

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THE GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC LOWER  
SCHOOL**

Kingsthorpe, Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122039

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Walker

Reporting inspector: Mr Ted Wheatley  
10013

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 248320

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kingsland Gardens Kingsthorpe Northampton
Postcode:	NN2 7BH
Telephone number:	(01604) 714399
Fax number:	(01604) 714672
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Maureen Jamieson
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Good Shepherd Catholic Lower School has 252 pupils aged 4 – 9 years and is broadly average in size compared with other primary schools. The school will retain Year 5 pupils in September 2003 and will officially become a primary school in September 2004. The pupils are of mainly white United Kingdom background and there are small numbers of Irish, Asian, Caribbean, black African and mixed race pupils. Three pupils have support through ethnic minority funding. There are 17 pupils with English as an additional language, which is above average, but none are in the early stages of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs and the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is broadly average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

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

This is a very good school with some outstanding features. Pupils' achievement is very good and the levels of attainment they reach are well above average overall. Teaching is very good and the school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction for improvement. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils' achievements are very good and their attainment is well above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent, their attitudes to school are very good and relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent.
- The provision for personal development is very good and for moral development is outstanding.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good and the direction for improvement provided by the headteacher is outstanding.
- Procedures to assess the progress pupils make and to use assessment information to improve progress, teaching and the curriculum are very good.
- The school's links with parents and the community are very good and contribute to pupils' learning.

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

- The attendance of a very small number of pupils is unsatisfactory and some pupils do not consistently arrive at school on time.
- There are too few extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1997 and since then it has made good progress. Planning for teaching design and technology, history, information and communication technology and music has improved considerably and is now good. Planning of lessons now includes clear learning objectives against which it is possible to measure pupils' progress; assessment information is used very effectively to plan teaching. The governing body is fully involved in the planning for school improvement and in monitoring and evaluating outcomes. Standards have risen and teaching has improved.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	C	B	A	A
Writing	B	B	A	A
Mathematics	D	D	A	A

  

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment and they make very good progress to reach levels which are well above average by the time they are seven years old, at the end of Year 2. In the national tests taken by seven year olds in 2002, attainment was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and results have improved over recent years. Compared with similar schools, attainment was well above average. In teachers' assessments in science, attainment was above average. Standards seen in lessons are in line with the results of end of Year 2 tests. Pupils achieve very well.

Pupils in Year 4 reach levels of attainment that are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. These pupils have made very good progress since they took their end of Year 2 national tests in 2000.

All pupils achieve very well, whatever their prior attainment or background.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school. The great majority arrive with enthusiasm and take part in work and other activities eagerly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils are very well behaved indeed. They are considerate to each other and teachers in lessons and around the school. At playtimes and during lunchtimes they behave sensibly and with enjoyment.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities when they are available. Relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils are excellent.
Attendance	Good overall and very good in the case of the great majority of pupils. A very small number of pupils have more absence than they should because of family holidays during school time. Small numbers of pupils are sometimes late for school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

*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.*

Teaching and learning are very good. Over half of the teaching seen was very good and occasionally excellent. Almost all of the rest was good and a small amount was satisfactory. There was no

unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and science. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught well and this helps pupils learn well in other subjects. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of both the standards pupils achieve and the efforts they make. Pupils respond well to this – they work hard and they learn very well. In the very best lessons, teachers plan their lessons very well and include interesting, challenging activities that fascinate and involve pupils in their learning. On rare occasions planning does not link work sufficiently to what went before, so learning is slightly less effective than it could be. Teachers establish very effective relationships and pupils then learn confidently in a secure learning environment.

Teaching meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers use assessment information effectively to meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education. The range of extra-curricular activities is good for pupils in Years 3 and 4 but there are too few elsewhere.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and classroom assistants work hard to ensure learning needs are identified and that lessons are planned to take account of learning difficulties. As a result, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. While no pupils are in the early stages of learning English language, the school works hard to ensure that pupils' progress is monitored and they are given support if the need arises.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Provision is excellent for pupils' moral development and good for their cultural development. Opportunities for personal development are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The school provides a high level of care and particularly so in assessing pupils' progress and using assessment information to improve the curriculum and teaching.

The school works closely with parents and the community and has established good relationships that contribute to pupils' education.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall and the headteacher provides outstanding direction for how the school should continue to improve. Staff are highly committed to continuing improvements and carry out their responsibilities effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They carry out all of their responsibilities effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. Teaching is observed and evaluated by the headteacher and the school has a very good grasp of the areas for improvement and what needs to be done to improve further. Priorities for improvement are very good.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school plans its expenditure carefully, monitors effectiveness of its spending and continually seeks good value for its available funds.



## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• They make good progress at school.</li><li>• They behave well.</li><li>• They get the right amount of homework.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• Parents are well informed about their children's progress.</li><li>• The school deals with concerns well.</li><li>• The school has high expectations.</li><li>• It works closely with parents.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• It helps pupils become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents expressed concern at lack of activities out of lessons.</li></ul>

Inspectors agreed with strengths identified by parents. Inspectors were also partly in agreement with parents' concern about lack of extra-curricular activities. While the range of activities is good in Years 3 and 4, opportunities are missed to provide extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Pupils' achievements are very good and their attainment is well above average.**

1. Pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment and by the end of Year 2 in 2002 their levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average and well above the average for pupils in similar schools. In teachers' assessments in science attainment was above average. This represents very good progress from the moment pupils enter the school. Results have improved steadily over recent years, with little change in attainment on entry to the school. Pupils' achievement has been good in recent years and is improving.
2. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve very well and the standards of work seen are generally well above average. By the end of Year 2, pupils' written work is articulate and shows that pupils have a wide vocabulary and spell accurately. The great majority of pupils express themselves well and lower attainers write and spell carefully. The highest attainers write with confidence and enthusiasm. In their speech pupils are thoughtful and express themselves accurately. As with their writing, pupils use a wide vocabulary, and use it accurately. Pupils read well and with enjoyment. Pupils have very good numeracy skills. They add, subtract, multiply and divide with well above average competence and show themselves to be skilled in mental arithmetic. In their science, they show a good knowledge of materials and their properties and the structures of plants. They keep clear records of experimental results and understand the basic principles of fair testing.
3. By the end of Year 4, the standards pupils reach are also well above average and they have maintained their very good achievement. They write freely and with confidence – in many different subject areas. For example in history pupils have studied what it was like to be in a Victorian classroom. They explain at great length how children were treated, what they learned and how teachers behaved towards children with clarity. Pupils' grasp of the time perspective is very good. In the great majority of lessons pupils achieve high standards because they feel confident in discussing their ideas and understanding with teachers, knowing that they will be guided and supported in their learning.

#### **Pupils' behaviour is excellent, their attitudes to school are very good and relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent.**

4. The great majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They respond enthusiastically to lessons and other activities organised for them. They work happily and with great interest and become very involved in all activities presented to them. Around school, they show great interest in the displays on walls, move through corridors with respect for other people and treat resources with care. In assemblies pupils listen with attention and enthusiasm, join in singing and make their own contributions when invited to do so.
5. Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is excellent. In all lessons they do as they are told, follow established routines and observe school rules impeccably. They respond to teachers' requests responsibly and move around classrooms sensibly when engaged in activities or collecting resources. At lunch and break times pupils play, talk to each other and adults with respect and enjoyment. While there is a high level of supervision, it is rare that adults need to remind pupils how to behave.
6. Relationships are excellent. Pupils work and play together in outstanding harmony. Incidents of aggressive or oppressive behaviour are extremely rare and the relationships between pupils are such that they support and help each other when anyone appears to be upset or distressed. The relationships with adults are equally good, mainly because adults are sympathetic and supportive and rarely critical in their reactions to situations. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of inconsiderate behaviour towards others and they also see the benefits of being kind and considerate to each other. In lessons pupils work very well together. They share resources, listen to each other when talking about work, and help each other when they see someone is having difficulty.

7. Pupils' personal development is very good. They take on responsibilities around school willingly. They give out and collect resources, readily clear up so that work areas are clean and ready for the next lesson. They take part in assemblies, organising some of the activities themselves and take pride in making sure that what they do is done to the best of their ability. Many pupils have been involved in producing mosaic panels that decorate the school playgrounds and improve the appearance of the school grounds.

**The provision for personal development is very good and for moral development is outstanding.**

8. The school takes great pride in its high moral standards based on strong Christian beliefs. Throughout the school, in all of its activities and in all of the interrelationships between pupils and between pupils and adults, there is an outstanding regard for what is right and wrong and the impact on how pupils develop into mature, responsible young people. There are rules in all classrooms and these are discussed with pupils so that they do not appear oppressive but are based on consideration and respect for others. They extend to how pupils behave on arriving to school, in lessons, assemblies, in the corridors, at lunch and play times and in out of school activities.
9. Teachers provide very good role models in the way they treat pupils, and observe the same standards as they set the children. The moral code is extended to address issues concerned with care for the environment, respect for property, personal rights and responsibilities and zero tolerance for racism. This plays a significant part in helping pupils develop their mature attitudes.
10. Provision for spiritual development is very good with a strong emphasis on Christian beliefs and the impact that God has on day-to-day life. It also takes into account the wonders of nature, evident in some of the science lessons seen, the developing surprise and wonder at how children were educated in Victorian times and the obvious enjoyment and thrill pupils get when they see enthusiastic singing and acting.
11. Provision for social development is very good with many opportunities for pupils to play and work together in lessons, the playground and corporate assemblies. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility, and the school is planning to increase the frequency of meetings of the council and pupils' involvement in school activities.
12. Provision for cultural development is good and for United Kingdom and European culture is very good. Music, art and design and drama are very well represented and there are established links with two French schools. There is increasing attention to other cultures through, for example, African art, Peruvian lifestyle and Muslim and Jewish festivals. Links have been established with schools in South Africa and support for children in Kurdistan is being explored.

**Teaching and learning are very good.**

13. Teaching and learning are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Expectations are very high and lead to very good planning of lessons. The great majority of lessons have a wide range of activities that interest and involve pupils and lead to very good learning. In an English lesson about humorous poetry, for example, reading poetry, discussing meanings of words and phrases, examining syllables in words, group work and class discussion led to pupils working very hard on creating their own poems. Pupils of all capabilities learned very effectively.
14. Lessons have very clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils. Literacy, numeracy and ICT feature regularly in lesson plans and play an important part in how well pupils learn. At the end of lessons teachers return to the objectives, examine whether they have all been covered and provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate and discuss what they have learned or where they have had difficulties. This is an effective process that helps pupils acquire confidence in what they know or seek further clarification. The pace of work is good and pupils work industriously and enthusiastically.
15. The management of pupils is very good and helps provide the right environment for pupils to learn with confidence. Teachers listen carefully to what pupils say. They encourage and work effectively with learning assistants to support and help pupils who have learning difficulties. Teachers encourage and

develop good working relationships among pupils and, in particular, develop the atmosphere of trust that allows pupils to ask questions and reveal learning difficulties so that they can receive help and guidance.

16. Ongoing assessment of pupils' work is very good and as a consequence the advice and guidance given by teachers plays a significant part in helping pupils make good progress. Teachers know what levels pupils are working at and adjust work according to individual needs, and fully take into account specific learning difficulties.

**Leadership and management are very good and the direction for improvement provided by the headteacher is outstanding.**

17. The headteacher provides outstanding direction for the school's continued improvement. She has a sharp awareness of developments in education and brings these to the staff's attention. She enthuses her colleagues so that they are prepared to make a great deal of effort towards school activities. She has a high level of respect for them and values the efforts they make towards the success of the school. She initiates and encourages new developments and when other teachers bring their own ideas to the school's attention, she encourages them to take responsibility for development and implementation. All staff carry out their responsibilities effectively and take pride in how well they manage their particular areas of responsibility.
18. The quality of the school's self evaluation is good. All staff take responsibility for evaluating their own subject area and planning improvements. Teachers support each other and work co-operatively to plan developments. Staff and governors, and the headteacher in particular, have a high level of awareness of the school's areas for improvement and work hard together to help the school improve.

**Procedures to assess the progress pupils make and to use assessment information to improve progress, teaching and the curriculum are very good.**

19. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good and the school makes impressive use of the assessment information it gathers. The school collects a wide range of assessment information including tests results, classroom observations and the results of on going assessment. Teachers use this information to build up a profile of each pupil and then to identify pupils' particular learning needs. This then leads to teachers planning lessons to meet the identified needs of all pupils and to reorganising the curriculum, where necessary, to take into account underachievement in particular work topics. The process is very effective and has resulted in high standards and very good achievements by almost all pupils.

**The school's links with parents and the community are very good and contribute to pupils' learning.**

20. Parents are welcomed in the school and many are frequent visitors to help in classrooms or attend school assemblies, church services, trips and other activities. They listen to reading at home and support their children's learning positively.
21. The school has many links with the local and wider community and these benefit pupils' learning. There are links with inner city schools and pupils become very much aware of the extremes of wealth and poverty, advantage and disadvantage. The school has very strong links with the local schools, church and parishes from which it draws its pupils. There are developing links with the local mosque, Sikh temple and charities. Barclays Bank has established links leading to donations of playhouses and a wooden potting shed from which pupils gain a great deal of enjoyment.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The attendance of a very small number of pupils is unsatisfactory and some pupils do not consistently arrive at school on time.**

22. A very small number of pupils have unacceptably high levels of absence because parents take them on holiday during the school term. This means that they miss some work, even though teachers sometimes set work for them to do while they are away. A small number of pupils regularly arrive late to school and join their class lessons after registration and when lessons have started. This puts them at a disadvantage because other pupils are already settled and, in addition, their late arrival occasionally leads to delays in lessons starting promptly.

**There are too few extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2.**

23. While there is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 3 and 4, there are too few opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to engage in out of class activities either at lunchtime or after school. However, the school has plans to improve the range of activities offered for all pupils.

**WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

24. What the school needs to do now:

- i. improve attendance and punctuality by:

- impressing on parents the importance of regular attendance at school;
- discouraging parents from taking their children on holiday during term time; and
- encouraging parents to ensure their children are consistently on time for school;

*(Paragraph 22)*

- ii. provide more extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

*(Paragraph 23)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	12	10	2	0	0	0
Percentage	8	46	38	8	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	252
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	19	24	43

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	42	43	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (93)	100 (95)	100 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	18
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	42	43	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (96)	100 (98)	98 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	223	30	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	7	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	9	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25.2

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	548,370
Total expenditure	531,940
Expenditure per pupil	2,054
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,150
Balance carried forward to next year	16,430

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	252
Number of questionnaires returned	144

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	44	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	47	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	49	9	0	1
The teaching is good.	56	40	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	50	9	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	47	43	8	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	47	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	41	11	3	14

### Other issues raised by parents

Overall, parents are pleased with the standards achieved by pupils and in the quality of education and care provided by the school. At the meeting with the Registered Inspector held before the inspection, a very small number of parents felt there is too much homework. However, inspectors judged that the frequency and quantity of homework set are good. Some parents were also concerned that there had not been enough consultation over the new school uniform and that parents would find it too expensive. Inspectors found that the level of consultation was satisfactory and that there was enough flexibility in uniform arrangements to ensure that parents will not have to spend any more than they do at present.