 pupils on roll, the majority of whom are of white, European origin. Pupils are usually between the ages of 5-13 years. The school does not offer a midday meal; consequently parents make alternative provision for pupils' refreshment. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language. When they arrive at the school pupils have levels of attainment that are below national expectations; this results from under-functioning that stems from their learning difficulty. There are nine pupils who have Statements of special educational need (SEN). Of these, their respective local authorities fund eight and the ninth is funded privately. The remaining pupils are all funded privately. The central philosophy of the school is to receive pupils who are under-achieving within mainstream schools (both private and state) and return them to mainstream education within an identified time frame. This could be between 2-3 years. Within this period the aim of the school is to compensate the learning difficulty of each child, as well as restore a level of confidence and self-esteem, that will enable each to take his or her place within their next school. To achieve this, the school offers each pupil intensive and individual help to compensate for their learning difficulties. The school is currently operating at its capacity figure of 32 pupils. The school has been in existence for only five years and has not been previously inspected.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with a number of considerable strengths. There is a strong commitment to raising achievement and this enables the school to fulfil its stated aim of compensating pupils' learning difficulties and enabling them to return to mainstream school within a stated period. Teaching, particularly to compensate the learning difficulties of each pupil is satisfactory. While pupils are at the school there is a consistently upward trend in their personal and academic progress, especially in their learning difficulty. This is the result of the individual teaching each pupil receives. As yet, there is insufficient planning, of the quality necessary, which would bring about whole school development. When considering factors, such as the provision that enables pupils to become successful learners, the progress made by pupils, the high level of approval from parents and the effectiveness of its main aims, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Identifies pupils' specific learning difficulties accurately; using the information very effectively in individual programmes that enable pupils to succeed?
- Pupils make good progress in compensating their specific learning difficulty.
- It has established good procedures that ensure effective levels of pupils' care. As a result, the pupils feel valued and cared for by adults?
- The effective procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress ensure individual programmes are precisely targeted for their individual needs?
- Enables all staff, through training, to become effective in their central role of identifying and compensating pupils' learning difficulties.
- Parents are given good information about their children and this has resulted in good links with them as well as significantly high levels of trust and confidence.
- Uses homework very well as a means of improving pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The development of a plan that would encompass the whole work of the school.
- Better curriculum planning for subjects other than English. This should enable teachers to have better oversight of the subjects for which they are best qualified.
- Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory and the use of computers inconsistent; this hinders pupils' achievement.
- The development of a whole school approach to management of pupils' behaviour. Of particular relevance is the behaviour of some pupils during afternoon lessons.
- More effective monitoring of teaching that leads to a greater proportion of better quality lessons.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 13	Key
speaking and listening	B	very good A
reading	B	good B
writing	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	C	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	C	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	

Although pupils take appropriate national tests at the end of each key stage any comparison of the results with national data would not accurately show the real progress that pupils make. In reality pupils achieve well, when set against the background of prior attainment, and are well prepared to go to their next stage of formal education. Anecdotal evidence relating to a good number of pupils, as well as letters from those schools to which pupils return, indicate that these pupils successfully integrate both socially and academically into their new school. Progress in key areas of learning is good.

As a result of well-focused and effective teaching pupils make good progress in learning language skills. Through carefully planned and targeted learning programmes pupils quickly adopt effective learning practices that they continue throughout their stay in the school. The skills gained through these enable pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in other areas of the curriculum. When considering individual needs, the progress they make is good; this is particularly so in personal and social learning. Inspection findings are that, with the exception of information technology pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects of the curriculum. Evidence accumulated during the inspection does reveal however that for some language-based subjects, such as history and geography, progress in understanding of concepts is hindered because teachers planning focuses on knowledge more than skills and concepts.

Where pupils are diagnosed with dyspraxia they make good progress as a result of the meticulous and consistent response by the school. Specific programmes are devised that enable these pupils to successfully come to terms with their difficulty.

Standards in mathematics and science are satisfactory, although the mathematics curriculum tends towards the use of number and does not adequately address other requirements, such as problem solving and data-handling. When confronted with the wider requirements of the national tests pupils are disadvantaged and may not attain the standards of which they are capable. Standards in all other subjects, except information technology, are satisfactory. It was not possible to conclusively judge standards in design and technology because little evidence was available. The subject was not taught at the time of inspection but was included in pupils' learning earlier in the year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils have genuinely positive attitudes and they are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of	Good; especially when concentrating on tasks that are well structured. Problems occur during afternoon lessons where requirements are more

classrooms	lax.
Personal development and relationships	Good; pupils learn much from the good role models provided by staff. They genuinely respect each other and continue friendships outside of school.
Attendance	Very good.

A great strength of the school is the patience and concern that all adults show for the pupils. The pupils appreciate this and respond positively. The school has what one parent described as a "safe to fail" ethos and this encourages pupils to blossom as individual characters. This ethos is also responsible for the high levels of attendance. Discussions with pupils indicate they are reluctant to miss any school sessions and the recorded figures confirm this.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-7	Aged 8-13
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers teach lessons across the key stages and there are no variations in quality between these. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons. Forty three per cent of lessons were good or very good. The quality of teaching is best within lessons that serve the individual needs of pupils. Literacy skills are well taught but the teaching of numeracy provides insufficient challenge for many pupils. Strengths include the good practices of summarising previous lessons and using assessment very well to plan teaching. Higher attaining pupils have developed good study habits. The needs of all pupils are well considered by teachers and these are very well planned for.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good and relevant to the needs of pupils. It is enriched with a good range of extra-curricular provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; All aspects are well considered in the work done by staff.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well; the care for pupils is meticulous. The monitoring of their academic progress is systematic and thorough.

The curriculum is effectively planned in English. The use of information technology is unsatisfactory in subjects other than English and where it is used in direct support of pupils' individual needs. The school has an effective partnership with parents and enhances this through involvement in the work done by their children. The procedures that support monitoring of pupils' progress are very effective especially when these are focused on the individual needs of pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the Principal and other key staff	Satisfactory; the Principal provides considerable drive and vision for the school. She has a clear vision of the next stage of the school's development
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; though formal procedures for this process are yet to be fully developed.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers and TA's are well deployed to support the central work of the school. The range and quality of resources to support learning require improvement.

There is sufficient staff with appropriate expertise to ensure the educational and social needs of pupils. The accommodation is satisfactory and soon to undergo major extension. Resources for subjects, such as science, information and communication technology, music, history and geography, are inadequate to provide a full range of learning opportunities for pupils. The leadership is strong in ensuring a good educational direction for the school. The school bursar and company co-director consistently applies the principles of best-value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress they see in their children. • The individual strategies used in order to help their children. • The way in which the staff encourage individuality and respect for others. • The provision of regular homework. • The information that the school provides. • The way in which the school responds to their concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although not a unanimous view, some parents indicated they would welcome a 'self-help' group in which they might discuss issues of mutual interest.

The inspectors endorse the views held by parents, especially that the school is effective in enabling their children to become successful learners. The suggestion of a self-help group is one that the school should give some consideration.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils are admitted to the school they have poor communication skills associated with their specific learning difficulty. Pupils are judged to have been under-achieving at their previous schools because of dyslexia, dyspraxia or aphasia. As a result of the carefully planned, individual curriculum designed to remedy their learning difficulty pupils make good progress, especially in English. By age 11 the majority of pupils successfully complete national tests, but they still attain below the average national standard.
2. By the age of thirteen pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening. This is evidenced by the many occasions on which pupils were required to explain points of view in front of their classmates. The weekly assembly is used to encourage pupils throughout the school to demonstrate their reading prowess. Pupils, by the age of eleven, confidently stand in front of their peers and read work they completed in lessons. In one particularly good example a younger pupil read a poem about a train journey and managed to interpret it with a cadence reminiscent of trains clicking over the tracks. The skill of writing is, for many pupils, very difficult. These pupils require physical prompts, such as forming letters in modelling materials, before they successfully translate such skills to paper. Generally, however, the teaching and its emphasis on writing enables pupils to achieve good results when they attempt written tasks. There are no significant differences between the key stages in the learning and use of such skills.
3. The development of numeracy skills within pupils is narrow and tends to focus mainly on the use of number. All pupils are encouraged to learn their 'tables' and this adds to their confidence when dealing with simple numbers. Higher attaining pupils confidently use numbers up to the '12 times table'. The development of further understanding in the use of number is inhibited by the language difficulty of some pupils. This is particularly so for younger pupils and those who have been at the school for only a short time. Older pupils, in Key Stage 2 show satisfactory achievement in understanding concepts such as 'unit' and know that the size of this is variable and can refer to distance, angle or weight. These higher attaining pupils also understand the concept of measurement and show this when they accurately estimate lengths of up to 0.5m.
4. Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory. By the age of thirteen pupils understand that the sun is the light source for the world and continue their thinking to recognize that in order for us to see an object, light must be reflected from it to our eyes. In the words of one higher attaining pupil "That's why we can't see in the dark!" These older pupils also understand the difference between drugs that are harmful to humans as well as those used for medicinal purposes. Within this context they also identify groups of foods that contribute to healthy eating habits and extend this to an understanding of organs of the human body that help in the processing of such food. Younger pupils, in Key Stage 2 understand the properties of different materials, such as cloth, plastic and paper. They understand, through watching an experiment that these different materials also have different water-repellent characteristics. Higher attaining pupils know which of these materials are natural or man-made.
5. Pupils' achievements in art, physical education, religious education, modern foreign language, history and geography are satisfactory. Their achievements in information technology and music are unsatisfactory because these subjects are insufficiently resourced.
6. In art, by age eleven, pupils paint simple pictures in the style of Monet and sketch animal portraits, using pastels. Some higher attaining pupils continue this development to make 3-dimensional collages. In physical education the majority of younger pupils swim at least the required minimum distance of twenty-five metres. By the time they are thirteen pupils also throw a ball with some accuracy over distances of up to fifteen metres. Within other activities pupils

with dyspraxia develop well their physical control through a series of activities designed to develop balance and movement, such as walking toe to heel. In design and technology pupils indicate satisfactory skills through their work on packaging. By the age of thirteen, higher attaining pupils develop satisfactory design skills. They prove, through sketches, that they use appropriate thought processes in design work. In both history and geography all pupils have satisfactory knowledge about factual elements, such as the formation of rivers or the influence of the Romans at nearby Bath. As yet they have not extended this to a development of skills and understanding of concepts that can be applied in both subjects. In religious education pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the similarities and differences between faiths. For example they are aware of different religious festivals, such as Hanukkah and know of the Hindu reverence for animals, such as sacred cows.

7. Achievements in both information technology and music are unsatisfactory. In information technology pupils use programs effectively to remedy individual learning difficulties but their wider knowledge and use of computers is weak. Many are unfamiliar with basic keyboard operations as well as knowledge of the Internet, e-mail, scanning and digital photography. In music pupils' achievements are almost exclusively in singing. They produce an annual Christmas concert, such as Oliver, that is well received by parents and other guests. They do not however have sufficient knowledge and understanding of skills, such as composing or of playing instruments.
8. The most notable and effective area of pupils' achievement is in addressing their particular and individual need. When set against the requirements, as identified either in Statements of special educational need or contained within individual education plans, pupils achieve very well. The levels of challenge presented to pupils are consistently high and these are matched by the high expectations of both teachers and teacher assistants. Target setting processes are rigorous and these are reviewed according to a six-weekly programme. Pupil mobility, in terms of timing of leaving and entry, is a significant factor in the school and the procedures in place ensure that the individual requirements of each pupil are very well considered.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils are keen and eager to come to school and show an interest in all their activities. The majority, relate well to one another and their teachers, they feel safe and secure and enjoy school. There is a strong sense of mutual respect between teachers and pupils, this ethos helps the pupils to work with confidence. Parents like the family atmosphere of Calder House and they value the way in which their children are nurtured in a non-competitive atmosphere. They were very positive about the values and attitudes taught by the school and the inspection substantiates their view.
10. School starts promptly and pupils settle quickly to lessons in the morning sessions. Their behaviour is good at break, lunchtime and during morning school. This is because of the well-structured curriculum, specialist small-group teaching and individual support in the mornings. However, in afternoon classes, where teaching and learning are not as well focused and where there is less support, pupils' behaviour is not so good. A significant number of lessons contain unsatisfactory elements of behaviour such as shouting out, being rude to the teachers and ignoring instructions. This wastes time and therefore affects the progress pupils make in subjects such as history, geography and information and communication technology. The management of pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. This is particularly evident in afternoon lessons and there is no overall, effective strategy that successfully manages resulting unsatisfactory behaviour.
11. Pupils' personal development is good. The school is especially successful in helping pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem through compensating their specific learning difficulties. In this respect pupils are well prepared to cope with the next stage of their education. Pupils' attendance is very good and they show a keenness to come to school. When pupils were observed arriving at school there was not one long face among them! There have

been no exclusions since the school opened. The Principal follows up any absences immediately.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching in the school is undertaken predominantly by qualified teachers. There are unqualified staff who work as 'Teachers' Assistants' (TA) and some of the work they do is with groups of pupils as well as individuals. Their role is to substantially support the compensatory programme devised by the Director of studies. When viewed as a whole, the quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory and enables pupils to have positive attitudes to their work. As a result, they have developed satisfactory work habits.
13. Some 95 per cent of the teaching is at least satisfactory. Of this, 44 per cent is either good or very good. Although, it must be said, that the proportion of very good teaching is low. It should be a concern for the school that the greater part of teaching is within the range of satisfactory or good. There is no variation between the standard of teaching seen within the key stages. All staff teach across the full age range. At less than 5 per cent, the incidence of unsatisfactory teaching resulted from individual lessons that had unsatisfactory outcomes.
14. The school day is divided into two clearly identifiable areas. The bulk of the day is given to compensatory programmes that are highly individualised for pupils. These sessions occur during an extended morning and pupils learning needs are fully considered within these. Teachers and TA jointly undertake these programmes. The programmes are highly structured and result in both effective teaching and learning. The afternoon sessions are given to provision of the National Curriculum and it is in this area that both teaching and learning is less effective.
15. The quality of teaching in English is good and that in mathematics and science is satisfactory. In English the teaching in individual lessons, especially for older pupils, is occasionally very good. The better quality of teaching seen in English results from more detailed planning that is undertaken, as well as the priority given to the subject. The majority of lessons are very well structured and pupils begin these with a clear idea of what they have to learn. Consequently the outcomes, in terms of pupils' learning, are much more effective and identifiable. In mathematics and science the standard of teaching is satisfactory overall. Where pupils are provided with individual lessons the standard of this teaching is good and pupils' progress is enhanced. These lessons, also, are characterised by good summaries of previous sessions that enable pupils to demonstrate what they have both remembered and learned. Teachers use well focused questions that draw understanding from pupils.
16. In all other subjects, where sufficient lessons were available to be seen, the standard of teaching is generally satisfactory. Insufficient lessons were seen in design and technology, information technology, physical education and modern foreign language to enable conclusive judgements of quality to be made. However, when considering the outcomes, as seen in pupils' work, it would be fair to say that (with the exception of information technology) teaching is broadly satisfactory. There is little effective planning of information technology and its use within many lessons and subjects is sporadic.
17. Many lessons have common threads of good practice. They begin with good summaries of previous lessons. Teachers use question and answer techniques effectively to establish and consolidate what pupils have learned. During these parts of the lessons pupils are enthusiastic to participate and show clearly what they already understand. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson about *Aesop's Fables*, the teacher enabled the pupils to show what they had learned and then used this to set the scene for the reading of the next story. Pupils were closely involved in this (*The Lion and the Mouse*) and one pupil, in particular, was very effective in his rendition of 'the mouse'. In order to draw from the pupils such high quality work, the teacher had equally high expectations.
18. Where TA's are closely involved in pupils' learning and where they benefit from clear direction by the teacher, their work is more effective. For example, in reading sessions, when the main task

of the teacher is to hear individual pupils read, TA's are detailed to work on individual programmes with pupils, such as some of the commercially produced schemes adopted by the school. Although such interventions are short, some six or seven minutes, they are effective in increasing the knowledge and understanding of the pupils.

19. Teachers use available resources to effectively support pupils' learning. This is most evident within the highly structured morning sessions, where the individual needs of pupils are very effectively addressed. Within this context information technology (IT) is well used to support learning in both English and mathematics. Teachers also prepare worksheets that support the central theme of lessons and use these as a means of assessing progress.
20. Overall, the assessment of pupils' learning is done well. This is especially so in English, but is not exclusive to that subject. In science the teachers maintain a good overview of the learning achieved by pupils and substantiate this with good records that show progress over time. The gathering of assessment information and the use that is made of this is a considerable strength. The ethos of teaching is to provide clear information about individual pupils and teachers are very focused in their knowledge of individual pupils. Homework is also used very well, both as a consolidation and extension of work done within the classrooms. Parents are particularly pleased with both the quantity and quality of the work that their children are expected to do at home.
21. A significant strength of the teaching is the degree to which both teachers and TA's are aware of the individual needs of pupils. This comes from detailed knowledge of the individual education plan relating to each pupil and a consistent response to cater for such needs. For example, some pupils require physical manipulation of modelling material in order to form letters or words. When they have done this they are then better able to incorporate such words or letters within their writing. In some cases, teachers encourage pupils to form small tableaux that enable them to understand concepts, such as a choice between different objects.
22. Areas that need further development in teaching centre on the quality of planning for individual subjects of the curriculum. The school policy is to follow the schemes of work supplied by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) but these do not always translate into effective planning practice at the level of individual lessons. Consequently some lessons, for example in physical education and music, lack clearly identified objectives that would better direct pupils' learning.
23. Timing of lessons needs further re-examination. In part, this difficulty is compounded by the short time available for each lesson and this is especially so for lessons in the afternoon. However, there were a significant number of lessons that ended without clear and planned conclusions. For example, a well-constructed science lesson on the topic of 'light' simply ran out of time before the teacher was able to draw together the strands of learning that had occurred. These elements included the sun as a source of light, our ability to see objects because they reflect light and the structure of the eye as a receptor of light. Pupils understood the concept of reflected light and as one pupil succinctly concluded, "That's why we can't see in the dark". As a group however, they were not able to compare their own understanding because of the shortage of time.
24. The ineffective use of resources by teachers limits the involvement of pupils in some lessons. In such lessons understanding and progress is therefore compromised. In English, resources are well used and in part this accounts for the good progress made by pupils in this subject. Information technology is not included effectively in many lessons. Where subjects, such as music and science, which can be enhanced by using resources to enable pupils' practical involvement, these are not used effectively. Sometimes this is because there are insufficient available and also because some teachers use demonstration, rather than pupil involvement. For younger pupils, particularly, their eagerness to be involved overflows into misbehaviour. As a result their progress in such lessons is hindered.

25. It is not evident that teachers have a common response to unsatisfactory behaviour. Consequently, some lessons are disrupted. Lessons in the afternoon session are particularly prone. These are generally the less structured lessons, but even within this context some teachers do not demand sufficiently high standards of behaviour from their pupils. In some lessons pupils disregard requests made by teachers and this indiscipline is compounded by ineffective group management techniques.
26. The school policy of enabling teachers to teach the subject for which they are best qualified is very sound. Where this occurs lessons are of better quality. Teachers use their knowledge well and feel confident to extend the learning of pupils.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils is overall good. Calder House School is for pupils who have specific learning difficulties, dyslexia and dyspraxia and the central function of the school is to meet the very specific needs of each pupil. This it does very effectively. Whilst the main thrust of the school is providing a curriculum with a strong emphasis on literacy and communication the school is also committed to giving pupils a broad, balanced and relevant experience of the range of national curriculum subjects. Overall it is successful in meeting this aim.
28. Prior to entry to the school each pupil is assessed against the wide range of skills and sub-skills that are needed to read and write effectively. This process is carried out thoroughly. Any strengths or deficits that the pupil has are then built into a personal programme of compensatory activities. Each pupil will have at least ten sessions of additional help in his or her personal programme. These take place mostly in the morning as small groups or individual sessions. They include sessions to develop awareness of word sounds that give pupils secure strategies in reading. Comprehension is developed as a specific skill through the use of a commercial scheme. Handwriting exercises develop pencil control and in conjunction with spelling workshops these enhance the skills of writing. The skills learned in these sessions are used effectively within English lessons where pupils develop their writing for a range of purposes as well as to explore literature.
29. Pupils also have access to speech and language therapy on a regular basis and courses in social skills and drama develop pupil's speaking and listening confidence. The provision for this is good. Sessions in *balance and movement* help those pupils with dyspraxia. In this way the school can offer a wide range of strategies and methods to meet the very specific needs of each pupil. These courses are confirmed by the school's commitment to thoroughly train staff, both teachers and teaching assistants, by providing clear guidance for sessions and the time and resources to deliver the individual sessions effectively.
30. The school is committed to preparing pupils for a return to mainstream education, usually after about a period of two years. To that end the school ensures that its curriculum gives pupils the necessary literacy and numeracy skills as well as the confidence and study skills to be able to integrate successfully into a mainstream curriculum.
31. Numeracy skills are taught through a published scheme and are satisfactory. Computers are well used to consolidate pupil's skills in spelling and word recognition but this area of the curriculum needs further development so that pupils have the confidence to make full use of information technology in other subjects.
32. Pupils are given a wide and varied curriculum both through the study of national curriculum subjects and extra activities arranged on an occasional basis, such as art workshops and environmental studies. The school is aware of the need to develop the teaching of the national curriculum subjects in a more systematic way so that consideration is given to which elements of each subject's programme of study should take priority, to make that subject relevant to the situation and needs of the pupils. The medium term planning for each subject does not

presently include sufficient detail in extending the skills and concepts of the subject. This is needed to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential and make progress to the higher levels now expected in national curriculum assessments.

33. At present the majority of national curriculum subjects are taught in short lesson periods mainly in afternoon sessions. This means that pupils experience up to three different activities or subjects each afternoon. Teachers are required to prepare a range of lessons that are taught in quick succession, with little opportunity to develop the main learning objective. The school is aware of the needs to review its use of time both within each day and how best subjects could be presented to pupils over the course of each term.
34. Classes and teaching groups are carefully organised to meet the individual needs of pupils and equality of access is ensured. The majority of pupils live a distance from the school so that after school extra curricular activities are difficult to arrange. Despite this the provision of extra curricular activities is good. Outings are organised on a regular basis to enrich the curriculum, particularly in history, geography and environmental science. Visits have been made to the theatre and to concerts and there have been a small number of inter school sports events. A number of days have been set aside for creative activities many of which are linked to fund raising for local charities.
35. The provision for personal, social and health education is overall satisfactory. Developing pupil's confidence and personal development is an integral part of the work of the school. For many pupils this is specified in their education programme and addressed through social skills sessions. All adults in the school act as good role models for the pupils and encourage social development as pupils gain maturity. The school makes good use of the Wiltshire Life Education Centre to ensure that pupils are aware of the dangers of illegal drugs and to encourage personal respect. Sex education is taught satisfactorily through work in science as well as appropriate individual discussion. The school is in the process of researching a suitable scheme, which would enable teachers to plan the teaching of the full range of personal, social, and health topics on a more consistent basis.
36. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall, and each element supports the outcomes of the others. The strength is in the moral, social and cultural development. The spiritual development of pupils, although satisfactory, is not as strong. There is an act of contemplation at the start and end of each week, but many opportunities are taken to reflect on why people hold the views they do. In an assembly pupils considered thoughtfully why slaves were treated the way they were and the motives of the slave traders. Issues, such as bereavement or childbirth, are dealt with sensitively, both at a personal and whole school level, making a good contribution to the emotional development of pupils.
37. Weekly assemblies focus on celebrating the achievements of others, which may not only be the work of the pupils themselves but also of other cultures, for example aboriginal art. Assemblies are planned to leave pupils with a parting thought that focuses on courtesy and respect for others. These make a good contribution to a supportive whole-school community.
38. Values are explored well through classroom debate and the lunchtime story. This latter provision, of reading a story when pupils have had their lunch, is an effective way of challenging pupils to consider both their own attitudes and those of others. Opportunities are seized to develop knowledge and insight into issues, such as racial prejudice in Mississippi, or the impact of teenage sex and abortion. These make a very good contribution to the social moral and cultural development of pupils giving them very good opportunities to extend their personal understanding across a range of issues, including their personal responsibilities. This makes a good contribution to preparation for life in a multicultural society. Good opportunities are created to explore European culture through outings to the theatre, concerts, the Roman Baths, a Victorian school, the war memorial and the Easter Bunny paper chase. The Italian Festa is also an opportunity for pupils to raise money for charity. The large, beautiful grounds and mellow buildings create a reflective environment.

39. The school has good links within the local community and uses a wide range of local facilities, which include the army sports hall and swimming pool. Educational visits are made to places such as the Bath when studying the Romans and Motcombe Farm, South Gloucestershire for environmental studies. The school is also involved in raising money for charities, for example, cancer research for the Royal United Hospital.
40. The school has very good relationships with other local schools. Prior to admission a teacher from Calder House visits each pupil in their referring school to gain a better understanding of the needs of each. Before a pupil is returned to mainstream education, teachers from the receiving school are invited to visit Calder House to meet the pupil, discuss their educational programme and prepare for the transfer. The school makes a conscious effort to share good practice by inviting teachers from local schools to attend training sessions led by specialists in the fields of dyslexia and dyspraxia. The principal is invited each year to lecture at Chippenham College on teaching approaches for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the school's arrangements for child protection are good. Teachers know pupils well, recognise their needs and respond to these well. The Principal is particularly observant of pupils, greeting them each day as they arrive. It is a caring school where all of the work is focused on individual support for each pupil. The working environment is safe and pupils are well supervised both at work and play. The health and safety procedures are rigorous. These are modelled on and in line with those of the local education authority (LEA). Outdoor construction work, presently being undertaken, has been addressed by working in a detailed way with the contractor with appropriate emphasis and strategies that ensure the safety of pupils. Provision for child protection is good and procedures comply with those of the LEA. The Principal has overall responsibility and is very experienced and sensitive to issues, referring them when appropriate to local social services. Occasional staff meetings that focus on child protection issues include staff training by the Principal.
42. Procedures for assessing pupil's attainment and progress are good. A very detailed assessment is made prior to entry to the school and this identifies pupils' strengths and deficits in their learning skills. This initial overview is backed up by a very thorough assessment, carried out by the school's speech and language therapist, which identifies specific skills each pupil needs in order to have a firm basis for future learning. This information is transferred into a detailed education plan for each pupil that forms the basis of future compensatory work. Progress in this is regularly monitored by all staff and adjustments made to it accordingly. Those pupils with a Statement of educational need have an annual review that includes targets appropriate for future development. Each parent receives a termly report on their child's achievements in all school activities and because these are well detailed they become a record of progress. Reading and spelling tests are given each half-year to keep track of progress in these areas and national statutory tests are taken by pupils in Years 6 and 7 to give assessments in English, mathematics and science. The school also maintains a national curriculum record of attainment for each pupil in all subjects of the national curriculum. The use of assessment procedures that enable staff to plan future interventions and learning are good.
43. The procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Parents are diligent in informing school about forthcoming medical or other appointments. Any unexplained absence is promptly checked and followed up by a telephone call to parents. Patterns of absences are noted and steps quickly taken to ensure that pupils maintain regular attendance. The school's measures to promote good behaviour are overall good, though practice concerning individual behaviours during the afternoon sessions needs further review. All adults rigorously reinforce expectations of courtesy and respect for others throughout the school day. Details of behaviour are kept as part of each pupil's record of achievement. No examples of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection and parents report that they feel this does not routinely occur. For those pupils whose behaviour is of concern the school arranges a home-school book that details both inappropriate as well as good behaviour. This effectively tells the pupil what is expected of him or her and supports them in maintaining progress in their personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents consider Calder House to be a good school, which provides well for their child's needs. They report that their children now want to come to school, and they are happier and more sociable. Many parents described this as a stark contrast to experiences in other schools. They describe it as a "safe to fail environment" with strategies that suit the individual needs of their children. At the pre-inspection meeting held for parents many positive views were expressed in appreciation of the work done by the school. Most parents reported good progress in their child's ability to read and all parents were appreciative of the raised self-esteem that this has brought about. One parent said that as a result of her child being placed at the school and the consequent improvement in his behaviour the whole quality of their family life had improved. At this there were many murmurs and nods of agreement from other parents.
45. The school has effective and good links with parents that consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Information provided about the school activities is satisfactory – this includes regular newsletters. Good information is provided about pupils' progress through termly reports and meetings. The latter usually lasts about two hours for each pupil and gives parents a very comprehensive picture of the progress made by his or her child. This enables parents to feel very involved in their child's education and they further support this through the homework and other learning done at home.
46. The impact of parent's involvement on the work of the school is good. An issue raised by one parent and agreed by a few others, is that she would appreciate the opportunity to meet other parents within the context of the school so that she could compare and discuss issues surrounding the complex nature of her child's difficulties. The opportunity and potential benefits of such a support group are now recognised by the school. Opportunities for parents to meet together and be informed about the nature of specific learning difficulties would further strengthen the links that the school enjoys with its parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The Principal leads the school with considerable vision and purpose. Within the space of five years she has set up the school and ensured that high standards prevail in its central work of providing for pupils with specific learning difficulty. She is determined to provide the best possible opportunities for pupils at the school, to build upon the skills they have and prepare them for their next stage of education. An area that requires further development is the planning of a framework in which the whole work of the school can flourish, this includes development of the National Curriculum as well as a well-focused development plan that secures the immediate future of the school. She thus provides satisfactory leadership, overall.
48. The Principal ensures that the central work of the school is carried out very effectively. She has enabled staff to become very proficient in their roles of remedying the specific learning difficulties of pupils and has given considerable, effective thought into the ways in which this might be best achieved. Parents indicate good levels of satisfaction with the approach taken by the Principal. One parent, in particular, mentioned that she had very little active involvement with the school because she was so confident with its management that she felt she did not wish to interfere. She described the school as "a box" into which she placed her child and when he came back out he was much improved. This same level of confidence in the leadership is reflected in statements made by many other parents.
49. The director of studies monitors the educational work of the school. She carries out this role diligently and effectively. She is responsible for the oversight and planning of the whole curriculum. Within the small school atmosphere she has a very good knowledge of pupils' progress and individual requirements. The management has yet to enable teachers to clearly lead subjects in which they have most expertise.

50. The Principal evaluates the performance of the school mainly through the data that she collects about the individual performance of pupils. These include baseline tests on entry, as well as trends in national test results. These are an effective measure of performance by pupils but they do not enable the Principal to have an overview of the whole work of the school. Issues, such as the quality of teaching, are addressed through a monitoring process but this does not give a complete or objective analysis of outcomes. Consequently, the quality of teaching is satisfactory but the levels of better teaching, i.e. very good or better, are proportionately too small. The procedures currently in place lack the rigour that might raise standards throughout.
51. The school deploys its staff very effectively. This is done very well to support the individual needs of pupils and is seen to work most effectively during the morning sessions. This in part accounts for the good progress made by pupils in these sessions. Staff are effective at providing pupils with the skills necessary to come to terms with their difficulties as well as make significant improvements in their learning. Where possible the leadership of the school has enabled staff to undertake specific training for these needs. Teaching assistants are also encouraged to take upon themselves considerable levels of responsibility for the tuition of individual pupils and the recording of their progress. In this respect the school has a well-qualified and experienced staff.
52. Resources that support the work of teachers vary in both quality and quantity. Overall, they are satisfactory but the quantity and range of these in some subjects inhibit the quality of teaching. Subjects most affected by this are science, information technology and music. Currently, the quality and level of provision for these subjects does not allow pupils to learn effectively. For example, in science they cannot take a full part in experiments or investigations and in music presence of few instruments, both tuned and untuned, results in sessions that are exclusively singing lessons.
53. The accommodation is satisfactory and enables teachers to do their work effectively. This is soon to be extended to include additional teaching areas as well as a central hall that will accommodate whole-school gatherings. Externally, the pupils benefit from very good quality play facilities, in the form of a purpose designed 'play barn'. This imaginative project includes many options for pupils to extend their opportunities for learning, as well as to enjoy themselves in the process.
54. The school has a good business plan and has effectively completed the first phase of this. Targets have been met in terms of the building programme and achieving the permitted roll of 32 pupils. The next stage of the business development plan is about to commence and when completed, subject to Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) approval, will enable the school roll to be increased to 50 pupils. The school currently has a large financial carry forward figure that is planned to support the expansion. The bursar is conscious of costs and in making purchases to support the work of the school he consistently seeks 'best value' options.
55. In contrast, financial planning for educational developments is weak. Apart from English, there is no detailed curriculum development planning and spending is done in response to requisitions made by teachers. This ad hoc system and not clearly support the development of individual subjects or pupils' learning. This lack of an overall curriculum development plan also means that planning and monitoring of teaching in subjects such as science, design and technology, music, physical education and information and communication technology are unsatisfactory and under-resourced. The school does not use computer technology effectively to enable it to monitor or manage its activity. For example the timetable, which is changed frequently to plan pupils' individual learning sessions, is handwritten.
56. Good progress has been made over the past five years in developing a new school, appointing qualified staff and reaching the target number of pupils. The unit cost is low in comparison with similar schools. The school is successful in achieving its aim, of returning pupils to mainstream education within two years, compensating their basic language and literacy difficulties and giving them strategies to cope in a larger school environment. In this respect the school offers good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to continue and enhance the good work done in the school the proprietors should;

- (1) **Construct and implement a development plan that enables all aspects of the school's work to be more effectively directed.**
 - Such a plan should include criteria and targets, as well as a time scale, by which this work can be evaluated.
(Paragraphs 47, 50)
- (2) **Undertake more detailed planning of the subjects of the National Curriculum.**
 - The school already has a good model of practice within the planning of the English curriculum. The quality seen in this should be aimed for by using the subject expertise of teachers.
(Paragraphs 32, 86, 90)
- (3) **Ensure better provision for the teaching and use of information and communication technology by:**
 - Expecting teachers to include its use within their teaching
 - Giving pupils access to a wider range of research experience, such as the Internet and CDROM, as well as other forms of recording, such as digital photography.
(Paragraphs 7, 24, 99, 104)
- (4) **Provide a commonly agreed practice by which staff can respond to misbehaviour by pupils within lessons by:**
 - Clarifying with staff the clear responses and procedures to be followed in the event of misbehaviour.
 - Providing staff with guidance on behaviour management techniques.
(Paragraphs 10, 25, 43, 77, 84,89, 108, 112)
- (5) **Undertake more effective monitoring of teaching practice and standards so that the incidence of good teaching can be promoted throughout all subjects of the curriculum by:**
 - Raising teacher's expectations of what can be achieved.
 - Using lesson observations that identify strengths as well as areas for development.
(Paragraphs 47, 50, 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

46

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	39	52	4	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

No of pupils

Number of pupils on the school's roll

32

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

The school does not have the facility to offer a cooked midday meal.

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

5

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.84
National comparison figure	9.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.25
National comparison figure	2.4

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 2

In 2000 ten pupils sat the national tests.

Percentage of pupils at each level

Subject	No. of pupils	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	No level
English	10	0	50	50	0
Mathematics	10	10	30	30	30
Science	10	0	70	30	0

Results of the English Speaking Board Examination

Numbers refer to pupils who took the examination

Year	No. of pupils	Pass	Good pass	VG pass	Credit
1999	28	3	10	6	8
2000	31	4	8	11	7

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	1
White	30
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y 3 – Y 8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.6
Average class size	6.4

Education support staff: Y 3 – Y 8

Total number of education support staff	5
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Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	203,933
Total expenditure	189,421
Expenditure per pupil	6,314

Total aggregate hours worked per week	110
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance brought forward from previous year	4,539
Balance carried forward to next year	19,051

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

32

Number of questionnaires returned

23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	27	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	27	9	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	32	5	0	0
The teaching is good.	91	9	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	91	9	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	23	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	14	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	64	36	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	86	14	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	36	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	32	5	5	18

Other issues raised by parents

A minor issue, raised by some parents, concerned their active involvement in the school. They mentioned that they do not have a school gate' forum where any views they have might be expressed. For the majority of parents this was not perceived as a problem because they have "great confidence in the management of the school". Inspectors disagree with the perception of parents that the school does not offer an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. Within the limits placed upon it, such as the need of some pupils to travel long distances at the beginning and end of each day, the school offers trips and visits that support the needs of the curriculum as well as pupils' learning.

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

ENGLISH

58. Pupil's achievements in English are good in all key stages. All of the pupils in the school have been assessed and found to have specific learning difficulties so that when they enter the school they have significant deficits in the major skills of English, notably reading, spelling and writing. They lack confidence and their tested results are often well below their potential. Against that context the progress made by pupils in the subject is good.
59. The school has a thorough system of assessment prior to entry that identifies the pupil's strengths and the areas of deficit, which are the cause of the low attainments in reading and writing. Each pupil has an extensive personal education plan to address these deficits and will have at least ten individual activities each week aimed at compensating for these. The activities include handwriting practice as well as more general skills such as reading or spelling. These activities are closely linked to the pupil's experience in their English lessons and are also reinforced by activities, which are provided or planned by the speech and language therapist.
60. Because of this thorough compensatory programme, pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are good. Many of the remedial activities such as 'sound linkage', where pupils have to listen and identify the position of a sound within a word, and dictation and spelling sessions encourage pupils to listen with good levels of attention. All pupils are prepared for the examinations of the English Speaking Board and annual results in these examinations have been consistently successful. A group of younger pupils in their drama lesson spoke with confidence and clarity in their group performance of the 'Owl and the Pussycat' and individual pupils showed that they could explain their work to the whole school assembly in a clear and interesting way. Older pupils in a geography lesson discussed current issues about housing developments in a mature and constructive manner. Younger pupils in a social skills group are aware of the importance of good questioning and listening techniques and can put those into practice in dialogues.
61. Pupil's achievements in reading are good. Reading tests administered every six months show significant progress from the time pupils enter the school to the time they leave. They do so with reading skills that enable them to take a full part in other subjects of the curriculum. Formal reading sessions take place every morning and pupils show that they are able to read independently, with some tackling long novels such as *Harry Potter*. Because of the concentrated focus in remedial sessions, on the use of letter sounds and close observation of word construction, pupils successfully use a range of strategies in their reading. Each pupil is heard to read daily and this they do so with enthusiasm, interest and expression. They give their opinion of the plot and the characters, using the text as examples. Pupils are confident to read aloud in English and other lessons and use textbooks effectively in other subjects of the curriculum.
62. Pupil's achievements in writing are good. Again, the concentration in specific sessions for writing skills, such as spelling, pencil control and handwriting enables the pupils to achieve good results when they attempt writing tasks. English lessons also focus on grammatical correctness and through a good range of literary activities help pupils to develop confidence in writing for a range of purposes. The youngest pupils write short creative stories as well as accounts of their activities and interests. They use simple punctuation correctly and are beginning to use speech marks in the correct way. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 write longer pieces, they draft work, proof read it and correct it and then complete a neat copy for display. Higher attaining pupils have a good range of vocabulary and put this to good use in their poetry, where they use simile and personification to great effect. By the age of thirteen pupils have consolidated and extended these writing skills. Their stories and accounts have a clear structure with punctuation and paragraphs used correctly.

Pupils at this level are confident to write extended essays for homework in history and geography. They accurately use technical vocabulary in these subjects. Despite the difficulty some pupils have in pencil control, handwriting is generally neat and carefully done. Many pupils use a style that is both fluent and legible.

63. The quality of teaching and learning in English lessons and in the remedial sessions is good. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and on occasions it is very good. Many of the remedial sessions are carried out by teaching assistants and the quality of their work is also good. All sessions and lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers tell pupils what is expected of them and hence pupils work productively and at a good pace. In the remedial sessions the teachers generate a sense for the need for accuracy and correctness whether it is sounding out a word to get the correct order of letters or careful letter formation in writing and hence pupils develop a good level of perseverance in improving the quality of their work. In English lessons teachers use a good range of literature to widen pupils' experience and interest in stories, plays and poetry. Teachers develop vocabulary well giving pupils the tools to create interesting and evocative pieces of fictional as well as non-fiction writing. Expectation for behaviour and effort are high and hence pupils respond well. In the very good teaching seen there was focused support for individual pupils which continually challenged them to extend their work and a very useful short plenary at the end of the lessons when pupils could share their learning with the rest of the class.
64. Pupils' attitudes to work in English are good. In all sessions they settle quickly and use all the lesson time well. They complete work diligently and try to produce neat work. They concentrate, listen well and join in discussions sensibly. Relationships within groups are good so that pupils have the confidence to read aloud in class and to share their ideas.
65. English and literacy in its broadest sense is rightly given a high priority by the school and it is very effective in meeting the needs of the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and flexible in the way they develop the skills of all pupils. Resources are adequate with books of all types available to pupils in each classroom. Computers are well used to support some pupils with spelling and word recognition but not yet developed sufficiently as a tool for their writing or research. Assessment is regular, detailed and used well to plan future work both for individual pupils and class groups.

MATHEMATICS

66. In all key stages, the achievement of pupils in mathematics is satisfactory. Most pupils enter the school with below average mathematical skills and low self-esteem. They make sound progress during their short time in the school. When they leave, most have acquired adequate number strategies to enable them to cope with the next stage of their education.
67. By the age of 11, most pupils can count reliably and are developing a satisfactory understanding of place value relating to thousands, hundreds, tens and units. Whilst higher attaining pupils have a sound grasp of this process there are several others who find this concept difficult to understand. Some lessons start with mental arithmetic tests that are designed to sharpen pupils' number skills such as addition, subtraction and multiplication. These sessions are not always brisk enough, questions are repeated too often and pupils are helped during the test rather than at the end of it. However, useful feedback is given to pupils after the tests about different ways of solving problems; for example, by adding on or counting back. Pupils are encouraged to learn their tables and this aspect of their learning is good. Higher attaining pupils are confident and know their tables up to 12 times. In one lesson, an educational game was successfully used to reinforce tables and at the same time help pupils to improve their short-term memory. Although pupils are familiar with their tables, the application of this knowledge in terms of problem solving is not as good. Pupils have difficulty in interpreting questions and are very reliant upon the teachers and support assistants for help. For lower attaining pupils, intensive individual help is available which is very effective. A good session was observed which built on the pupils' homework. The teacher used a number line effectively to teach the concept of subtraction and reinforces this in a practical way by using real sweets. Homework is set on a regular basis and parents are very supportive.

68. In a lesson observed at Key Stage 2, pupils study units of measure. The teacher asks them what instruments they might use for measuring? The pupils think of such things as a ruler, tape measure and protractor and one remembers that a Newton Meter had been used in science to measure forces. When the teacher probes more and asks what a protractor measures, one pupil remembers that it measures angles in degrees. Good teaching in this practical lesson helps pupils to develop their accuracy when measuring the length and width of desks in the classroom. This leads into a discussion about millimetres, centimetres and metres. By the end of the lesson, pupils have a better understanding of the relationship between decimals and fractions and most understand that 0.50 cm is half a metre. Mathematical language is taught satisfactorily, for example, in this lesson pupils learn that the word 'unit' doesn't just refer to a single number but that there are different units of measure and these can be used to measure distance, time, angles and weight.
69. Numeracy skills are applied satisfactorily in some other subjects. Examples of this are measuring temperatures in science, organising themselves into team groups in physical education, the use of coordinates in geography and the developing sense of chronology gained through understanding the passage of time in history and religious education.
70. Pupils' attitudes to their work and behaviour in lessons are satisfactory. The majority work effectively as individuals and, when required, collaborate satisfactorily within groups. Most pupils show an interest in their work and some sustain their concentration for lengthy periods of time. Occasional instances were observed of disrespect being shown towards teachers.
71. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Six lessons were observed; of these four were satisfactory and two were good. However, one of the good lessons was taught on an individual basis. There is no significant variation in the quality of teaching provided to all the age groups. Features of the good teaching are teachers' planning that contains clear learning objectives based on assessment of previous learning, questioning of pupils to reinforce learning and assess what pupils have learned, challenge for higher attaining pupils and work that is well matched to the previous attainment of all pupils. In some lessons, when teaching is not of this quality, pupils take too long to settle, they chat too much and teaching time is lost. The use of information and communication technology is used effectively to reinforce basic skills, however, insufficient thought has been given to using it for such things as displaying and interpreting data in graphs and spreadsheets. The quantity of work produced by pupils is satisfactory but the presentation tends to be rather untidy and leaves much room for improvement. Marking is mostly cursory and rarely helps pupils with the next stage of their learning.
72. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school has adopted a commercial scheme of work, which is helping teachers with their planning. Pupils are under functioning when they come to the school. Therefore, before they return to mainstream, most of the teaching is focused upon developing number skills, especially use of the four basic operations. The school achieves this satisfactorily. However, when pupils take the national tests there are inevitably some gaps in their knowledge and understanding of elements, such as problem solving, handling data and shape, space and measures. The director of studies has an overview of mathematics, but the subject lacks detailed co-ordination. Not all the staff that teach mathematics are adequately trained for teaching this subject at Key Stage1.

SCIENCE

73. The achievement of pupils in science is satisfactory. Attainment of all pupils is below that which would be expected nationally, but in view of the nature of their individual difficulties pupils make satisfactory progress.
74. Pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of materials, with higher attaining pupils recognising the essential differences between man-made and those that are natural. They develop this knowledge through a simple experiment to determine which materials are most resistant to water. To do this they use a syringe to squirt a known quantity of water onto different materials and

gauge which of these allows through the most water. Higher attaining pupils point out that it would be useful to measure the amount of percolated water so that they might have a more accurate measurement. The majority of these pupils have only a notional understanding of a 'fair test', but they are careful to measure the correct volume of water into the syringe.

75. In Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of issues that might affect their health. These include the misuse of illegal drugs as well as some, though legal, are also harmful. They also understand the need to eat healthy food and confidently name examples, such as fruit and vegetables. Most pupils show an awareness of unhealthy substances they might possibly encounter, such as glue. When asked to list things that might make them unhealthy they included "too much chocolate" and "watching television for too long". With regard to the latter, the observation was made that "It makes you fat". In work recorded in their books pupils show a satisfactory understanding of plant nutrition and fertilisation. They are familiar with terms, such as photosynthesis. Older pupils, in Year 7 have done good work relating to the seasons of the year and performed simple investigations, such as testing model parachutes and the changing state of solids and solutions. Some of this work shows good evidence of understanding through the detailed notes it contains.
76. Only three lessons were observed so no conclusive judgement about quality of teaching can be made. However, when considering the range and quality of work done by the pupils it is reasonable to say that this teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning in science. Of those lessons observed the strengths are in the introductions made by teachers. They ensure, through challenging questions that previous knowledge is secure and also set up the requirements for the forthcoming lesson. A good example of this was in the lesson for Year 6 and 7 pupils where the teacher used the technique of 'brainstorm' to draw from pupils what they already knew. She discovered that their knowledge went beyond what she had taught and using this information she tailored the subsequent lesson to suit the needs of the pupils. Timing and pace of lessons needs further consideration. The conclusion of lessons was rushed and in so doing some of the gains made within the lessons might have been lost, however, in the lesson for Year 6 and 7 pupils the requirements for the subsequent lesson were set well. In general the time available is too short, but this issue goes beyond the teaching of science.
77. The attitude that pupils have to their lessons is satisfactory and the work recorded in exercise books, especially that done by girls, shows good attention to detail. In lessons the majority of pupils are eager to take an active part and for younger pupils particularly this eagerness spills over to inappropriate calling out. As a result this destroys the flow of the lesson as teachers regularly have to re-establish order. Pupils do not misbehave in lessons but they occasionally lose concentration because they are required to be passive for too long. As a result the quality of their learning is impaired.
78. Pupils with specific needs are well supported by both teachers and teacher assistants. Teachers have very good knowledge of pupils' individual education plans and use this to structure their responses accordingly. Consequently, the progress made by these pupils is ensured.
79. During their stay at the school the work planned for pupils covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. To be effective this planning needs to be more detailed so that it culminates in lessons of good quality. The current schemes of work that support lessons are too sketchy. Consideration should be given to nominating a subject leader so that the quality of provision can more effectively be monitored. Learning by pupils is hampered by their lack of practical involvement, both in investigations and experimentation. Presently, pupils are passive observers as teachers demonstrate much of the work. Before pupils can become 'young scientists' the range and quality of resources will need to be increased. The resources available are poor and do not support the needs of the whole curriculum.

ART

80. Too few lessons were available to form clear judgements about the quality of learning. However from those seen, as well as scrutiny of work previously done by pupils it is possible to say that pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory. Progress is also satisfactory. In addition to formal lessons in art pupils also use their skills to support learning in other subjects.
81. Older pupils in Years 7 and 8 use sketches to develop portraits of animals. They use pastels to create these but then interpret this work into collages or by using clay. In the lesson observed the teacher used encouragement very effectively to inspire pupils to extend the quality of their work. Other work, on display, indicates a satisfactory command of other media, such as papier-mâché, watercolour and charcoal. There are especially impressive life-size papier-mâché figures as well as figureheads based on the characters in the story of Pinocchio. In other lessons, such as history, pupils use their skills to portray marble columns. They do this using cloth they have coloured which is then stuck to models. They also use different coloured material to give the effect of a mosaic floor. Some pupils have supported the work they do in their Italian lessons by designing or copying the flags and banners used in the Palio at Siena.
82. Pupils enjoy art and this brings about a good attitude to the subject. They particularly enjoy the practical opportunities and once started, become absorbed in their tasks. Where pupils are challenged to extend their interpretive skills, such as using different collage materials to portray animals, they are very successful and gain much pleasure from the results. This stems from the availability of a wide range of resources. Where the tasks are more mundane, such as in cutting and sticking, their attention begins to wander and they do not gain as much satisfaction or learning from the mechanical nature of these. Minor misbehaviours show themselves at such times.
83. The resources for the subject are satisfactory. The current accommodation is also used for other learning experiences, such as speech therapy and music, but it nevertheless effectively supports the work done by pupils. Some thought should be given to the temperature of this room as, even on pleasant February days, this rarely rose above 15°C. Planning of the subject is the responsibility of the director of studies. This is effective in ensuring broad entitlement to the programme of study but as individual teachers are required to interpret these requirements there is variation in practice.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Design and Technology has already been taught within this academic year and will continue to be taught in the coming summer term so no lessons were seen. Hence there is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements about the quality of teaching or learning. There is an experienced teacher for this subject and planning for the previous terms work shows appropriate consideration for the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to explore their ideas through research, preliminary drawings and experimentation with a range of materials including card, balsa wood and junk materials. They are taught the safe use of simple tools.
85. Over the past term the younger pupils made books with moving parts and pupils up to age thirteen designed and made 'fantastic' shoes and hats using a range of joining and sticking techniques. The older pupils researched packaging for food and drink and then designed and decorated their own package for a specific item. Pupils also made the puppets used in the school production of Pinocchio.

HUMANITIES

86. Pupil's achievements in both history and geography are overall satisfactory and for those pupils who have been in the school for a year or more they are making satisfactory progress in developing a basis of knowledge in both subjects. The school attempts to teach a wide coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study as it is able, including elements of the Key Stage 3 programmes of study for the Year 7 and 8 pupils.

87. In history the youngest pupils learn about the Romans and their way of life and through a visit to the Roman Baths and museum in Bath they know about the local evidence of the Roman occupation of Britain. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 have good knowledge of life in Victorian times. They understand the differences in transport, clothes and artefacts they would see in the home if they were living in that era. They are developing a sound understanding of chronology. Older pupils have studied American history. They are able to use personal research for their extended essays and projects and hence know the importance of accuracy in using evidence. They are able to consider different points of view when learning about past events such as the reasons for the disagreements between Parliament and Charles the first. They are beginning to develop empathy as shown in their work about the slave trade.
88. In geography pupils are developing good skills in using maps to identify features of settlements and are able to compare urban and rural locations. The eldest pupils in the school know the range of facilities you may expect in an urban area and they are able to discuss the effect of housing and industrial developments in local towns. Younger pupils are learning about the features of a river. They are able to use correct geographical terminology to describe the river and know that it moves material downstream in its work of erosion and transportation. Other pupils in Key Stage 2 have been studying arid areas in both hot and cold lands and know how those conditions affect the life style of the inhabitants.
89. The quality of teaching is, overall, satisfactory. Teachers start lessons with a useful recap of past work so that they can check the level of pupils' understanding and pupils are then clear of what they are going to learn. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and bring the content of the lessons alive through useful descriptions. In a lesson preparing pupils for a visit to a Victorian school the discussion about what pupils could bring for their packed lunch really brought home the difference in life styles and situation for Victorian pupils. For example, some pupils were wide-eyed at the thought they could not include crisps or chocolate in their packed lunches and that these lunches had to be put in a brown paper bag, rather than their lunch boxes. Teachers have high expectations for good attention and good quality of presentation in their work so that pupils sustain concentration and complete work diligently. Teachers use the resources they have effectively. In geography lessons cuttings from local newspapers about controversial development issues formed the basis of discussion. The pupils were able to identify the benefits and disadvantages of urban developments in their area. Teachers use and consolidate correct vocabulary so that pupils have a sound foundation when they write notes or develop their essays. Homework is well used to encourage personal research and re-enforces the knowledge learnt during the term.
90. Pupil's attitudes to their lessons are satisfactory and often good. They show interest in both subjects. They join in discussion sensibly and listen carefully. The quality of notebooks and projects kept by the eldest pupils are of good quality and pupils are rightly proud of them.
91. The long and medium term planning for these subjects are at a developmental stage but it is based appropriately on the requirements of the National Curriculum. Presently the planning does not ensure that pupils have the opportunity to develop their thinking about the subjects. The current emphasis on remembering facts does not enable the pupils to use their understanding in different contexts of history or geography. Resources in the subjects are just adequate. New texts have recently been acquired but teachers lack visual aids such as photo packs and posters and 'big books' to help pupils understand the lesson at a visual as well as aural level. Very good use is made of visits to places of historical or geographical importance in the locality and pupils gain greater insight from the visits.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

92. Pupils' achievements in information technology at all key stages are unsatisfactory. This is because there is insufficient planned teaching of this subject. By the time they leave the school, most pupils have not acquired the skills necessary to take a full part in a secondary school curriculum. However, computer assisted learning to help pupils to develop basic spelling and basic mathematical skills is good.

93. Information technology is not established as an integral part of the school's curriculum. There is little evidence of it being used in different subjects. Computers are rarely used in subjects other than English or mathematics. Insufficient thought has been given to using computers for research in subjects such as science, history, geography, art, design and technology and religious education. Key aspects of information and communication technology are not taught such as, control technology, data handling, use of the Internet, electronic mail and digital cameras.
94. Each class has one period a week in the computer room each half term. There are insufficient computers with the appropriate software for pupils to get enough 'hands on' experience to develop their skills. Pupils have to share computers; this means they have fifteen minutes each per week on a half-termly basis, which is wholly inadequate. The school acknowledges that training for teachers is needed in a number of key areas. At all key stages when pupils use computers they use the mouse appropriately, but their keyboard skills are much weaker. Pupils are familiar with the computer aided learning programs to reinforce basic skills in English and mathematics. They use these programs well and load and exit from them with confidence. However, in the two discreet information technology lessons observed, few pupils could use the word processor with any confidence. Pupils had learned to change the letter and font sizes but were unable to do basic operations such as using the backspace, enter and delete keys.
95. Pupils enjoy using the computers. Most respond satisfactorily to instructions and work co-operatively together. They take time to settle when coming to lessons and because of this some teaching time is lost. The majority of pupils use the computers sensibly and they show respect for the equipment.
96. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching because only one teacher was seen teaching word-processing. A teaching assistant, who gave effective help and ensured pupils worked on the correct level of mathematics and spelling programs, was also observed. The outcomes, as seen in pupils' work and the manner in which they use computers indicates that insufficient opportunity is given to pupils to enable them to learn and consolidate basic skills.
97. Currently, the hardware and software is inadequate. In effect this means that the school can only offer a very narrow curriculum. Insufficient thought and time has been allocated to the development and monitoring of this subject and the assessment and evaluation of pupils' progress and development of their skills. The school acknowledges that training for teachers is needed in a number of key areas.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - Italian

98. Italian conversation is taught to single groups of both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils. An unqualified teacher provides the tuition, though this person is a native Italian speaker. One lesson was observed and it is thus not possible to judge conclusively about the overall quality of teaching. From scrutiny of other work it is possible to say that achievement is satisfactory.
99. Pupils learn simple Italian phrases and rehearse their skill of speaking the language through use of descriptive terms, such as, *il bianco gatto*. Higher attaining pupils imitate the intonation provided by the teacher and in so doing are developing well their ability to speak the language. Many of the phrases used are out of context, for example 'the yellow bird' and it is difficult for lower attaining pupils to learn the skill of speaking, simply by rote.
100. As part of the provision pupils also learn about Italian culture and this is a considerable strength of their learning. The teacher provides individual 'Italian days' in which the pupils sample the delights of an Italian Festa. In this they sample a range of Italian food and gain a good understanding of some of the customs. Younger pupils have made a study of The Palio in Sienna and this has encouraged them to design their own banners and flags that might be associated with this event. Overall, this makes a good contribution to their cultural development.

101. Most pupils have a satisfactory attitude to the subject, with some of the higher attaining pupils developing a pleasing accent through careful listening to the teacher. Much of the work is done orally, but where recording is done within workbooks the presentation is generally neat, though for lower attaining pupils this can also be somewhat laboured. In the lesson observed there were minor misbehaviours that disrupted the flow of the lesson. Occasionally it appeared noisy, but careful listening indicated that most pupils were rehearsing what they had just heard. In this respect they were not following the convention set by the teacher and it was therefore difficult for them to learn from each other.
102. Resources to support pupils' learning are minimal. There is no requirement for the school to provide teaching in a foreign language and so they are to be commended for using the opportunity to extend the range of pupils' listening skills as well as their knowledge of the wider world. The experience of learning a foreign language for young pupils remains valid and for many of the higher attaining pupils it is also an exciting challenge.

MUSIC

103. All pupils receive one lesson of music tuition each week. This is done as three groups and comprises mainly singing. As only two lessons were observed it is not possible to form conclusive judgements about overall standards or the quality of teaching.
104. Younger pupils show a satisfactory ability to hold a single note, with some higher attaining pupils being able to vary its pitch and volume. All pupils sing as a group, joining in familiar songs such as 'I'd like to teach the world to sing'. Although the quality of such singing is satisfactory it is done without much enthusiasm and the result is a rather unenthusiastic rendition. Parents however, indicate that the quality of singing in the Christmas productions is much more lively and expressive. The performance in singing by older pupils is of a similar quality and does not represent significant progress.
105. The poor level of resources available significantly compromises the teaching of the subject and hinders pupils' learning. There are insufficient instruments available to enable all pupils within a group to be fully involved in performance or composition. The level of challenge, thus presented to pupils, is below that which they might reasonably be expected to meet. As a consequence many pupils show an indifferent attitude to the subject. Within the group singing some pupils play no part at all. Where girls are a minority this is particularly the case. Despite the expertise and enthusiasm of the teacher it is unlikely that standards can be raised without a significant injection of resources as well as better planning that ensures the requirements of the programme of study are provided.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

106. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are satisfactory and over time they make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave the school the majority of pupils can swim 25 metres. Some high attaining pupils swim distances of up to 1500m.
107. Only two physical education lessons were observed during the inspection therefore a conclusive judgement could not be made about quality of teaching. The judgement made about achievement is based on lessons observed, conversations with teachers and scrutiny of the documentation, which show the range of activities and the development of inter-school sport.
108. Currently the school does not have a hall or swimming pool but is fortunate to have use of the facilities at the local army camp, a short bus ride from the school. In the games lesson in the sports hall, pupils develop skills of throwing and catching. A sound teacher demonstration shows pupils how to pass over a short distance. The pupils then work satisfactorily to improve their accuracy by aiming a bounce pass at a hoop on the floor. Clear instructions are given about playing a game and pupils try and work within these confines, but most tend to flock to the ball. The next stage of pupils learning is to develop tactics and use the space in the sports hall more effectively. In this lesson a weakness in the teaching was the lack of a proper warm-up activity.

When teaching swimming, the teacher gives good instructions about developing the arm and leg action when teaching the crawl stroke and she uses higher attaining pupils to demonstrate this effectively. However, the use of time is unsatisfactory in this lesson because pupils spent less than half the allocated time in the water, the rest of the time is spent sitting on benches, watching the other group. Within individual needs tuition, small groups of dyspraxic pupils work on their motor control skills with a teaching assistant. They listen carefully to instructions and respond to the challenge to 'do it better' and make good progress walking toe to heel forwards and backwards within closed lines. All teachers take care to ensure the safety of pupils.

109. Pupils dress appropriately and most change quickly for their lessons. They enjoy physical education and listen and respond satisfactorily to instructions. Pupils are learning to work co-operatively with the majority being keen and eager to participate in lessons. Their behaviour is mostly satisfactory, but on a few occasions, too much chattering means that time is wasted by having to stop lessons and remind pupils of how to behave. All pupils have equal opportunity to the curriculum and there are no apparent differences in the performances of boys and girls.
110. The new buildings are due for completion within the academic year and these will include the provision of a hall. This means that, apart from swimming, all activities will take place within the school environment and time will be saved travelling to and from different venues. The school is working hard to develop inter-school sport and hockey matches with Downside School have been held recently.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. The achievements of pupils throughout the school in religious education are satisfactory.
112. During the inspection only one lesson of religious education was observed, therefore an overall judgement cannot be made about the quality of teaching. The scrutiny of pupils' work, curriculum planning and conversations with the director of studies indicates that most pupils are making satisfactory progress.
113. In the lesson observed, pupils' attitudes were good. They listened carefully about the Hindu practise of caring for animals. One higher attaining pupil knew all about the Hindu reverence for cows and shared her knowledge with the rest of the class.
114. The curriculum is based upon the DfEE scheme of work and offers pupils the opportunity to study Christianity and other major religions and religious festivals. There is good emphasis upon looking at similarities and differences between different faiths. Some of the work is linked to ancient religions; for example, Roman gods are studied in history and in one lesson the pupils talked about Minerva.
115. The director of studies provides sound subject leadership. There is a satisfactory range of resources and artefacts to support pupils' learning. The subject makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.