

INSPECTION REPORT

CALDECOTT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Abingdon

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123087

Headteacher: Margaret Gibb

Reporting inspector: Mr Andrew Matthews
19410

Dates of inspection: 30 September – 3 October 2002

Inspection number: 248423

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Caldecott Road
Abingdon
Oxfordshire

Postcode: OX14 5HB

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Kevin Nelson

Date of previous inspection: 10 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19410	Andrew Matthews	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1311	Barry Wood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8839	Mike Egerton	Team inspector	English Physical education English as an additional language	
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography Religious education	
19613	Susan Thomas-Pounce	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Caldecott Primary School is situated in the Caldecott ward of Abingdon, and the great majority of pupils come from this ward. The ward contains both affluent housing and housing deemed to be among the most deprived in Oxfordshire. There are a number of single parent and low income families. Although the school is still bigger than most other primary schools, the roll has fallen since the last inspection in 1997 and the school is under subscribed. There are 311 full time pupils; 163 boys and 148 girls aged between four and 11, taught in 12 classes. There are 46 part time pupils in the nursery; 24 boys and 22 girls. There is a low proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, although two per cent of pupils have English as an additional language and this is slightly higher than in most schools. There are 52 pupils eligible for free school meals, which at 17 per cent is about average. There are 51 pupils on the special needs register which at 17 per cent is slightly below the national average. There are five pupils with a statement of special educational need which at 1.6 per cent is close to the national average. Pupils begin part time nursery during the term in which they are four years old, or the term before when places are available. Some children are admitted after they are three on the recommendation of outside agencies. Pupils join the reception class in the term that they are five years old. This means that there are three different entry points into the reception class. An extra reception class is created for the summer term. At present, the school is on two sites but an extensive building programme is creating a primary school with a nursery under the same roof. There has also been a successful bid for 'Sure Start' funding to enable the construction of additional family support services for pupils. Pupil mobility rate is ten per cent, which is similar to most other schools, with 14 pupils joining and 20 leaving the school at other than the normal times. Attainment on entry has fallen since the last inspection and is now well below average, with a significant minority of boys having very low attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Caldecott Primary School is a good school, with some excellent features. It is extremely well led by an inspirational headteacher who is very well supported by knowledgeable governors and a dedicated and hardworking staff. Teaching is good overall and leads to pupils making good progress through the school, with improving standards at the end of Year 6. The standards for the present Year 6 are average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Effective subject coordinators have devised a well planned curriculum that helps pupils develop relevant skills and knowledge as they move through the school. The school manages its budget very carefully and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is ably supported by governors and staff.
- There is a very good team spirit amongst the staff, who have a strong commitment to the pupils, who in turn feel valued and have a great pride in their school.
- Pupils are taught well and make good progress through the school.
- Children in the nursery and reception make a good start to their education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good and leads to pupils' good behaviour and caring relationships.
- The school's curriculum is carefully planned for all pupils and the school provides very good opportunities for them to work together in a very good range of extra curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in writing and science at the end of Year 2 and their attainment in science and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection in 1997 and has very good capacity and drive to continue this improvement. With regard to issues from the last inspection, the school has improved standards in information and communication technology and in design and

technology. It makes far better use of assessment to judge pupils' progress and this has led to a much improved quality of teaching and more accurate targeting of work to individual pupils' needs. The school has established robust monitoring systems to ensure that the quality of education it provides is appropriate to the pupils. The results of this monitoring feed directly into the much improved School Improvement Plan which clearly identifies priorities and how they are going to be carried out and evaluated. The school has also made some clear improvements in areas that were not highlighted as weaknesses at the last inspection. Particularly important is the great improvement in the leadership and management of the school in which all teachers support staff and governors play a significant role in helping the school move forward. Other significant areas that have improved include pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their behaviour and attitudes to school, the curriculum and the school's partnership with parents. There have also been improvements in pupils' mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	C	E	E
mathematics	E	E	E	E
science	E	D	E	D

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

The results above show that, since the previous inspection, Year 6 National Curriculum test results have improved in science. However, the very good improvement in English in 2001 was not sustained and attainment has remained consistently below average in mathematics. Whilst the results for 2002 were overall well below average, statistics show that the Year 6 pupils who were in the school for their Year 2 National Curriculum tests made satisfactory progress overall in the above three subjects. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 5 was average in English and science but well below average in mathematics. The results for 2002 do show a fall from the previous year. The main reason for this fall was an increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, with a very high proportion of these pupils having statements. Another significant factor was the very low overall attainment of a group of pupils who joined the school in Year 6. The attainment of the present Year 6 pupils is average in English and below average in mathematics and science. However, this attainment shows good overall progress for this group of pupils, who entered the nursery with attainment that was well below the national average. The school has set challenging targets for the present Year 6 pupils to achieve at the end of the school year in the above three subjects. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are on track to meet these targets. In other subjects, these pupils' attainment is above average in religious education, geography and physical education and average in all other subjects. The difference between boys' and girls' attainment that was clear in previous National Curriculum tests has narrowed significantly because of the school's much improved support for pupils needing extra help in English and mathematics. Year 2 pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests for 2002 showed that standards improved in reading and mathematics but declined slightly in writing. Much of this improvement was due to the enhanced performance of boys and the noticeable rise in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading. The present Year 2 group of pupils has average attainment in reading and mathematics but below average attainment in writing and science. In all other subjects, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations, apart from religious education and physical education where it is above average. Children make a good start to their school life in the nursery because of the carefully planned curriculum and consistently good teaching, which successfully addresses the children's individual needs. By the time they leave reception, children's attainment is still below average but they have made significant progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Throughout the school pupils are most polite and behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have good relationships with each other and take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils have an increasing say in the life of the school as they move through the years.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Has improved in the last year.

Pupils show a good understanding and consideration for each other and get on very well with their teachers. They have positive relationships and these make a noticeable impact on the way that pupils learn and work together in classes. Pupils respond well to the good quality teaching and greatly enjoy the very good range of out of school activities that the school provides. Whilst attendance has improved during the last year, there is an above average absence rate for a significant minority of pupils on the special educational needs register.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a significant proportion of lessons being very good or better. This shows a notable improvement since the last inspection. The good quality teaching has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and the consistently good progress they make as they move through the school. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teachers make good use of assessment to ensure that the work is appropriately challenging for all pupils. The teaching of basic skills is good throughout the school in both numeracy and literacy. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and make effective use of their good subject knowledge when questioning pupils. Therefore pupils achieve well and make good progress in the majority of subjects, but most importantly in English, mathematics and science. Teachers make consistently good use of the well qualified and hardworking teaching assistants who work effectively with groups of pupils. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is consistently good, enabling these pupils to make good progress. Although the teaching of information and communication technology is good, teachers do not plan consistently for its use to support pupils' learning in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is carefully planned and well supplemented by a very good range of extra curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with individual education plans make good progress towards their targets because of the good quality support they received from both teachers and classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Teachers plan carefully for these pupils and they make good progress in developing their basic literacy skills, thus enabling them to take a full and active part in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The very good provision impacts strongly on the atmosphere in the school and pupils' attitudes to work, each other and their outlook on life.
How well the school cares for	The school has very good procedures for child protection and for

its pupils	ensuring pupils' welfare. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance is strongly developed through the school and this information is used well to support pupils' learning.
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All pupils are fully included in all the school's learning activities because this is strongly emphasised in all aspects of school life. Consequently, children gain greatly in confidence as they move through the school and are developing a good understanding of citizenship. There are good links between home and school, with parents receiving good quality information about their children's progress. However, the progress of some pupils is affected when they do not receive regular support from parents with their homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has a very supportive and hardworking staff who are all committed to raising standards. Subject coordinators provide good leadership in their individual subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are supportive of the school, visit regularly and play an active part in the school's strategic planning and an increasing role in the monitoring of its developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Test results are carefully analysed and challenging targets set. Subject coordinators regularly monitor teaching and learning in their subjects and make recommendations for improvement. The monitoring of teaching is very good and is used very effectively in the school's drive to raise standards further.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school applies the principles of best value well.

The school's staffing and resources are adequate for the learning needs of the pupils. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and will be considerably enhanced when the new Foundation and Key Stage 1 building is completed, thus bringing all the school together under one roof.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Eighteen per cent of parents returned questionnaires and ten parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy coming to school and make good progress. Teaching is very good and children behave well. The school is very well managed and very approachable. The school has a very good range of extra curricular activities. The school keeps parents well informed and promotes good attitudes and values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of homework.

Inspectors fully endorse all the parents' positive comments about the school but do not agree with some parents' concerns about the provision of homework, which inspectors judged to be satisfactory. However, inspectors were concerned that parents did not always support their children in this work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 As a result of the good overall improvement in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils, the school was awarded a 'School Achievement Award.'
- 2 The results for the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils show that attainment fell overall when compared to the previous year. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was well below average when compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. Pupils' attainment in science was also well below average when compared to schools nationally but below average when compared to similar schools. However, when compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was average in English and science but still well below average in mathematics despite a small improvement. There were three main reasons for the overall decline in standards from the previous year. One was an increased proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register compared to the previous year. Another was the very high proportion of pupils having a statement of special educational needs, and the third was the very low attainment of a significant minority of pupils who joined the group during the academic year. The targets which had been set at the beginning of Year 5, for these pupils, were missed in both English and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that the present Year 6 group of pupils, which again has an above average proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register, has average attainment in English but below average attainment in mathematics and science. The school has set very challenging targets for this present group of Year 6 pupils but the much improved monitoring, assessment and support systems in the school are helping to increase the attainment of this group of pupils and eliminate the past differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Teacher assessment, which is borne out by inspection evidence, shows significant improvement in the proportion of pupils working at the higher levels in English and mathematics compared to the previous year.
- 3 In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils, attainment was average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the results were above average in reading and below average in mathematics and writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels increased significantly in reading, went up slightly in mathematics, but as in 2001, no pupils achieved the higher level in writing. However, these results do not tell the whole story. After the disappointing results in 2001 for Year 2 pupils, the school brought in far more stringent assessment procedures in reading, writing and mathematics and made the raising of the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 its principal aim. This was a successful initiative. For example, when compared to similar schools, the proportion of Year 2 pupils in 2002 who achieved the expected Level 2 was well above average in mathematics, above average in writing and average in reading. There was also a significant improvement in boys' attainment in reading and writing where boys greatly increased the percentages achieving above average standards. However, the overall proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics is still too low, and this is the principal reason why pupils' overall attainment in these two subjects is still well below average when compared to all schools nationally.
- 4 Evidence from the inspection shows that the improvement has continued and attainment for the present Year 2 group of pupils is average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing and science. The principal reason for the below average attainment in these two subjects is the low proportion of pupils working at the higher levels.
- 5 Children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below that expected of children of a similar age. The attainment of a minority of boys is particularly low. Children's individual needs are well met by all the teaching and support staff and by the time they leave the reception class all children have made good improvements, with the majority having social skills that are close to expectations and well developed movement skills. In all other areas attainment is below what is generally expected. Current achievements are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection because children's standards on entry to the school are lower and children begin the school younger than they used to.

- 6 Inspection findings show that standards in English are average at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 2 are average in reading but below average in writing. In speaking and listening Year 2 pupils are below expectations, despite the marked improvement they have made since they joined the nursery. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils' skills meet expectations, mainly because teachers build good relationships with the pupils, giving them the encouragement and confidence to take a full part in lesson discussions. Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. Teachers work hard and successfully to improve pupils' reading confidence and instil in them a love of books. By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving the expected standards, with higher attaining pupils achieving good standards and confidently reading text to the class. The general standard of reading has improved through the school because pupils who do have particular weaknesses receive regular additional support. Pupils make good progress in their writing, as this is a target area in the present School Improvement Plan. As a result of this targeting and the introduction of focused writing sessions, pupils are making noticeable progress in all classes. However, standards are still below average in Year 2 but, by the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils are achieving the standards expected nationally, with the higher achieving pupils showing good skills in the use of paragraphs, grammar and vocabulary.
- 7 Pupils make progress in mathematics through the school and standards have risen since the last inspection. The attainment in Year 2 is now in line with national averages, but is below average for pupils at the end of Year 6. The main reasons for the improvement are the better use of assessment, the very good support given by teaching assistants to groups of pupils experiencing difficulties, and the clear identification and sharing of the lesson's objectives. Consequently, all pupils have a clear idea of what they are going to learn. In Years 3 to 6 the use of grouping by ability in Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 is ensuring pupils of all abilities are successfully challenged and extra support given to those experiencing difficulties. The profile of mathematics has been raised by the creation of an early morning mathematics group for higher attaining pupils.
- 8 Pupils' attainment in science is below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This shows that standards have been maintained in Year 2 but have improved in Year 6 since the last inspection. Much of the pupils' learning derives from carefully planned practical work and investigations. This makes pupils enthusiastic about the subject, which is often carefully linked with aspects of pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils' design and technology work was closely linked to their work on the human body, whilst Years 3 and 4 work on making a burglar alarm made good use of pupils' knowledge of electrical circuits. Although an above average proportion of pupils is expected to gain the expected level, there is a below average proportion of pupils working at the higher levels. Inspection evidence shows that work that is more challenging is now being set for these pupils and that the proportion will increase. Whilst pupils make good progress in developing their scientific vocabulary, they have too few opportunities to use this knowledge in explaining the results of their investigations. Pupils work hard in lessons and produce a good amount of work but there are not always enough opportunities for lower achieving pupils to finish their work. As a result, some investigations are not completed and pupils' learning is restricted.
- 9 Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection and pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is higher than that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress through the school. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop a good knowledge of holy books and have an increasing awareness of the similarities of different religions. Careful planning by teachers in Years 3 to 6 enables all pupils to learn about a wide range of different world religions. Good opportunities for discussion help pupils to explore issues such as caring for others and how faith and belief in a deity changes peoples' lives.
- 10 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident in the use of the mouse and keyboard for a range of purposes. They have satisfactory word processing skills and illustrate stories by using an art program. Year 6 pupils are confident when they use the internet to support their learning in other subjects. Higher attaining pupils are confident in the use of control and are developing appropriate skills in multi media work.
- 11 Standards at the end of Year 2 in design and technology, geography and music have remained in line with national expectations as they were at the time of the last inspection. Consistently good teaching in physical education has led to improved pupil attainment that is now above national

expectations. Pupils' attainment in history and art and design has been maintained overall and is in line with national expectations.

- 12 By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in geography and physical education and in line with national expectations in all other subjects. This represents an improvement in pupils' attainment in design and technology and physical education, and the maintaining of standards in music, history, geography and art and design. Pupils' attainment in design and technology, which was a key issue at the time of the last inspection, has risen because of the improved quality of teaching and a cohesive curriculum which clearly outlines what pupils are to learn in each year. The very good range of extra curricular sporting clubs has a positive impact on pupils' attainment in physical education.
- 13 Pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are developed well through the curriculum. There are good opportunities for them to develop literacy skills in a range of subjects, including science, geography, history, design and technology and religious education. There is also careful planning by teachers to develop pupils' numeracy skills. This is evident in science, design and technology and history. Through this careful planning, teachers create meaningful opportunities for pupils to use both their mathematical and English skills in different contexts.
- 14 The level of attainment of pupils who have special educational needs is low. Their progress is good overall and an improvement since the previous inspection. The well targeted programmes give a greater than usual amount of support. In some cases these contribute to very good progress, for instance the mathematics booster groups last year brought all the pupils into the expected Level 2 category. The pupils with emotional and behavioural needs also make very good progress, because the school is so effective at building up confidence, self esteem and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils for whom English is not their first language are again given good support and make good progress in developing their basic literacy skills so that they can take a full and active part in all lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 15 The previous report stated that pupils' attitudes and personal development were satisfactory, whilst their behaviour was mainly good. Despite the school admitting some pupils with potentially challenging behaviour, it has improved many of these features, due to its focus on behaviour management and the staff's skills and confidence. Presently, pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are all at a good level. The school has very high expectations of the behaviour of all its pupils, and makes no concessions to many pupils' disadvantaged backgrounds. More parents are realising that the school is becoming a happy inclusive place, and that the school's behaviour management techniques are having a positive effect on their children.
- 16 Pupils who have special educational needs in the area of learning basic skills, and those with behavioural difficulties, have a positive attitude to learning. They have built up very good relationships with teachers and support staff. As a result they usually concentrate as well as their peers, and try hard to present their work neatly, and behave well. They love the more practical subjects such as art and design and design and technology. They are free to explore their ideas and achieve the all important success, which helps them develop a positive self image. However, a significant number of pupils with special educational needs has irregular attendance at school.
- 17 Many nursery children have good attitudes and behaviour, although their social and speaking skills are well below average for their age. Initially, they take time to adjust to their spacious surroundings, and many lack independence in their personal needs. They soon start to trust the sensitive staff and gain confidence to participate more easily in the daily routines. They cooperate in new activities, develop more social skills, and play together with increasing enjoyment. They are generally fascinated and wide eyed at the rich agenda of good teaching and learning, for example, taking turns in either the play house or watering the garden. In the reception class, attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, as many children, and particularly boys, are restless, and can exhibit challenging behaviour or lose concentration. In the early years classes, most children's limited speaking abilities are evident, and their insufficient vocabulary inhibits them in expressing themselves clearly, except in shouting out answers when they become excited. Overall, the school's early years provision gives a good foundation for the pupils' later school lives.

- 18 Although a small minority of pupils is sometimes late, the great majority of pupils arrives calmly and is happy to attend school. Most pupils wear the school uniform with obvious pride. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have good attitudes, which can often be very good when they are enthused and motivated by very good teaching or the very good range of extra curricular activities. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, listen well, are responsive, and are interested in learning. However, some pupils, and boys in particular, can exhibit signs of tiredness which affects their concentration and retention of facts. Pupils settle quickly to independent work, and show perseverance and enthusiasm. By Year 6, many pupils have made the connection that hard work will produce improving results, and work hard to make good progress against their own targets.
- 19 The behaviour of the pupils throughout the school is good and closely mirrors their attitudes to school in general. There are occasional incidences of poorer behaviour in Year 3 and 4 classes, but teachers' management of behaviour, and an increasing awareness of self discipline by pupils, allows teaching and learning to take place without tension. Behaviour around the school is usually good, and allows the school to function as a calm and well ordered society, with assemblies that have a rich positive ethos. Any incidents of poor behaviour are closely monitored and systematically analysed by the senior management team. They show a decline, after the departure of some boys, with challenging behaviour, during the last year. Although bullying, racial incidents or swearing were not evident during the inspection, the school is aware that these can occasionally rise to the surface and are associated with a small minority of individual pupils. The school has used exclusions during the last year to counter the poor behaviour of a small number of boys; exclusions have reduced to zero during the present academic year.
- 20 The quality of relationships is good and improving under the strong teamwork of the school staff. Although it is early in the academic year, staff pupil relationships are often very good, and pupils depend on, and value, the trust, empathy and care that they are given. The relationships between pupils are generally good, and there are obvious friendships being forged across the school. Occasionally, relationships can be limited by the pupils' experiences outside the school, or by their lack of interpersonal social skills. In the classroom, pupils are developing their abilities to listen to each other, even when speaking ability is limited. In all classes, and during assemblies, pupils are given opportunities to value each other's opinions and qualities. Pupils cooperate well in groups to attain an effective outcome and they share resources sensitively. Older pupils look after younger pupils at lunchtimes as part of the school's buddy system, and older pupils and younger pupils within mixed age classes work well together in pairs, in lessons such as information and communication technology. Pupils are inquisitive and welcoming to visitors, and are generally very courteous. Boys and girls eat and play amicably together, but many boys are often preoccupied by football to the exclusion of girls.
- 21 The personal development of the pupils is good throughout their time in school. The school has prioritised building pupils' self esteem, and they are given time to reflect on fundamental principles and values, and demonstrate their work either in assemblies or in classrooms. The high quality formal personal health and social education, with work on friendship and special people in their lives, supports them well. Staff represent positive role models for both pupils and parents alike, to maintain continuous encouragement for pupils at home and school. 'Caldecott star pupils' are actively seen helping around the school at the start of the day and before assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to think of others worse off than themselves through a range of charities that leads to a caring society. The school council is impressive in discussing significant issues and empowering pupils with 'ownership' of the school. Many pupils are developing a sense of moral and social awareness that will equip them well for the next stage of their education, and is also helping to moderate the challenging behaviour of some. Although the school's appreciation of citizenship themes requires further development, it has a good relationship with local community police officer. Older pupils maintain the environment of the site well through litter picking, whilst most pupils respect the school's resources. From the nursery onwards, pupils tidy their classrooms eagerly, and cloakrooms and public access areas are clean. Pupils have a real pride in the presentation of their work.
- 22 Since the last inspection, attendance rates have declined from their former high levels, but have remained consistently above the national average. Although, the overall levels of attendance are satisfactory in all year groups, approximately one in seven pupils has an attendance rate of less than 90 per cent. There is a high coincidence of pupils with poor attendance having either special

educational needs or a recognised home crisis. Poor attendance is associated more with boys than girls. Unauthorised absence has increased in the last two years, and is just above national norms. Holidays taken in term time are a significant reason for authorised absence. The school receives a good level of support from the educational welfare service. The recent truancy sweep in the town showed that there was zero school truancy over the period. Some pupils find it difficult to come to school on time, but this does not affect a smooth start to the school day. Punctuality throughout the rest of the day is satisfactory. Registers are completed in a statutory manner and the registration period is carried out courteously and efficiently, providing a settling and calming period for all pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 23 The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall and this equates closely to the good progress that pupils make as they move through the school. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with a significant proportion being very good or excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. The most significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection is the way in which teachers monitor and assess pupils' progress as they move through the school. This is leading to a better match and challenge of work for the pupils. It results in pupils of all abilities and backgrounds being successfully challenged in their learning as they move through the school.
- 24 Teaching, as at the time of the last inspection, is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers and teaching assistants know their children well and provide a rich and varied range of learning opportunities for them. As a result, children achieve well, are enthusiastic learners and have good relationships with each other and with the adults. Staff make good use of assessment to measure children's progress and to plan new activities which build on children's strengths and address their weaknesses. All staff build close relationships with parents and carers who are kept very well informed about their child's achievements. This enables all concerned to work closely together in the children's best interests. Good use is made of the well equipped and specifically designed outdoor area and the activities provided lead to children making good gains, particularly in their physical and personal, social and emotional development.
- 25 Teaching in English is now good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy, together with good quality monitoring of teaching and learning, has enabled the school to make considerable improvements in pupils' attainment. The good use of assessment helps teachers to identify pupils who need extra support and provides carefully planned work to address their weaknesses. The teachers' good use of additional sessions outside the literacy hour is enabling them to focus specifically on pupils' writing skills. Teachers have high expectations, which are shared at the beginning of every lesson, and activities planned are challenging and interesting. The teaching of basic skills, particularly in letters and their sounds is helping to raise pupils' standards in reading. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and clearly outline how individual pupils can improve their work.
- 26 Good teaching standards in mathematics have been maintained in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection and the quality of teaching has improved in Years 3 to 6. The National Numeracy Strategy has improved teachers' planning and there are no longer any inconsistencies in the different age groups. Lessons are structured carefully so that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged. The short plenary at the end of each lesson provides a useful opportunity for summarising and sometimes extending pupils' learning. Much greater use is now made of good quality assessment to track pupils' progress and to analyse pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The latter are addressed in teachers' subsequent planning. The present combination of assessment and planning informing well targeted teaching is raising standards through the school and making mathematics, for many pupils, one of their favourite subjects.
- 27 Teaching is consistently good in science and the quality has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the area of teachers' subject knowledge. Much improved planning, allied to a commitment to learning through investigations is producing enthusiastic scientists who work hard in lessons because of their interest in the subject. A careful analysis of last year's Year 2 and Year 6 assessment and tests has given the school an accurate insight into how teachers' planning can develop strengths and address pupils' weaknesses. Strengths are well built on by teachers setting work that is more challenging and this is leading to an increase in the proportion of pupils

scoring the higher levels. The weaknesses are addressed by the careful planning and extra support from the teacher or teaching assistant. The teaching of science is also enhanced when pupils make relevant links with other subjects such as art and design, design and technology, numeracy and literacy. This makes the learning more relevant for the pupils, whilst consolidating their skills in other subjects.

- 28 The teaching of information and communication technology is good. Teachers now have a much greater understanding of the different programs and a greater confidence to teach the subject than at the time of the last inspection. Because of this, the progress in lessons is good and pupils are highly motivated. Teachers' planning has improved because they plan from a good quality scheme of work and have received well focused training to ensure all aspects of this curriculum are taught at the appropriate levels. Whilst pupils' skills are carefully developed in lessons, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across other areas of the curriculum.
- 29 Good standards in the teaching of religious education have been maintained since the last inspection in Years 1 and 2, with the quality of teaching improving in Years 3 to 6. This consistently good quality teaching has a positive impact on the development of pupils' skills and is leading to enthusiastic learners who use their knowledge of the subject to explore everyday issues, such as faith and leadership. Good quality planning enables teachers to build carefully on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and leads to a good rate of learning and above average standards. Teachers make effective links with literacy by encouraging pupils to read and write carefully and take part in a range of discussions. Pupils are expected to listen to each other and this helps pupils to value the opinions of others: thus making a positive contribution to their personal development.
- 30 In all other subjects, teaching is good, leading to pupils making good progress across the curriculum. During the inspection, some very good teaching was observed in history and physical education. This resulted in pupils making very good progress and achieving high standards, of which they were justifiably proud. Teachers' planning is consistently good and clearly identifies what pupils are to learn during each lesson. These objectives are shared with pupils under the acronym WALT (we are learning to.....) and this gives them a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. Teachers have high expectations of the amount of work that pupils are to cover in lessons and, as a result, pupils produce a good volume of work, which gives them sufficient opportunities to practise their skills. Occasionally, the slower working pupil does not always have opportunities to finish the work and, as a result, the teacher does not have a clear understanding of how well a new concept has been understood.
- 31 Teachers know their pupils well and the different approaches they employ create an enthusiasm for learning and a desire to succeed. This was clearly seen in an excellent Year 6 drama lesson, where the teacher's well timed intervention had a very positive impact on pupils' confidence and the development of the story line. Teachers have good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and use the information well in their future planning. For example, in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, which revised elements of the previous day's work, which pupils had not fully understood at the time. Pupils are expected to behave well during lessons and listen carefully. This results in lessons having a good pace with very little time being wasted on the disciplining of pupils. Occasionally when the pace of lessons drops, such as in a Year 5/6 science lesson, pupils' concentration wanes and they do not achieve their full potential.
- 32 There are very good relationships between teaching assistants and teachers. Teachers make very good use of the skills of the well trained assistants who give good quality support to individuals and groups of pupils. This has a significant impact on the progress of groups of pupils who encounter this support. Homework is set regularly and has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning. The quality of marking is consistently good through the school. It is encouraging and regularly informs pupils what they need to do to improve their work. It has a clear impact on the progress that pupils make through the school.
- 33 Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated into their classes and, because of the good support they receive, have the opportunity to experience the full curriculum. Teachers make good efforts to promote these pupils' learning in general and the acquisition of English in particular.

- 34 The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when some inconsistency was observed. The staff as a whole are committed to the school's ideals of giving the best deal to all pupils. Whilst pupils make good overall progress, teachers sometimes miss opportunities in lessons to develop pupils' learning that is targeted on their individual education plans. However, teachers use questioning and support very effectively to encourage the pupils and help them feel included in the class activities. They give them many opportunities to experience success in front of their peers. Strategies such as 'star of the day' help pupils feel valued and proud of their achievements. The teachers communicate well with the support assistants to ensure that pupils get the maximum benefit from the work planned. The assistants work tirelessly both in the classroom, and in the very wide range of booster groups, to ensure good, practical learning conditions for the pupils. The part time support teachers also have very good relationships with their pupils. This allows them to approach their learning in a relaxed manner, and explore a deeper level of understanding.

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

- 35 In providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum in all subjects, the school is offering a good range of learning opportunities for all its pupils. The adoption and modification of national schemes of work have improved planning and there is a clear programme of policy review. The curriculum successfully meets all statutory requirements including religious education and personal, social and health education. The appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy has not detracted from the delivery of the wider education achieved through all the other National Curriculum subjects. Teachers in the different years work hard to provide balanced curricular opportunities for their classes. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
- 36 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced effectively across the school, and pupils use these skills well in other subjects. This cross curricular work is carefully planned by the teachers and has contributed to improvements in all years, with noticeable improvements in writing. Since the previous inspection the provision for information and communication technology has improved and this has led to improved standards. The school is aware of the need for further development of the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The new computer suite, together with additional subject resources and additional planned training and external support will place the school in a strong position to address this.
- 37 The school has made a considerable effort to develop a personal social and health education programme which includes sex education and attention to drug misuse. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good and class discussions during 'Circle Time' make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The overall provision is very good and is leading directly to positive relationships, which are a defining feature of the school's ethos. This helps to make the school a happy and harmonious place.
- 38 The school provides equality of access for all pupils and has introduced setting in order to match work more closely to pupils' needs in English and maths. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are well supported and they are successfully integrated into class groupings. Teaching assistants provide focused support to ensure that pupils of all abilities are supported, included and valued. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school offers a wider than usual range of support programmes. The planning for these is consistent right through the school from the earliest years. The very good level of communication between all the adults involved ensures effective continuity across all years, and into the senior schools. The curriculum is successfully adapted to meet a whole range of precisely identified needs. For instance the setting arrangements for English and mathematics have a positive impact on the quality and pace of learning for the less academic pupils. The teachers are now more skilled at matching work to ability groups within the years and the sets. The larger number of boys on the register is one effective way the school is tackling the lower performance of boys overall.
- 39 The school has made the conscious decision to emphasise the focus on supporting the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This involves some disturbance in other lessons, as pupils move

from group to group. The situation is carefully monitored, and the benefits are weighed against the disadvantages. The pupils' individual education plans have improved since the previous inspection. They are more accurate and specify clearer support activities. They are still not as precise as the coordinator wants them to be. They do not, for example, specify short term time scales or identify how progress towards each target is to be measured. The special needs action plan addresses these issues and links them to further staff training.

- 40 The curriculum is well organised, there is an effective curriculum map giving an overview of what is taught in subjects and therefore, continuity and progression are a developing feature. Schemes of work and responsive planning have been introduced to offer pupils equality of provision in classes in each year group. This ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are successfully developed as they move through the school. There is a programme of systematic monitoring of teaching and learning resulting in focused targeted learning. The school has good systems for assessing and monitoring pupil progress. Pupils are systematically tracked and the analysis of data provides a clear diagnosis of issues enabling specific pupil support to be implemented. The school has developed strong links with the community and these, together with high quality support from governors, have made an important contribution to the pupils' learning. The school takes an active part in the community, through visiting local churches, holding special services and supporting local charities. It has a close working partnership with the local town primary schools and the three secondary schools to which most Year 6 pupils transfer. It also has close links with a 'beacon school' which has worked with some staff on the delivery of the curriculum.
- 41 The school has a very good range of activities outside lessons. A wide range of extra curricular activities from table tennis, football, hockey to chess and choir provides something for pupils of all ages and abilities, whilst supporting their musical and physical development. The curriculum is also enriched by educational visits to places of historical and cultural interest directly linked to curriculum topics. These are successful and contribute to the pupils' personal, social and spiritual development as well as providing learning in other subjects of the curriculum, including history and geography.
- 42 Overall, the school has a very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of its pupils. Since the last inspection the school has strengthened the spiritual, moral and social provisions from sound to very good levels. The cultural provision remains at an overall satisfactory level. These aspects permeate all parts of the school and are in tune with the school's aims. They are an undoubted strength and are helping pupils to develop physically, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally, and cope with the challenging influences and distractions that many have experienced previously. Pupils are being given a solid foundation for the next stage of education and eventually as good citizens.
- 43 For many pupils, the school's very good spiritual provision is identified through their perceptions of the school as a haven of calmness and security where they can make real non threatening friends and where they can explore values and beliefs which have not been evident in their lives previously. Although the school is mostly self sufficient in providing spiritual opportunities for pupils, it is building a number of relationships with local churches, including the Abingdon Community Church. In the classroom, pupils are given opportunities to gain insights into the values and beliefs of the principal faiths. There is an appropriate balance between secular and spiritual issues in assemblies, and pupils are given sufficient time for prayer and reflection on issues of friendship and working together. The school has taken time with pupils to try to make sense of bereavement, both in school, and externally with consideration of the New York Twin Towers, and the death of the Queen Mother. The pupils' spiritual development receives a rich extension through gentle questioning and personal, social and health education lessons, with themes of special people in our lives and the family. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and are often fascinated by new learning, whether in the nursery when tending the garden, or in Year 6 when working on Ancient Egypt. Staff are conscious of many pupils' bruising experiences to date and reinforce pupils' family identity and self esteem respectfully and with total trust.
- 44 The school's very good moral provision is evident throughout the school day, both in lessons and in the playground, and reinforced by the personal example provided by the headteacher and staff. Rules and class targets are well displayed in classrooms, and most pupils have an understanding of the boundaries within the school, and the need for self discipline, without feeling a loss of independence. Many moral issues are developed through assemblies or personal and social

education in classes. Pupils frankly discussed concepts of poor behaviour with the inspectors, and are happy to be in a school where they can 'get on with their work.' The School Council is very conscious of its capacity for moral leadership and displays a strong pride in the school.

- 45 Increasingly good relationships are a developing strength of the school, and these greatly assist the school's very good social provision. The school has a real sense of a busy, inclusive community through its assemblies, lunchtimes, clubs and activities. There is a positive emphasis on care, tolerance and understanding that promotes socially acceptable attitudes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are fully integrated into the life of the classroom. Mixed age group classes allow older pupils to develop tolerance, share resources and help their younger classmates in lessons. This is a distinctive feature of school life. Pupils are learning to make friends warmly and easily, and there is visual evidence of friendships being forged. Pupils from year one worked well with pupils from the Kingfisher Special School, when they visited the school for physical education.
- 46 The provision for pupils' cultural development is, overall, satisfactory, but is better in appreciating local and European culture than multicultural topics. The vast majority of pupils have a white United Kingdom heritage, and they are given a good understanding of their own local culture through a range of activities within Abingdon, and local studies, including visits to local museums, that support the curriculum. European culture is increasingly well represented in the school through appreciation of artists and music, and a European Week. A number of pupils are participating in country and folk dancing and there is an enthusiastic choir. The school has participated in a recent musical production. The school has a racial equality and cultural diversity policy, and pupils learn about other cultures through topic work such as ancient Egypt and the Caribbean. The school is justifiably proud of its World Week. However, the resources contain insufficient multicultural books or artefacts, and displays are usually indicative of white monoculture. The school is beginning to develop an awareness of living in the culturally diverse society that is modern Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 47 The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good and have improved significantly since the last inspection when it was highlighted as a major weakness. The school has worked very hard to establish a good range of assessment strategies which teachers use effectively to support planning for classes, groups and individual pupils. The school is making good use of the local authority assessment and recording material, which is giving teachers a clear insight into the pupils' attainment, and the progress they are making as they move through the school.
- 48 Assessments are carried out soon after children start nursery and good use is made of results by teachers to plan appropriate work and help children in their areas of greatest need. This careful analysis also helps to identify, early on, those young children who may have problems with aspects of their learning. The school puts strong emphasis in meeting the needs of all children in its care, and a positive approach to allocating appropriate support begins in the nursery. The teachers and nursery nurse monitor pupils' progress very carefully and use the information to record the children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals¹. Teachers keep detailed records of what children do and how well they achieve and these are passed on to the children's new teachers.
- 49 The statutory national tests are administered as required, and the school uses the optional tests in Years 3 to 5, to help measure pupils' progress at the end of each year in English and mathematics. In all subjects, pupils are set end of year targets, with teachers making good use of assessments to measure pupils' progress towards these targets. This is an effective system to ensure pupils' progress is appropriate for their ability and that pupils are meeting their potential across all subjects. Assessment is used particularly well through the school to identify pupils who

¹ Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. Stepping stone are used to signify the children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The goals refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

need extra support with their learning. Last year, pupils were targeted in mathematics in Year 2 because of the previous year's very low results in the National Curriculum tests. By rigorous and regular monitoring of individual pupils' progress, teachers and support staff provided very carefully targeted support that was very successful in raising the mathematics attainment of these pupils. As this pilot was so successful, it is being applied this year from Years 2 to 6 in both English and mathematics. Evidence from the inspection shows that it is being very effective in raising attainment generally, but specifically in boys who are very quickly closing the attainment gap on girls. Pupils in last year's Year 6 classes benefited much from the 'booster' groups. The school has introduced these groups from the beginning of this school year as the evidence from the monitoring of last year's groups shows the very positive impact these groups had on those pupils' progress. The use of assessment to inform planning is well advanced through the school, and the school is making increasing use of an assessment manager program to monitor pupils' progress.

- 50 The good standard of care noted at the time of the previous inspection has been strengthened and is now very good. There are no unsatisfactory aspects. The school tailors its efforts to focus on the individual pupil, particularly where there are problems, and increasingly supports their learning and personal development. All pupils are well prepared for the next phase of education, and most parents appreciate the school's efforts.
- 51 The identification of pupils who are likely to experience learning difficulties starts at a suitably early stage, in the nursery class. As the pupils move from year to year, the school monitors their progress regularly. All the curriculum support programmes, sets and class grouping rest on a very strong base of careful assessment. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school is aware that the pupils' individual education and behaviour plans do not contain sufficiently detailed criteria to enable the staff to gauge the small steps of success achieved. The time scales for assessing progress are usually too long. The upgrading of the individual education plans is part of the special needs action plan. The school has good relationships with many specialist agencies. They support the school with training programmes for staff. The staff give pupils sensitive help, counselling and guidance in behaviour, and monitor their progress well. The school works hard to ensure all pupils, regardless of their needs are fully involved in the school's work and life. Accordingly, it is ensuring that the new building under construction fully caters for the needs of any disabled pupil who joins the school.
- 52 The headteacher and staff are very mindful of the disadvantaged sections of the community that they serve. Staff have a very thorough knowledge of their pupils and families. This is often promoted through the very close liaison with the on site family centre, and teaching assistants' long service and their knowledge of the local community. Staff work hard to provide a caring and stable environment for all pupils when at the school, and often into the community outside normal school hours. The newly started on site youth club is particularly effective in sustaining care and activities to under privileged pupils in the evening and during holidays. All staff realise the need to gain the confidence of parents, and they are proactive in engaging parents regarding the welfare of their children.
- 53 Overall, the monitoring of the personal development of pupils is satisfactory, but good within the early years. There are many sources of information on each pupil, but as yet, these have not been systematically coordinated into a total profile of the individual pupil. Procedures are informal and rely on individual teacher's records, rather than a whole school policy or approach. In the classroom, personal development targets are agreed with the class and are well displayed. Only where there are behavioural difficulties are individual personal development targets agreed with a pupil. The school reports on the personal development of pupils in the annual report to parents. Pupils with English as an additional language are effectively assessed, and outside professional agencies are involved appropriately.
- 54 The school has an extensive range of relevant and updated support, guidance and welfare policies, which guide its actions. These include policies for racial equality and internet safety. Policies are clear and concise and receive a consistent implementation across the school and with good understanding by all staff. The headteacher has been very proactive in gaining outside resources to assist pupils. The school is very welcoming to outside agencies who support the pupils on a routine basis, or if there are specific problems. Oxfordshire Emotional and Behavioural Outreach Department gives good support to pupils with behavioural problems. The School Nursing Service has a long and valuable relationship with the school. The nurse has become involved in many

areas of health education, sex education and staff training. The whole community has worked together to achieve a Healthy Schools Award. The education social worker makes a valuable contribution, whilst the police have a sensitive relationship with the school.

- 55 Child protection procedures are good, and the school discharges its responsibilities conscientiously and often bravely. The school is very vigilant in this aspect, through the determination of the headteacher and the support of outside agencies. The headteacher has received recent external training, and although many teachers are experienced, they would benefit from in service training. New staff are acquainted in the procedures through their coordinators and the staff handbook. The school does not display the Childline number.
- 56 Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good and a fundamental pillar of the school's caring agenda. There is a strong focus on raising all pupils' self esteem and raising levels of mutual respect. There is a rigorous definition of the systems and procedures that maintain an effective balance between sanctions and rewards and these are fairly and consistently applied by staff. The school has been clear that it needs to reward consistently good behaviour, through its Caldecott star pupils and the 'weekend bear', as well as reward pupil's transient good behaviour. In the classroom there has been a joint development of rules. Many pupils know the boundaries of the positive behaviour culture, and understand the need for self discipline and the personal responsibility that is required. The headteacher and staff have been effective in detecting poor behaviour, and the senior management team has taken the lead in monitoring the challenging behaviour and bullying of a small group of pupils within the school. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are now showing a downward trend after an upsurge in the last academic year.
- 57 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. They produce a consistently satisfactory outcome from many families with distracting social problems. The school has developed a strong focus on attendance and punctuality issues, through the headteacher's determination, agency support, and an adequate level of rewards. The school prospectus and newsletters make positive statements to parents regarding their statutory obligations on attendance and in term holidays. The school administration makes good use of proforma letters to contact parents, and procedures can include the telephoning of parents or home visits from the headteacher, when there are recurrent or ongoing absences. The school makes good use of the computerised analyses to detect trends in pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- 58 The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, and this is particularly evident, even during the present on site building works. Health and safety procedures are good under the guidance of the headteacher and a very knowledgeable governor, with inspections being undertaken regularly. A few minor health and safety points have been fed back to the school for review. There is a satisfactory complement of qualified first aiders. Pupils are being acquainted with health and safety principles in the home and at school, through the school's personal health and social education provision, and at the commencement of lessons, where necessary. The school administration utilises information technology well to update all pupil information and this is sufficiently accurate and detailed to support medical emergencies.
- 59 The school has good relationships with the local secondary schools and pupils' and parents' anxieties are minimised through a sufficient number of visits before transfer. A teaching assistant from the school escorted a pupil with special educational needs on his first two days of transfer to a local secondary school. Admission procedures to the school are good, and parents and pupils are allowed to gain a good awareness of school routines.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 60 There has been an improvement in the school's partnership with parents. Parents view the school as a good school in which their children are making good progress. The school is very aware of the importance of encouraging parental support, but despite its best endeavours, it is not always successful in engaging all parents in a positive partnership for the advantage of their children. Presently, most aspects of the parental partnership are at least good for those parents that wish to have a meaningful relationship with the school. However, the contribution of parents to their children's learning is only satisfactory overall.

- 61 One in six parents responded to the parents' questionnaire and ten parents attended the meeting before the inspection. When their views are assessed in conjunction with a substantial number of interviews with individual parents at the school gate, it can be seen that parents' satisfaction levels have substantially improved, and are now at an overall good level. Dissatisfaction levels have reduced as parents have recognised the quality of the school's provision, and mutual respect has developed as a fundamental pillar of school life. There are no areas of significant dissatisfaction, but homework has a conspicuously high level of dissatisfaction. After a scrutiny by the inspectors, it was judged that the school's provision in this area is satisfactory.
- 62 Parents feel the school is approachable and that they can have a meaningful dialogue with teachers, particularly in the early years and lower school. The headteacher and staff work hard with parents where there are problems, such as special educational needs or personal crises in the community. They are greatly assisted in their efforts in integrating parents, often as helpers, through the work of the family centre. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in the procedures and are kept well informed. Satisfactory individual educational plans are produced, with targets, which lead to these pupils making good progress and most parents attend the important annual review meetings. Parents are very pleased with the effort put in to support the special pupils. The school wants a closer link with parents to help make its work with special pupils even more effective. Initiatives such as the 'family literacy' groups are popular with the parents involved, and very effective in developing the children's confidence, relationships and attitude to learning.
- 63 The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is generally good and particularly for the small core of parents who are regular helpers. Although the school lacks a full complement of parent governors, the present elected governors are dedicated and enthusiastic and make a substantial contribution. A small number of parent helpers assist in the school and at the new Youth Club. The Friends of Caldecott School have great energy in contributing time and effort to running many events, raising significant funds, and integrating a majority of parents into fun experiences within this happy school.
- 64 The quality of information for parents is now good. The language and style of all communications are accessible for the many parents, and the school is sensitive to parents with literacy difficulties. The aims of the school are well focused on the needs of children from disadvantaged communities and make direct reference to parents and the home. However, the school would benefit from a parent policy. The school prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are good quality documents, which contain all the points of statutory information and indicate that the school values its parents. Induction procedures are good in the early years, and there are well planned procedures for parents whose children are joining later. The school has a good range of policies and procedures, and parents would benefit if these were displayed in the school. Other written communications are sufficient and respectful to the role of parents, and give them sufficient time to react. The pupils' annual reports for parents are good and give recognisable feedback on how well pupils are doing. There is, however, insufficient space for parent or pupil feedback. Communications through notice boards should be reviewed to offer a real focal point for the celebration or projection of the school's ethos for parents or visitors to the school.
- 65 The growth of the educational partnership is satisfactory, but too many parents give a low priority to education. The majority of parents have signed the home school agreement, but a minority of parents does not comply in helping the school to improve its attendance and punctuality performance levels, despite the zealous efforts of the headteacher. The school runs adult family literacy programmes involving parents and pupils. As part of the mini 'Sure Start' initiative, funding has been gained for the implementation of the 'Peers Early Education Partnership' programme. The school has tried to gain the interest of parents in National Curriculum tests, and literacy and numeracy evenings, but these and the annual governors' meeting for parents are only attended by a small core of dedicated parents. Class assemblies and information evenings to discuss pupils' progress are well supported by parents. Parents receive good advice from the school at the time of transfer to secondary school, and this minimises parental anxieties.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 66 Excellent leadership is provided by the headteacher who is ably assisted by her knowledgeable deputy. She is also very well supported in all her work by her hard working staff and supportive and

knowledgeable governors. The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection and much of this is due to the headteacher's vision, drive, determination and a wealth of ideas that have helped to considerably improve the standards that were described in the last inspection report. She is keenly aware of her own strengths and uses the skills of others to very good effect. All the staff in the school work very well as a team. Collectively they have a very good combination of skills and as such provide a very strong team that has a very good capacity to build further on the improvements that have been made.

- 67 The governors have improved in all aspects of their work since the last inspection and now provide very good leadership in helping the school move forwards. The linking of governors with an individual subject has made them more keenly aware of the strengths and weaknesses within the school. The knowledge is shared effectively with the full governing body, which is now in a far stronger position to challenge the headteacher on aspects of the school's work. The roles of committees are very well defined and there is effective delegation to these committees. The committee structure has been strengthened by a new strategy group, which is working closely with the school in ensuring that the new extension will fully meet the needs of the younger pupils. Overall, governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses and play a significant role in the drawing up of the School Improvement Plan and a far more proactive role in helping in its evaluation.
- 68 The role of subject coordinators is now good and has been considerably strengthened since the last inspection. It is one of the principal reasons for the consistently good progress that pupils make through the school and for the improvements in attainment in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher has judged aptitudes very well and gives very good encouragement to all those with subject coordinator responsibility. There is very effective delegation for the standards and resourcing in individual subjects, with the headteacher having very effective systems in place to maintain a watching brief over this work. Since the headteacher joined the school two years ago, she has quite rightly concentrated on raising standards, particularly in the core subjects. Very effective monitoring by the headteacher and coordinators and challenging targets for individual pupils are helping to drive up standards. The much improved monitoring and assessment of individual pupils is helping to ensure that all pupils are appropriately supported, particularly in numeracy and literacy. The monitoring of teaching carried out by the headteacher has addressed individual teacher weaknesses and has raised the quality of teaching in the classroom. However, more could be done to share the very good practice that exists in the school so that the quality of education continues to improve.
- 69 The school has made very good improvements since the previous inspection. All areas highlighted at the time of the last inspection have been successfully addressed. As a result, standards in information and communication technology and design technology now meet national expectations. The quality of teaching has increased considerably because of a combination of well focused monitoring by the headteacher and subject coordinators and a much improved curriculum, which clearly identifies what pupils are to learn in each year. All school developments are driven by a comprehensive School Improvement Plan, which correctly identifies the priorities, which will develop the school further. These priorities derive from careful evaluations which make good use of the school's data on pupils' progress. The school has rightly concentrated on improving the school's performance with single year plans. A planned move to a detailed single year plan fitted into a longer term strategic plan will give greater shape to the school's long term development. The school's effective and well established performance management system is closely tied to the improvement plan priorities and is ensuring that initiatives are appropriately supported by carefully targeted training and well directed resources.
- 70 Clear improvements have also been made in areas that were not specifically highlighted as weaknesses in the last inspection. Fundamental to these is the high quality of leadership which has speeded up the rate of improvement in many areas of the school's work. As a result, improvements in teaching pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour, and the relationship with parents all combine to improve the overall quality of education that the school provides.
- 71 The school aims are highly appropriate and are extremely well incorporated into the school's daily life. The school aims to highlight the opportunities for pupils to achieve their full potential, academically, morally and socially, and to have a caring and responsible attitude towards others,

regardless of race or background, and the environment in which they live. The development of a positive self image, an ability to work independently and cooperatively and the full encouragement of pupils to take part in the rich variety of extra curricular activities are constantly reflected in the work of the school and in its future developments. Consequently the school has a very happy, disciplined and purposeful atmosphere where all pupils are valued, fully included in all its activities and challenged appropriately.

- 72 The number of teaching staff is larger than usually found, since the school has additional part time teachers. Their qualifications have been upgraded by well targeted in service courses to match their assigned leadership roles. For instance, their expertise in design technology and information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection. Classroom support staff are well deployed to meet the school's aims for quality provision for special needs pupils. The midday staff contribute significantly to the calm atmosphere at lunchtimes. The school office is the good humoured hub of school life, and a sterling support to the headteacher.
- 73 Accommodation is satisfactory, and used flexibly to enhance the learning opportunities of pupils. Teachers have worked hard to create a bright, cheerful learning environment, with effective displays celebrating pupils' academic and creative work. A committed caretaker and cleaning staff keep the building in a clean and orderly condition. Pupils and adults are looking forward to the completion of the new building. This will bring the whole school together and be more in keeping with its family ethos. The new building will bring the benefit of new facilities, for instance a larger, better ventilated computer suite.
- 74 Learning resources overall are satisfactory. They have a considerable impact on effective teaching and learning. In some subjects the coordinators have built up the resources to give pupils an even better quality of direct experience. For instance in art and design, the range of equipment and media gives pupils a wider scope for exploration and design.
- 75 The school aims for excellence in its provision for special educational needs. Under the inspiring leadership of the new headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator is empowered to set the provision on a secure footing to meet the requirements of the new Code of Practice. She has established tangible and cheerful teamwork, committed to the progress of the school's pupils with special educational needs. This is important because the very complex timetable for the support assistants can only work with the goodwill of all concerned. It is operating effectively, and ensures that the expertise of the staff is in the right place at the right time, ready to begin interacting with pupils from the start of lessons. The administration of the paperwork is very effective. However, using a more efficient computer based information handling and progress tracking system could reduce the burden of this. There is more than the usual amount of monitoring to be done and cost effective decisions to be made because of the wide range of the school's support arrangements.
- 76 The headteacher is well supported in her task of planning the school's finances by the chair of the finance committee and the school bursar service. Financial planning is good, and the comprehensively defined annual educational priorities are well supported by rigorous procedures. The school is taking a cautious view of the number of pupils on roll in the next three years, due to demographic factors beyond its control, but the school finances are not at risk in the short or medium term.
- 77 Financial planning is theoretically driven by the School Improvement Plan, which is produced by the headteacher and governors after appropriate conversations with staff. It is a comprehensive one year action plan with clear costing. It supports the annual budget process well and all educational priorities have measurable outcomes and timescales.
- 78 The carefully planned annual budgets are the cornerstone of the school's financial planning. There is good involvement of curriculum coordinators in bidding for resources for educational priorities. The school complies with the local educational authority financial regulations and controls. Although the last auditors' report was over five years ago, corrective measures have been implemented on the points raised. The effective school administration, which is well assisted by the school bursar service, greatly facilitates the smooth running of the school, and allows the headteacher to maximise her input into the school. There is a good understanding of the use of computers in the office environment, with a developing application of various packages to support educational monitoring and attendance. The application of information technology in the remainder

of the school is developing, through a satisfactory computer suite, but is less well developed in classrooms to support subjects of the national curriculum.

- 79 When compared with other schools, the income and expenditure per pupil are slightly above average. The school has operated with cash balances, which are outside national guidelines, due in part to excess caution in financial planning by the headteacher and governors, and restraint on the expenditure on buildings, soon to be made redundant. Much of the carry forward has been earmarked for the development of the new information and communication technology suite and the networking of classrooms. The headteacher has made determined and resourceful efforts to attract grants, and these have been very successful for building and future educational initiatives. The special educational needs budget is carefully spent and is further supported by the school so that pupils make good progress.
- 80 The school gives good consideration to the principles of best value through the work of the headteacher; the governors' finance committee and the school administrator. It carefully considers its pupils' attainment in comparison to other schools, has very open channels with parents and receives very good support from them, particularly in the way that the school is organised and in the high standards of behaviour expected of its pupils. The school shows good regard to competition by ensuring that all purchases, including minor ones made by coordinators, are competitively priced. To date, the school has successfully reviewed utility budgets, but has been unable to compare its performance in various areas of expenditure with other schools due to a lack of base data. The chair of finance and his committee are particularly concerned to review the expenditure of money, including grants, on educational initiatives such as booster classes and early intervention in learning, to assess their effectiveness.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81 In order to improve the standards of attainment and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the standards in pupils' writing and science at the end of Year 2 and the standards of pupils' mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 (paragraphs 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 92-99, 100-106, 107-114)

In addition to the key issue above, the following minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum to support pupils' learning in other subjects (paragraphs 28, 36, 133-136)
- improve the criteria in pupils' individual behaviour and education plans to enable staff to judge improvements more accurately (paragraph 51)
- review and develop the school's multicultural resources (paragraph 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	47	16	0	0	0
Percentage	1	18	60	21	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	311
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.8
National comparative data	93.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	20	23	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	19
	Girls	20	21	22
	Total	35	37	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (86)	86 (77)	95 (61)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	20	21	21
	Total	36	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (73)	86 (59)	86 (70)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	30	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	19
	Girls	22	21	25
	Total	37	35	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (75)	57 (63)	72 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	18
	Girls	22	21	25
	Total	37	35	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (77)	57 (68)	70 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	308	10	
White – Irish	0		
White – any other White background	5		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0		
Mixed – White and Black African	0		
Mixed – White and Asian	0		
Mixed – any other mixed background	6		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0		
Black or Black British – African	0		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0		
Chinese	0		
Any other ethnic group	0		
No ethnic group recorded	1		

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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.88
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	25.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	179.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	1.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	704,319
Total expenditure	668,833
Expenditure per pupil	2,186
Balance brought forward from previous year	40,921
Balance carried forward to next year	76,407

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	311
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category 18%

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	26	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	58	7	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	55	12	4	4
The teaching is good.	60	36	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	33	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	16	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	21	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	35	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	30	11	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	42	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	35	7	0	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

82 There is an improvement to the outdoor learning provision for children in the Foundation Stage² since the previous inspection. The school uses the Early Learning Goals as a basis for outdoor learning activities. This enables the members of staff to check the children's progress against the Stepping Stones that lead to the Early Learning Goals³. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

83 Strengths:

- Children's achievement in personal and social skills across the Foundation Stage
- The consistently good quality teaching from all adults in the Foundation Stage
- The rich and varied learning opportunities for all children
- The careful use of assessment to measure children's progress
- Strong links with parents and carers
- Strong leadership and determination to provide high quality education

Areas for development

- Strategies to improve concentration and the ability to retain knowledge
- Outdoor learning opportunities

84 The school admits children to the nursery during the term in which they are four, or the term before when places are available. Children transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they are five. A significant majority of children enter the nursery with language skills that are well below the expectations for children of the same age. A minority of boys has attainment that is very low. By the time they leave the reception class many children have social skills that are close to expectations and have well developed movement skills. Attainment in all other areas is below what is generally expected. Current attainment is not as high as at the time of the previous inspection. This is because the standard of attainment on entry is lower and children are now younger when they start school. The nursery and reception classes make good provision for all children in the Foundation Stage of learning. They work well together to ensure the reception class builds on the work of the nursery.

85 The overall quality of teaching is consistently good for all children in the nursery and reception classes. A quarter of the teaching is very good. This ensures the children achieve well, are enthusiastic and have good relationships with each other and adults. There is effective and sensitive support for children with special educational needs throughout the Foundation Stage. The staff register concerns as they become apparent and check the children's progress very carefully. This enables the identified children to learn at a similar rate to their classmates. The school shares their aims with parents and carers and keeps them very well informed about their child's achievements. This enables all concerned to work together in the children's best interests. There are well equipped, secure and specifically designated outdoor areas for use by the children in the nursery and reception classes. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

² The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

³ Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. Stepping stones are used to signify the children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The goals refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

- 86 All members of the early learning team place much emphasis on this important area of children's development. The good quality teaching makes the children feel secure and happy in the nursery and reception classes. All children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. The caring attitudes of all the adults give the children security and confidence. This ensures that the children are content when their carers leave them and move confidently outside and around the classrooms. Most children share and take turns happily for example, when using outdoor equipment. Many, however, have difficulty in concentrating and the adults work hard to promote this skill. Children clearly enjoy their work in the nursery and reception classes. They cooperate happily with each other and adults. For example, children learn to take care of classroom equipment and to tidy up after themselves. Skilful and patient teaching ensures that children in the reception class understand the routines of school life and move quietly and sensibly around the school. For example, they walk confidently to the main hall for assemblies and physical education. In spite of their good progress, most children are not likely to achieve the expected levels in the development of their social skills by the time they join Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

- 87 The provision and teaching of communication, language and literacy skills are good. Children have a rich range of stimulating experiences in the nursery and reception classes. This ensures they develop an increasing love of books and interest in reading. An example of this is the visit from the 'reading bus' which promotes very good progress in developing enjoyment of listening to stories. All adults ensure that the children have frequent opportunities to handle and explore books. This means that children of all abilities use books and know that pictures and print have meaning. By the time they are ready to move into the reception class most children understand that sequences of pictures tell a story. This is effective achievement and the result of carefully structured teaching. All children receive a high level of support to increase their speaking skills. The adults speak clearly and make sure the children understand what is being said. This helps the children realise the importance of speaking clearly and politely to each other. They act out favourite stories; for example, the reception children enjoy listening to and using puppets. This increases their ability to sequence stories and develops their skills of speaking to an audience. All children in the Foundation Stage increase their early writing skills in a range of activities that encourage their hand and eye control. They achieve well from a very low starting point but their skills in writing are still well below the expected 'stepping stone' levels. The reception class teacher uses adapted elements of the literacy strategy to increase children's listening, speaking and reading skills. Children enjoy this and make good progress in learning letter sounds. All children increase their communication skills but are unlikely to reach the end of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Mathematics

- 88 All members of the Foundation Stage staff make good provision to develop and increase children's mathematical knowledge and skills. Most children learn and achieve well in consolidating and developing their number awareness. They are, however, unlikely to meet the standards necessary to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. This is because of their low achievement on entry to the nursery. The members of the nursery and reception staff use a carefully structured programme of work to increase the children's mathematical knowledge. This includes the Early Learning Goals for mathematics and the reception element of the National Numeracy Strategy. All children use sequencing activities to increase their control skills and make good progress in developing their knowledge of numbers. When they enter the reception classes children have a short session of structured number work each day. Most children know and recognise the place of numbers up to nine on a number line. Children use suitable mathematical language to describe processes, such as 'bigger' and 'smaller'. An example of this is when children compare their heights. Children consolidate, build on, develop and increase their early mathematical experiences in the Foundation Stage.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 89 The teaching in this area of learning is good. This has a positive effect on the development of children's knowledge, understanding and skills. The nursery and reception classes make good provision for developing children's awareness of the world around them. All the children have many opportunities in the nursery and the reception classes to explore the natural and man made world.

For example, children in the nursery investigate how to 'mend' a car and learn how to care for their guinea pigs. Skilful questioning leads to increased understanding of the meaning of care for objects and living creatures. Children continue to consolidate and increase their learning as they progress through the reception class. They develop a sound understanding of caring within a Christian community. This provides firm foundations for work in religious education and citizenship. Children use computers and listening centres as a matter of routine. Many have limited skills in using a mouse to control movement on the computer screen. There is not enough adult support to increase children's skills and this restricts the children's ability to work independently. Most children are unlikely to reach the end of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Physical development

- 90 The Foundation Stage classes make good provision for children's physical development and the children achieve well. The direct teaching of skills and techniques enables the vast majority of children to increase their ability to climb and balance on a range of apparatus. This includes the use of outdoor and indoor equipment. All children develop a good level of awareness of how to use large spaces as they move. This prepares the children well for work in Year 1. Careful teaching of pencil and brush control skills increases the children's ability to write and paint. The members of staff ensure that all children have access to pencils, crayons, scissors, and glue from the beginning of their time in the nursery. The children continue to develop their skills in the reception class and they become increasingly competent. This is evident in their ability to thread large plastic needles. Their skills in using pencils correctly are still below what is expected for most children of this age. Most children are likely to meet the expected targets in their ability to use apparatus and space for movement by the time they enter Year 1. They are, however, unlikely to meet expectations in their ability to use equipment such as pencils, brushes and scissors.

Creative development

- 91 The teaching and provision for children's creative development is good. Children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage as they learn basic techniques. This enables them to use and control materials such as paint and glue effectively. They apply paint to paper with increasing confidence but do not use brushes correctly. All children enjoy experimenting with paint to make patterns. For example, a child making footprints says, 'this is one of the colours of the rainbow', as she makes a red footprint. As they progress through the reception class, children increase their awareness of shape, pattern and colour. The teacher gives them many opportunities to experiment with materials. This increases their confidence in using paint, crayons and pastels. Children sing a variety of simple songs from memory and show a suitable awareness of melody. Many have difficulty in remembering words and their rhythmic skills are limited. They enjoy making sounds and respond well to the teaching. Most children achieve well but are unlikely to reach the level of skill necessary to achieve the outcomes of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

ENGLISH

- 92 Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests showed that standards attained by 11 year olds were well below the national average and well below average when compared to similar schools. The main reasons for the overall decline in standards from the previous year were an increased proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register compared to the previous year, the very high proportion of pupils having a statement of special educational needs and the very low attainment of a significant minority of pupils who joined the group during the academic year. The results achieved by seven year olds in the 2002 tests were average in reading but well below average in writing. When compared to similar schools, the pupils' attainment in reading was well above average and below average in writing. These results showed a considerable improvement on the previous year's results, with a significant rise in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in reading and a much improved percentage reaching the expected standard in writing. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the current group of 11 year olds is on target to achieve average attainment, but that the seven year olds will again be below the national average in writing but average in reading.
- 93 Children's attainment on entry into reception is well below average in all aspects of English. Their very poor listening skills make progress in the first few months very slow, and, as a result, the

children's ability to speak and communicate, either with each other or adults, is extremely restricted. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress, due to the quality of teaching they receive and the dedication of the staff to raising standards. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress due to the careful monitoring of every aspect of their work and the provision of additional help if any areas of weakness are identified. Staff work tirelessly, monitoring and evaluating test results, identifying areas of weakness and then putting into place appropriate strategies to address them. Although many of these strategies are quite recent, within the past two years, they are now beginning to impact positively on pupils' progress. Evidence from the inspection confirms that this is the case, and that standards are rising through the school. This is an area of considerable improvement since the last inspection.

- 94 By the end of Year 2 standards in speaking and listening are still below the national average for the majority of pupils but they have risen considerably from the time the pupils first entered school. In Year 6 pupils are achieving the nationally expected standards. Progress has been good for all pupils. In Year 1 and Year 2, teachers successfully build on the earlier work in the reception class. This results in the higher attaining pupils becoming attentive listeners, with the confidence to contribute to class discussions and to ask questions. However, many still need the reassurance of teachers before contributing to whole class discussion. A few pupils call out rather than waiting for their turn, but this is mainly linked to their enthusiasm. The good relationships teachers have with their pupils encourage everyone to want to take part in the lessons. The development of mutual trust and respect is a powerful influence on the confidence of pupils. As they progress through the school, pupils are continually encouraged to participate fully in all lessons. For example, in the Year 5/6 average ability group, pupils compared the structures of two stories. A phrase was read out by the teacher who then asked 'Does anyone know the name for this kind of phrase?' Immediately a boy responded with the answer 'An idiom' and this is followed by one of the girls who explained quite clearly what this means. Similarly in another Year 5/6 group, pupils involved in planning a drama tableau were able to take it a step further by adding their own speech, much of which had to be spontaneous. Very skilful intervention by the teacher extended the vocabulary the pupils were using and at the same time praised them for the efforts they were making. Opportunities such as this, which are carefully planned as extensions to the literacy hour, provide an excellent example of how the ethos of the school, which places great emphasis on self esteem, has helped pupils to gain in self confidence and begin to develop skills in speaking and in listening. Opportunities for speaking occur in different subjects and teachers actively target the development of these skills.
- 95 Standards in reading are improving for the great majority of the seven and 11 year old pupils and their attainment is in line with national averages. Higher attaining pupils are achieving a good standard and are confident to read a text out to the rest of the class. The emphasis on reading throughout the school means that where pupils are identified as having a particular weakness they will receive regular additional support either in groups or on a one to one basis. An experienced teaching assistant or one of the trained reading volunteers usually takes these reading groups. The introduction of practical activities to teach letters and sounds gives the pupils the confidence to try out new words that they have not met before. Pupils in Year 1 are taught how to look at the pictures on the page for clues to the word and how to use their knowledge of phonics to build up a word until they can say it. Emphasis is placed on developing reading confidence, and groups meet together with the purpose of targeting reading confidence. Work on developing the pupils' love of books from an early age is very successful, with older pupils being able to talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors. Pupils are taught how to use the library and they can explain quite clearly how to find a book about a particular subject. Pupils' progress in reading including that of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good.
- 96 Writing standards throughout the school were identified last year as a target area and are part of the School Improvement Plan. The targeting of writing with clearly focused writing sessions over and above the literacy hour has led to dramatic improvements, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where attainment is now in line with national averages. Pupils in Year 2 are able to retell stories such as the 'Billy Goat Gruff' and produce pieces of imaginative writing based on titles such as 'My cat Flossie'. Progress noted in their writing books confirms that they are doing well both in handwriting and in their pieces of writing. Weaknesses are apparent, however, in spelling where pupils tend to be careless even when using common words. There are also weaknesses in the use of punctuation. Pieces of written work often lack sparkle due to the limited vocabulary the pupils

have; this should improve considerably as their confidence in speaking increases. By the end of Year 6, pupils have extended their knowledge of grammar and of punctuation, and the story writing of the more able pupils includes good use of paragraphs, correct use of speech marks, and interesting vocabulary. Handwriting is joined, legible and neat with letter shapes clear and consistent. There are, however, a number of pupils who although being aware of the purpose of punctuation, do not always remember to use it and at times their work still contains errors. Stimulating teaching draws on the experiences of the pupils for many of the writing tasks as well as introducing them to new experiences and styles of writing. Pupils in Year 5/6 classes have looked at extracts from George Loy Smith's account of the Crimean War. Working on the extracts, the pupils have written their own versions looking at the accounts from either the British or Russian point of view. In producing these high quality pieces of written work, the pupils used their white boards to brainstorm ideas, produce a rough draft, and then work on the final version. Not only do these pieces of work indicate the progress pupils are making towards improving standards, but they also show the value teachers place on the pupils' work. For example, each of the displayed writings on this topic had been taken home by the teacher and typed up and mounted for display giving a clear message to each pupil that their work is highly valued. All pupils achieve well against their prior attainment.

- 97 A prominent feature of the work in English is the way in which it is supported in all the other curriculum areas. This is a quite deliberate strategy throughout the school and is certainly having an impact on pupils' progress. In geography the pupils write about 'getting to know Keswick', in religious education they re tell stories, and in science as well as writing out instructions they write about 'how to keep safe in the sun'. The impact of the work in other subjects in speaking and listening, reading for information and writing in different styles means that the pupils are now experiencing a rich variety of language that will help them develop both their skills and confidence, and in time lead to higher standards. Pupils of all abilities are fully included in every aspect of the work in English.
- 98 The quality of teaching seen was good. Teaching was never less than satisfactory and in the great majority of lessons teaching was good or better with one example of excellent teaching. It is this good teaching that, in a relatively short space of time, has pulled attainment up from well below average to average and enabled pupils to make good progress. The additional, clearly targeted sessions that occur outside the literacy hour have also had a significant impact on the improved rate of learning. Within the literacy sessions themselves, the close linking of group work to the whole class session is helping pupils to retain more knowledge and understanding as they put into practice the things that they have learnt. A good example of this was when one whole class session looked at metre, rhyming patterns and the settings for poems; this was followed by group tasks where the pupils developed 'Witches Spells' poems and worked on the settings. The introductions to lessons are very effective and, as a result, pupils know what they are expected to learn and how this fits into previous lessons. Expectations are high and activities in lessons are challenging and interesting. The teaching of basic skills, particularly letters and their sounds, is good and pupils use this knowledge to build new words. They recognise common beginnings and endings and are provided with strategies that help them to spell and read. A good feature of most lessons is the use of teaching assistants. They have a very clear understanding of their roles and work well to support pupils in their learning. Their relationship with pupils is excellent and they make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. Work is very carefully marked and there are well thought out and helpful comments to enable pupils to improve their next piece of work.
- 99 Management of the subject is very good. The coordinator has a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses, based on the careful analysis of assessments made across all age groups. The monitoring and evaluating of both teaching and learning is used with great accuracy to point out areas where further development is needed and strategies are put in place to address them. After an appropriate period, each strategy is evaluated to see if the improvements are sufficient. An example of this is the withdrawal of pupils for extra English work; soon this will be evaluated to see what gains have been made and whether changes need to be made. Target setting is well established in English. Pupils know the purpose of these targets and understand that when a target has been achieved it will be stamped and a further target put in place.

MATHEMATICS

- 100 For several years the standards in the national tests have been well below average. The pupils at the time of the last inspection achieved well below average results in the National Curriculum tests. The staff have worked hard to remedy the weaknesses mentioned in the previous report. As a result, pupils, including those for whom English is not their first language, are now making good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting point. The strategy for the numeracy hour has become established and effective. This has had a significant impact on provision for mathematics in the school, and standards have begun to rise. It has promoted teaching that is much more consistent. However, results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests showed that standards attained by 11 year olds were still well below the national average and also well below average when compared to similar schools. There was a small increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. Overall the results showed a decline on the previous year, but much of this was due to the above average percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register and the very low attainment of a significant minority of pupils who joined the group during the academic year. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the attainment of the present 11 year olds is higher than the previous year's Year 6 group and with pupils expected to achieve below average standards at the end of Year 6.
- 101 In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 rose significantly compared to the previous year. However, due to the low proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels, the overall results were still well below average when compared to all schools nationally, but below average when compared to similar schools. The present Year 2 group of pupils is making good progress and is in line to achieve average standards at the end of the school year.
- 102 One of the factors contributing to this improvement is good teaching throughout the school. The teachers are determined to get the best out of the National Numeracy Strategy. The new whole school planning strategy lays out the steps that teachers are to cover right through from Year 1 to Year 6. As a result, the inconsistency found in various year groups and across the key stages during the previous inspection no longer occurs. All teachers structure their lessons carefully to develop mental agility, to introduce the new learning and to give time for pupils to practise before summarising the results in a short plenary session at the end of the lesson. They discuss the lesson objectives with the pupils, so that the pupils get a clearer idea of the path their learning takes. This determination to succeed stems from the inspiring leadership of the headteacher and the subject coordinator. They view maths as also contributing to pupils' personal development. Teachers show in their planning how they intend to build pupils' ability to work together in groups, and expand their confidence as learners. Many pupils say that maths is now their favourite subject.
- 103 The staff use assessment data particularly well to identify groups who need special attention. Pupils on the special needs register receive good support from the classroom assistants to help them understand their tasks, either in the class lesson or in booster groups. Last year the staff managed to get all Year 2 pupils up to expected standard before they transferred to the juniors. The junior pupils achieve well in their ability setting arrangements. The teachers can adopt an appropriate pace for the pupils' abilities, while making the work challenging and interesting. The teachers are concerned to diminish the difference in attainment between boys and girls. Although there are more boys than girls in the lower set, equally there are now many more boys than girls in the highest group. The early morning mathematics group for these pupils led to one achieving a very high level last year.
- 104 The teachers' well structured lesson planning gives a reasonably balanced coverage of all the aspects of the subject over the year. They work from the National Numeracy Strategy to ensure that they move steadily through its programmes of study. However, the pupils' books for last year showed that there was a heavy emphasis on pure number work. The lesson objectives emphasise the new knowledge and skills to be learned. In the part known as WILF (what I am looking for) the teachers focus well on the pupils' understanding. The test for understanding is often to see if the pupils can do harder examples of the number tasks. This masks a weakness in deep seated ownership of skills and processes and does not always give a clear picture of the pupils' understanding of the new learning. In the booster groups, pupils get more time to explore their own thinking, devise strategies and reach a stronger understanding. Teachers can see their efforts paying off when pupils say, "Oh, I get it now!" or "I think you can do it this way." This represents very good teaching, which provides strong learning situations, where pupils' personal development

grows as they achieve self reliance. In this way, Year 2 pupils mastered the partitioning of twenty, by applying what they knew about smaller numbers. The teaching assistants are particularly good at helping pupils who have special needs, and these pupils make good progress as a result.

- 105 The school analyses the results of tests well. The coordinator has identified a common weakness in pupils' ability to solve problems, which are phrased in written form. This is because they do not get enough opportunity to develop and use their mathematical skills. There is little evidence in pupils' books of estimating the likely size of an answer, approaching a problem from different directions, showing the working out and checking for themselves as they go along.
- 106 The coordinator has undertaken an efficient audit of the subject. The analysis shows the need for a closer link with literacy, developing pupils' language to solve word problems, and providing more opportunities for pupils to explain their solutions. Computers are underused to support the pupils' learning in mathematics. This is recognised by the school, which has included this in the subject action plan, together with the more precise use of the computer for holding data on pupils' progress. While assessment is effective in its procedures, it is not yet fully helping to inform teachers of suitable starting points. In several lessons the teachers pitched the activity at too high a level. The teachers' expertise is good; they were able to adjust the challenge during the rest of the lesson, and amend their planning for the following day.

SCIENCE

- 107 The attainment of Year 6 pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests was similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection being well below average when compared to all schools nationally, but below average when compared to similar schools. These results showed a decline in attainment over the previous year. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level fell markedly, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was sustained. The low attainment of a group of pupils who joined the Year 6 class during the year was the principal reason for fall in standards.
- 108 The teacher assessments for the Year 2 pupils in 2002 showed a significant improvement on the previous year with the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level being below average when compared to all schools and average when compared to similar schools. However, no pupil achieved the higher level. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment of the present Year 2 pupils is still below average overall because not enough pupils are working at the higher levels.
- 109 Pupils make good progress through the school although by the end of Year 6 they achieve standards that are still below average overall. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection and this success has been achieved because of the improved monitoring of teaching and learning. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can do because they have access to information from good assessment procedures. This enables them to focus the teaching on the weaker areas. As a result, there is no discernible difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils have good knowledge of investigative science because much of pupils' learning is based on a carefully planned, practical approach. For example, during the inspection, pupils showed a good understanding of how to set up an investigation to explore a question which they had posed involving evaporation. Pupils' discussion showed they had a clear understanding of a fair test. Whilst pupils make predictions before they start their investigations, they do not make hypotheses, and this means that teachers miss valuable assessment opportunities to see how well their pupils have understood a particular principle. In some other aspects of science, pupils' understanding is below average, although they have a good understanding of forces, light and aspects of the human body. Although the curriculum has improved since the last inspection, the present two year planning cycle sometimes leads to very limited opportunity to revise work that was covered in the previous year. This is the principal reason why pupils' attainment in life processes, electrical circuits and aspects of materials was comparatively weak in last year's Year 6 tests. However, the school's newly introduced assessments at the end of each unit of work, will help teachers identify weaknesses in pupils' understanding and give them the opportunity to build on the strengths and address the weaknesses in their subsequent planning.
- 110 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build well on the good start they make in the Nursery and reception class and are making overall good progress. Pupils in Year 1 have a good understanding of the five

senses. The sense of touch was well developed in a lesson when pupils dipped their hand to feel an everyday object, which they described to their classmates. This part of the lesson was particularly successful as it practically illustrated the sense of touch and also developed pupils' speaking and listening skills. Despite the careful planning of the teacher, a minority of the pupils still find difficulty in relating a sense to a particular part of the body. Investigative skills are well nurtured in Year 2 and, therefore, pupils have good skills in this area. They have a sound understanding of life and living processes and show good knowledge when naming parts of a plant. They have an average understanding of the different properties of materials and have deepened their knowledge of these by examining the different types of materials used in the playground and the properties that made them appropriate for their use. Pupils understand that sound is made by vibration and use their knowledge to investigate which of a group of sounds travels furthest. Although the school's main priority is to raise further the proportion of pupils gaining the expected levels for Year 2 pupils, it is rightly setting more challenging work for the higher achieving pupils.

- 111 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produce a good quantity of work relating to all areas of the subject, and show good skills in their investigative work and in the development of fair tests. Much of their learning in other aspects of the subject comes from pupils' investigations. For example, pupils use their knowledge of circuits to divide materials into the two groups of conductors and insulators. They are making good progress in developing scientific vocabulary because this is well emphasised by their teachers. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills when writing up their investigations. Whilst pupils clearly explain the findings of their investigations, they rarely use their subject knowledge to explain why things have happened. As a result, opportunities to consolidate their scientific thinking are missed, as are teachers' opportunities to assess how well their pupils understand a particular concept. Pupils take great pride in the way in which they present their work. This is rarely prescribed by the teacher and so gives pupils opportunities for developing their own initiative. Whilst Year 5 pupils again make good progress in their subject, they have a particularly good understanding of the use of filtering, dissolving and evaporation to separate different materials. This particular piece of work was clearly recorded in graphical form, making good use of pupils' mathematical skills. Marking in all years is accurate and gives helpful suggestions to pupils as to how they can improve their work. As pupils become older, marking is clearly linked to the lesson's learning objectives (WALT) and this gives pupils a clear understanding of how well they have achieved the lesson's target. Year 5 pupils produce a good amount of work during lessons but there are not always opportunities for the lower achieving pupils to finish their work. As a result, they do not always have opportunities to conclude their investigations and their level of understanding is unclear.
- 112 The teaching of science is consistently good and has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the area of teachers' subject knowledge and their understanding of scientific facts and principles. The way that teachers plan lessons and use their teaching assistants, helps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are challenged at an appropriate level and are given focused support so that they have every chance of success. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject, work hard in lessons and behave well. Higher attaining pupils, unlike at the time of the last inspection, are now challenged well in the work that is set for them, and teachers ensure that they have good opportunities to use their initiative, particularly in the planning and recording of investigations. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and give useful comments to help pupils' improve their future work.
- 113 The science coordinator has been in post for just over a year. She brings enthusiasm and clear ideas for the further improvement of standards in the school. The subject improvement plan is well judged with appropriate priorities to achieve the objective of raising standards. The improved use of assessment at the end of each unit of work will result in teachers' improved knowledge of their pupils' attainment and their rate of progress. Future planning can then be more accurately targeted to address weaknesses and build on the strengths. This work will be further enhanced by the introduction of a revised curriculum, which the coordinator is at present developing. This will be a combination of the school's best practice and local authority and national initiatives. With increased monitoring of planning by the coordinator and more in depth monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom, pupils' progress will be scrutinised far more regularly and more closely to ensure that they keep on track to meet their end of year individual targets.

114 There are good planned links with other subjects, such as English, mathematics and design and technology but links with information communication technology, particularly in the recording of investigation results are under developed. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Year 1 pupils were enthralled and highly excited when taking their turn in the "senses" feely bag and all pupils show increasing development of their social and moral skills when working together on investigations. The school has adequate resources for teaching the subject and these are particularly well used in the development of pupils' investigative skills.

ART AND DESIGN

115 At the time of the previous inspection standards in the infants were above average and average in the juniors. Standards are now in line with those expected for the pupils' ages. This does not mean standards have lowered. With the programme of study for Curriculum 2000⁴ the requirement for art and design education has become more demanding. Progress is good right through the school for all pupils including those with English as an additional language. All pupils enjoy art and design, and those who have special educational needs particularly experience success and achieve as well as, and often better than, their peers.

116 The coordinator has introduced a new planning scheme since the previous inspection. It is based on national guidelines and enables teachers to develop basic skills systematically. Because of this, the planning is consistent through the school. Teaching throughout the school is good overall. Teachers now have a clear idea of what the pupils are to achieve during the lesson and focus well on imparting basic skills. The teachers give clear explanations, and share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils. Consequently the pupils see the wider context, and begin to understand the stages of their own progress.

117 Pupils are free to explore their own ideas within the teachers' detailed guidelines. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when work was described as being 'too structured at times'. Teachers develop pupils' ability to think of their materials as information that will help them realise a design. For instance, Year 1 pupils were encouraged to use the skill in paper collage, which they had practised in the previous week, to construct a portrait. This linked well with their learning in science. Year 2 pupils used half of a magazine picture to develop their drawing skills by studying closely the effect they wanted to achieve. Later in the year, they will use this drawing skill to support illustrations in subjects like geography and English. Pupils use the computer more than they did during the previous inspection, and particularly well to aid their understanding of design. Year 1, for instance, gained a good idea of composition when they produced their airbrush pictures in the computer suite.

118 Teachers create imaginative learning conditions that promote good progress particularly in the basic skills. For instance, they enthused Year 3 and 4 pupils to enjoy the architectural work of Gaudi. The pupils set out on their designs with positive attitudes, a determination that developed into deep concentration and exploration of original ideas. The teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of famous artists, either by visits to museums, or using the school's own source books. This helps pupils to expand their horizons, but at present they lack the vocabulary to discuss clearly the artists' and their own work. The pupils also find it hard to retain details of information. The coordinator's action plan includes the development of literacy within art and design, so that pupils can extend their writing of art appreciation. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. They grow in self awareness as they explore their ideas of the world around them. They learn to value themselves because the teachers value their work. Teachers take much care to display it in attractive form around the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119 Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents the maintaining of standards in Year 2 but an improvement in standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and

⁴ Curriculum 2000 defines what pupils should learn in a particular subject by the end of Year 2 and Year 6

those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

- 120 By the end of Year 2, pupils show a good understanding of planning and clear evaluations, with particular reference to the effectiveness of the material they have chosen for their making task. Pupils are developing sound cutting and joining skills, clearly shown when they made moving figures as part of their work on the human body. Higher achieving pupils show a good awareness of the importance of the appearance of the finished product.
- 121 In Years 3 and 4, pupils understand the importance of planning and make good links with other subjects in the making process. For example, pupils in a good quality lesson disassembled and assembled different types of switches as part of a focused task before designing and making a burglar alarm. The links between design and technology and their science work on circuits gave pupils an added interest in their work. By the end of Year 6, pupils work with a range of materials and develop sound skills in areas of the subject. Teachers' planning from a good quality curriculum ensures that the range of projects stimulates the pupils and develops their skills and knowledge appropriately. Pupils have a clear understanding of how careful planning can result in a much improved final product. This was evident in a design lesson where pupils designed a biscuit to be given as a present for a special occasion. Very good teacher questioning that helped to ensure that pupils fully understood the relevance of the design process enhanced the quality of the designs. Good use of a teaching assistant enabled small groups of pupils to develop their food technology skills, such as when making biscuits which they will decorate using their planned designs. Pupils' cutting and joining skills are satisfactory. There are good links with science evident in the pupils' battery operated vehicles.
- 122 The quality of teaching is good through the school and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers now have good subject knowledge and plan work carefully to ensure that it is relevant and interesting for all groups of pupils. Good support from teachers and their teaching assistants helps to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all lessons' activities. The curriculum from which teachers plan is now much improved and there are good procedures in place to assess pupils' progress as they move through the school. Links with other subjects, such as mathematics and science adds to pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and tasks planned by the teachers successfully develop pupils' social skills when they work in small groups. Pupils enjoy the subject and talk with enthusiasm about their work. This was particularly evident in the Year 3/4 lesson when pupils were disassembling different switches as part of their work on burglar alarms.
- 123 In general, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. However, teachers' planning from the two year rolling programme does not always ensure that the work is appropriate for the different years. For example, recent work on moving body parts for Years 1 and 2 does not show a clear development of skills between the two years. The coordinator monitors teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books. The recording of pupils' progress using the local education authority pupil profile is a good initiative and gives teachers a clear indication of pupils' attainment and progress, whilst highlighting areas that the school needs to address to improve standards. Whilst the school has satisfactory resources, the planned purchase of a tool board to move round the classes, particularly when pupils are working in wood, will improve pupils' access to a greater variety of tools. At present, there is too little use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

- 124 The amount of evidence available during the week of the inspection was limited to an analysis of pupils' work in books, photographic records and discussions with pupils. No detailed judgements can be made about the quality of teaching because no geography was taught during the inspection.

Strengths

- Standards by the age of 11
- The quality of marking and use of assessment to plan suitable work for all abilities
- The provision of interesting and challenging work

Areas for development

- Refining of assessment procedures and use to continue the interest and challenge

- The use of information and communication technology to support learning

- 125 By the age of seven standards are similar to those expected for most pupils of this age. Progress is clearly good because, by the age of 11, standards exceed those expected from most pupils of this age. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils clearly enjoy their work in geography for example, pupils said; 'you find out where things are. It's really interesting.' Pupils' written work across the school provides evidence of increasing skills in note taking and the use of secondary information sources such as reference books. This work provides strong links with work in English.
- 126 The school provides interesting and varied opportunities for pupils to learn about their local area. There is an improvement in the provision for pupils to have first hand experience through field trips. This gives the pupils a well developed awareness and understanding of geographical features of the local area. For example, three Year 2 pupils gave clear directions for going to the supermarket from school. They used correct language such as, 'go straight across the roundabout, look for the shop on the corner, turn left.' They do not yet, however, have the knowledge to contrast Abingdon with places further away.
- 127 This interesting work continues as the pupils progress through the school. By Year 6, most pupils have an above average understanding of important features of different localities. For example, they draw clear and thoughtful comparisons between Abingdon and the Isle of Wight. The work in the pupils' books shows that pupils of all abilities use first hand observations, books and maps in their research. There is limited use of information and communication technology and this restricts the development of pupils' skills in using computers to support their learning.
- 128 The subject leader monitors all planning and the quality of teaching in lessons. This ensures that there is no unnecessary repetition and that there is consistency in the teaching of geography. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is a marked improvement in the range and quality of resources since the previous inspection. This is having a positive effect on the standards that pupils achieve. The school is using a nationally recommended scheme to assess the pupils' progress and achievements. It uses these findings to plan work that meets the needs of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The subject leader and members of staff review the pupils' work and use the results to adjust the two year cycle of work. This ensures that all pupils have work that matches their needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school is continuing to improve and refine its assessment procedures to ensure that the pupils' work is relevant and interesting.

HISTORY

- 129 Standards are in line with the average expected for the pupils' age in the infants and juniors. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were found to be above average. This does not mean that standards have declined. The requirements of Curriculum 2000 have meant that the programme of study has become more demanding. The school has adopted a new structured planning scheme since the previous inspection. This allows teachers to plan clearer lesson objectives, and concentrate more closely on historical skills. This enables pupils to make good progress in lessons and throughout their years in school. The teachers and classroom assistants give good support to pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. They make good progress because they are also developing their writing skills.
- 130 The quality of teaching is good. The teachers' good quality medium term plans lay out clearly the skills and knowledge they intend to cover. They share these objectives with the pupils, who therefore acquire a good understanding of an organised approach to the study of history. The teachers' lesson plans identify the materials and methods which create good learning conditions. For instance, the youngest pupils deal directly with events and relationships in their own experience; when Year 1 pupils constructed family trees they learned how families grow over time. The oldest pupils learn to use their reasoning powers to interpret information. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils had to suggest their own ideas about an ancient Egyptian hunting scene, before they learned what the experts thought was happening.

- 131 Teachers take care to provide a wide range of sources for the pupils to study. The teachers of Year 3 and 4 pupils had taken the pupils on a visit to a local street with a range of old buildings. They took photographs, which the pupils could use in class to observe features and differences. The information and question sheets developed pupils' research skills. The teachers were careful to include all pupils in this task, by matching the reading level to three different levels of ability. At the hardest level pupils were finding out a lot of detail about Abingdon in the past from text books and maps. Teachers make the distinction clear between original sources and accounts at second hand. Despite the enthusiasm of the teachers, the pupils, particularly the brighter ones, are not yet raising their own questions about the past. This suggests that the questioning approach needs to be embedded lower down the school. The teachers' own use of questioning in lessons is good. It draws out pupils' ideas, supports the hesitant pupils and encourages the confident ones to think more deeply. The opportunity to promote good speaking skills is not as frequently used with the older pupils.
- 132 Pupils find the idea of the passage of time difficult to hold on to. They do not have a system for remembering the various periods of history and the number of years elapsed. The resources, such as timelines, are not sufficiently in evidence around the school. Teachers assess pupils' progress well, and know what levels their pupils are reaching. However, this information is not yet moving pupils up into the higher levels. This, and the greater use of information and communication technology, is part of the coordinator's action plan to develop the subject further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 133 At the time of the previous inspection, standards in information communication technology in both key stages were judged to be unsatisfactory. Progress since the last inspection has been good with a significant improvement in facilities and provision available to all pupils. Standards are satisfactory and are rising in line with the increase in what is expected nationally by age seven and 11. This demonstrates sound progress since the last inspection. The improved level of provision and increased teacher confidence is having a significant impact on standards, with the majority of staff benefiting from the government funded training. Teachers are now involved in the direct teaching of information and communication technology. There is an enthusiasm and commitment to improve standards in the subject from all staff.
- 134 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are generally confident and competent in the use of information and communication technology. They use the mouse and keyboard with confidence for a range of purposes, such as changing font and colour when writing stories or making pictures. They are developing the capability to work with a range of software. Pupils are successfully building on their skills; by the end of Year 6 pupils enter data and use information well to produce charts, and graphs. They are beginning to explore different features of software but are at an early stage of development in the control and modelling aspects of the subject. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use the internet to download information to support their work in other subjects, they are confident users of information and communication technology, ready for more advanced use. Higher attaining pupils use a control program confidently and are developing skills in multimedia work in order to combine a range of information from differing sources.
- 135 Although all pupils have regular access to information and communication technology, pupils need more opportunities to use the computer suite to develop their knowledge skills and understanding. Timetabled information and communication technology lessons are provided, and these enable all pupils to develop skills. All pupils are able to log on, save and print their work. Use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is at an early stage of development mostly because unreliable equipment has prevented its development. In the current rebuilding programme, the school has plans to purchase additional equipment to support the development of information and communication technology.
- 136 The quality of teaching is good overall, with teachers using a range of methods to teach information and communication technology. Their grasp of software and confidence to deliver information and communication technology has increased since the last inspection, so they have a good level of subject knowledge and sufficient confidence for what is currently taught. There is a positive attitude from staff, lessons are well planned and pupils are given clear instructions in order to achieve lesson objectives. Progress is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, and they are highly motivated. They

apply knowledge and skills appropriately helping and advising each other. They are eager to use the equipment and when given the opportunity they are able to work independently, sharing and cooperating even if a member of staff is not near by. Staff have received well focused training for the revised scheme of work, and planning, teaching, and learning are monitored regularly. Moderation of work takes place and targets for whole school improvement are beginning to impact on standards and short term planning. Leadership and management of the subject are a high priority for the school. The subject improvement plan clearly focuses on improving ICT provision and correctly identifies strengths in the subject and areas for development.

MUSIC

- 137 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils of all abilities make good progress; work is challenging and enjoyable. Music is used effectively in assemblies where pupils listen to extracts as they come in, for example in Key Stage 1 pupils listened to a live performance of a Beethoven piano sonata. Pupils sing in tune and songs and hymns support the active promotion of self esteem and agreed school values planned through the personal, social and health education programme.
- 138 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate control of pitch, dynamics and rhythms; they sustain the tune well and keep the pulse in both rhythmic patterns and action songs. They learn to reflect on what they hear, express mood and discuss impact. By the age of seven, pupils sing confidently in tune and with enthusiasm. Pupils add accompaniments to simple songs using a variety of simple percussion instruments. Pupils have positive attitudes to music; they work well in groups performing with confidence and enthusiasm.
- 139 By the end of Year 6, pupils' learning is good; they are critical in their appraisal of music and explain reasons for their judgements. Singing is good both in lessons and in assemblies throughout the school. Careful planning by teachers ensures activities in lessons and singing practices are varied and challenging. Pupils' musical knowledge and understanding of rhythm and pitch is put to good use in whole school productions.
- 140 The quality of teaching is good, and lessons build on pupils' previous learning ensuring focused learning for all pupils. Teachers' planning provides a balance of experiences and the school makes good use of published schemes. The coordinator is keen to develop the profile of music, she has improved resources, ensured that staff have received training and support and provided very effective support for the subject.
- 141 The music curriculum is enriched by a number of extra curricular activities and by the local education authority in the joint development of a foundation music course for Year 3 pupils. The school benefits from the work of qualified musicians who teach instrumental lessons and assist in assemblies. Pupils perform in concerts and this contributes well to their social development. Pupils have the opportunity to learn musical instruments, with the school organising small group lessons on string instruments and recorders. Pupils participate in musical activities and lessons with obvious enjoyment. They are well behaved and treat each other and the instruments with respect. Procedures for assessing and standardising pupils' levels of attainment are in place and there is evidence of this assessment informing subsequent planning. The assessments are also used for joint teacher/pupil discussions about the quality of the pupils' work. The subject is making a strong contribution to the promotion of pupils' self esteem and school values.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 142 Standards and pupils' achievements at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above those normally expected for pupils of these ages. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, are fully involved in all activities and make the same good progress as all the other pupils. A feature of all lessons is the way in which pupils are supportive of each other and offer encouragement to those who are finding things difficult. Standards seen during the inspection show that a considerable improvement has taken place since the time of the last inspection.
- 143 At the end of Year 2, pupils move confidently around the hall controlling their movements and using the space well. When asked to produce darting, curling, stretching and twisting movements, they

are able to do this and are beginning to link them together into sequences. When using the apparatus they demonstrate their ability to put together a sequence of movements. One higher achieving pupil put together a sequence that included a jump and a backward and forward roll, all performed on the apparatus. In all their work, pupils show above average levels of coordination, the ability to use their imagination and a confidence in their movements. As well as work in gymnastics and games, the pupils enjoy country dancing. At the beginning of the lesson there was a buzz of excitement in the hall and the minute the music began the pupils cross linked their arms and, in pairs, danced vigorously around the hall. In only two lessons they have mastered the Arden reel and with only a minimum amount of help from the teacher they can perform all the steps. A strong feature of this lesson was the way in which boys and girls very happily partnered each other and how much enjoyment was generated by the lesson.

- 144 Standards continue to improve throughout the juniors, where in gymnastics the pupils develop their skills by improving their balancing skills and working together to produce mirror movements and movements that are symmetrical and asymmetrical. As well as traditional dances, the pupils explore dances from other countries such as the Caribbean. This work provides a good link with work in other subject areas and extends the pupils' cultural knowledge. In all aspects of the subject, pupils show that they have developed skills that are much higher than those normally expected. In a games lesson where they were using bats and balls it was a joy to see the accuracy with which pupils could hit the ball and how agile they were in moving across the tarmac to return their partner's hit. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy swimming lessons and a very high percentage of them reach the required level with many of them going beyond this. A notable feature of all lessons both with the youngest and the oldest pupils is the quality of behaviour and the attitude of the pupils towards their work. No incidents of poor behaviour or silliness were observed even in situations where there was plenty of potential for this to happen, at all times pupils treated their teachers and each other with respect.
- 145 The quality of teaching was always good and at times very good. Lessons had a clear purpose that was understood by the pupils; they were well planned with an interesting variety of activities that were carried out at a brisk pace. Pupils were well managed and high expectations set to which the pupils responded by working hard. In all the lessons teachers made good use of demonstration to help pupils to develop their own techniques and skills. Through the use and development of appropriate language, the subject makes a good contribution to literacy skills.
- 146 A particularly commendable feature of one lesson was the inclusion of a group of pupils from the nearby Kingfisher Special School. Both schools value this connection; for the Caldecott pupils it helps them to understand and accept the differing behaviour of pupils with disabilities and thereby making a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Kingfisher teacher regards the Caldecott pupils as good role models for her own pupils in helping them to have new experiences and develop new skills.
- 147 Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Although the coordinator has only been in post a short time developments have already taken place. A review of the curriculum has led to changes in the approach to the dance element and reviews will continue to be made of the effectiveness of the curriculum. Assessment is in place and is used to judge the levels at which pupils are working. The physical education programme is supported by an excellent range of extra curricular activities that include hockey, table tennis, netball, football, skipping and country dancing for pupils of all ages.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 148 By the ages of seven and 11 most pupils achieve standards that exceed those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. This is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection when standards were average for 11 year old pupils. The quality of teaching for the older pupils is overall good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Strengths:

- The pupils' standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in both aspects of religious education
- The quality of teaching and learning across the school
- The positive attitudes of all pupils to their work

- The rich and varied curriculum and the very good use of assessment to plan interesting work
- The enthusiasm, knowledge and determination to raise standards of the subject leader

Areas for development:

- The provision of opportunities for pupils to increase their awareness of cultural diversity within present day Britain
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning

- 149 The analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils forms the basis for judgements about standards by the age of seven. These indicate that the pupils have a well developed knowledge about books that people consider holy. For example, they know that the Torah is very special to Jews and compare its use with the Bible. The pupils understand that Judaism and Christianity have similar festivals and know the origin of celebrations such as the Passover. This increases the pupils' awareness of the similarities between different religions. Work in the pupils' books shows that all abilities have a clear understanding of how families care for each other. Some pupils have limited skills in comparing their own experiences with those of other people. Discussions with pupils show that they understand the meaning behind parables. For example, they link this work with learning about healthy eating in science; 'but it's like growing good inside.' The marking of the pupils' work is thorough and gives pointers as to how the pupils can improve their work. This indicates good quality teaching and contributes to the above average standards that pupils' achieve.
- 150 The teachers build carefully on the pupils' knowledge and understanding as they move into Years 3 and 4. This helps the pupils to continue their good rate of learning and achievement. Throughout the school, the teachers plan work that enables all pupils to learn about a suitably wide range of different world religions. This is particularly noticeable in their understanding of the moral code of Islam. Careful and skilful questioning by the teachers enables the pupils in Years 5 and 6 to increase their understanding about the meaning of leadership. It helps them understand the conflicts of loyalty in Moses' life and to relate these to their own experiences. This includes the pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. The pupils explore the meaning of caring for others and of committing oneself to God's service. This effectively increases the pupils' understanding of how faith and belief changes lives. For example, in one lesson seen, the teacher ensured that the pupils had enough time to discuss and reflect on their work. This gave them an increasing awareness of the qualities of leadership; "He had courage. He was brave. He helped the Jews to be free" were some of the pupils' responses. The successful promotion of mature thinking and reasoning was a prominent feature of this very good lesson. The analysis of the pupils' work confirms the judgement of above average standards by the age of 11.
- 151 The pupils enjoy their work in religious education and behaviour in lessons is good. This is a direct result of the varied work that engages the interest of all pupils. The pupils know that all religions have rules for people to follow, and understand the need for order in society. This has a positive effect on the pupils' personal and social development. The work in pupils' books is neat and carefully presented. It is evident that they take much pride in their work. There is not enough use of information and communication technology to support learning in religious education. The subject leader is currently exploring avenues to improve this aspect of the pupils' learning.
- 152 The quality of teaching is overall good throughout the school. It is very good for the older pupils and makes a positive contribution to their above average attainment. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The teachers make their expectations of behaviour clear. This is successful and the pupils learn very well. All the teachers make effective links with literacy by encouraging pupils to read, write carefully and take part in discussions. They insist that the pupils listen carefully to each other and adults. This increases the pupils' awareness of each other's value and makes a positive contribution to their personal development. Part of the reason for pupils' high quality achievement is because the subject leader monitors the work in pupils' books and observes lessons. This gives a clear picture of progress and standards across the school and is an improvement since the previous inspection.