

INSPECTION REPORT

**Castle Camps Church of England
(Controlled) Primary School**

Castle Camps, Cambs.

LEA area : Cambridgeshire

Unique Reference Number : 110784

Headteacher : Mrs C McIntosh

Reporting inspector : Mr T Taylor
4262

Dates of inspection : 29th November - 2nd December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707023

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

Type of control : Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils : 4 to 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Bartlow Road,
Castle Camps,
Cambridge.
CB1 6SX

Telephone number : 01799 584270

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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mr. Clive Boase

Date of previous inspection : May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
T.Taylor Registered inspector	English Science Religious education Art Music Provision for the Under Fives	Special educational needs Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency
S. Stevens Lay Inspector		Equal opportunities Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
D Fisher	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology Geography History Physical education	Attainment and progress Curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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The Office for Standards in Education
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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- .The pupils' attainment in English is good.
- . The pupils are making increasingly good progress throughout the school.
- . The pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- . Much of the teaching is very good. Sometimes it is excellent.
- . The provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for their spiritual development is very good.
- . The provision for the personal and social education of the pupils is very good.
- .The leadership and the management of the school are good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The pupils' attainment in information technology is below expectations at the end of both key stages.
- II. The provision for the children under five is unsatisfactory. The teaching does not match their needs.
- III. The roles of subject coordinators have not been fully established.
- IV. The standards of presentation of work are not as good as they should be.

Castle Camps Primary is an improving school. The school is led well. It provides a sound education for its pupils, and they are making increasingly good progress. The current weaknesses have been identified by the school, and action is being taken to strengthen them. These will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has been significantly re-organised since the last inspection and has improved in many ways. The improved provision is having a significant effect and is beginning to show in the outcomes. There are now policies and schemes of work for all the areas and aspects of the curriculum. The Headteacher and Acting Deputy Headteacher are more active in monitoring the school's work, especially the teaching and the learning. The role of the support staff has been reviewed and reorganised. The accommodation is currently being extended. The provision for information technology has been improved, but is still unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention has been given to developing the provision for the children under five, which is unsatisfactory. Due to difficulties with staffing, the roles of the subject coordinators have not been developed sufficiently to ensure the satisfactory evaluation of the foundation subjects of the curriculum. The standard of presentation of work by the pupils is not high enough. The value for money that the school provides is satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection it was noted as being good. The essential changes in staffing and in the accommodation, being established by the governors and the headteacher, are having a beneficial impact but have not yet realised their potential. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E
English	B	B		
Mathematics	D	E		
Science	C	D		

The pupils' attainment in English at seven and at eleven is good when compared to national averages, and with that of similar schools. The test results indicate that standards in mathematics are below average. However, inspection findings indicate that the pupils' attainment in mathematics is above average at the end of Key Stage 1, and average at Key Stage 2. The pupils often make good progress, particularly at the end of each key stage. The assessment results in mathematics for 1999, showed a significant improvement on the 1998 results. Mathematics is currently a weaker aspect of the school's work. The problems are being firmly addressed. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted, and it is already having significant benefits in promoting the pupils' progress. Attainment in science matches the national average, but is below that for similar schools.

The pupils' achieve the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education , and the quality of their work in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum matches expectations. The quality of their work in music is good, as is much of their work in art. The pupils' overall attainment in information technology is unsatisfactory at both key stages, due to the limited opportunities the pupils have to practise and develop their skills and understanding.

Castle Camps Voluntary Controlled Primary School has maintained standards at broadly average levels over the past three years. It makes good provision for its higher attaining pupils, and more pupils achieve at higher than average levels than is the norm, in English and in science. Science standards overall, however, are average. The school also provides well for the significant number of pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils show satisfactory attainment in English and science in relation to their previous attainment, but weaker attainment in mathematics. The attainment and progress of the children under five is restricted due to the lack of opportunities provided for active learning. The school is working hard to improve standards.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good
Mathematics	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory overall. A significant	Satisfactory. A significant

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

The quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall. Almost nine out of ten lessons seen were either satisfactory or better, while more than a quarter of the lessons observed were very good or excellent. The best teaching is found at the end of Key Stage 1, and at the end of Key Stage 2. The teaching is often imaginative and lessons are made interesting. During the inspection, a pupil told the inspectors that the school “found fun ways in which to learn”. There is some unsatisfactory teaching, particularly for the children under five. Here, insufficient attention is paid to the learning needs of the youngest children, and an appropriate curriculum is not ensured.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. The pupils are well behaved. They pay attention in lessons and work hard. Parents agree that the children are generally well behaved.
Attendance	Good. The pupils are keen to come to school. The rate of unauthorised absence is below average.
Ethos*	Good. The climate for learning is positive. The relationships are good, and the school is keen to improve standards.
Leadership and management	The school is led well. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development. The Acting Deputy Headteacher provides strong support, and the governors are committed and very involved.
Curriculum	Good for Key Stages 1 and 2. It is both broad and balanced. The personal and social education of the children is a particular strength. Unsatisfactory for the children under five. Insufficient attention is given to providing them with an appropriate curriculum, planned around the key areas of learning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils are well supported, and they make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall. The provision for the spiritual development of the pupils is particularly good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. There are sufficient staff, but some staffing difficulties remain. These are being effectively tackled. The resources are adequate. The accommodation is being extended to include new classrooms, and a computer suite.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>V. That the school fosters appropriate values.</p> <p>VI. That the school promotes the children's sense of responsibility.</p> <p>VII. That the range and quality of the information provided by the school is very good.</p> <p>VIII. That the behaviour of the children is good.</p> <p>IX. That the partnership with parents in their child's education is seen as very important.</p>	<p>X. The overall progress of children in</p> <p>XI. That complaints are sometimes not</p> <p>XII. That the school does not provide a</p> <p>XIII. That the amount of homework set</p>

The evidence from the pre-inspection meeting, and the questionnaires, indicates that the parents are generally very satisfied with the school. The school's positive values and the work of the staff are much appreciated. The inspection findings indicate that the progress of the children in mixed-age classes is generally good at Key Stages 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory for the under fives in the Reception and Year 1 class. The school operates an open-door policy and inspection findings indicate that complaints are taken very seriously and good attempts are made to resolve them. The efforts the school makes to provide parents with information about its work, including details of the curriculum work currently being done, are very good. The school has a clear policy on homework. A 'home/school' notebook is used in which details of the homework are set. Homework is negotiable with parents.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors, headteacher and staff should:

ensure that the curriculum and the teaching for the children under five matches their learning needs and encourages more active learning, so that the children's rate of progress is increased;

(Paragraphs: 9, 13, 17, 18, 28, 61-68)

raise standards in information technology at both key stages by:

XIV.increasing the opportunities for the pupils to use information technology to support learning across the range of the curriculum;

XV.ensuring that all staff have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills to support the pupils in their learning;

(Paragraphs: 7, 8, 25, 50, 90-96)

promote further the role of the coordinators in monitoring and evaluating the school's work in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum.

(Paragraphs: 52, 89, 104, 111)

In addition to the key issues, the school should address the following minor issues, and should ensure:

that the standard of the pupils' presentation of work is improved at all stages and in all subjects.

(Paragraphs: 73, 88)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1 Castle Camps Church of England Primary School is situated close to the south Cambridgeshire border. It serves the villages of Castle Camps, Shudy Camps and Horseheath. The school also draws pupils from the nearby town of Haverhill, in Suffolk, and the villages of Ashton, Steeple Bumpstead, and Radwinter in Essex. The school caters for girls and boys between the ages of four and eleven. At the time of the inspection there were one hundred and twenty-two pupils on roll. The school is smaller than the average but the roll is steadily increasing. The ethnicity of the pupils is mainly white, and all use English as a first language. The school's register of special needs included forty-three pupils. This exceeds the average. One has a formal statement of special educational need, in line with the national average. Six-per-cent of the pupils take free school meals. This is below the average. The attainment of the children on entry is average and their socio-economic background is similar to that of rural primary schools generally. Most of the children experience pre-school education in local playgroups. At the time of the inspection there were seven children under the age of five in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- 2 The whole of the teaching staff has changed since the last inspection. The current Headteacher took up her post in September 1997, and the Acting Deputy Headteacher, took up the post in the Autumn Term 1999. There have been difficulties in staffing over recent months, due to illness, and to teachers leaving to take up other posts. At the time of the inspection there were some temporary staff. These difficulties have been tackled effectively, although some uncertainty remains whilst new staff are appointed. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been adopted and are having a beneficial impact upon standards. Targets have been set for improvement, in conjunction with the local education authority, and the school is well placed to achieve them. The school is currently undergoing a major accommodation development programme to replace four temporary classrooms.

Key Indicators

Figures in parentheses are last year's results

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year 1998/99:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	11	10	21

National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	8	10	11
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	16	18	19
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	77(90)	84 (96)	91 (95)
	National	85 (80)	86 (81)	90 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	8	8	10
	Total	18	19	21
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (91)	91 (91)	100 (100)
	National	86 (81)	86 (85)	91 (86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year 1998/99:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	6	9	15

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	2	2	2
	Girls	9	7	9
	Total	11	9	11
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (64)	60 (36)	73 (71)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	3	1	2
	Girls	9	7	9
	Total	12	8	11
Percentage at NC	School	80 (79)	53 (64)	73 (86)

Level 4 or above	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)
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Attendance

			%
Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for 1997/98	Authorised	School	3.6
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

		Number
Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during 1998	Fixed period	1
	Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

		%
Percentage of teaching observed which is :	Very good or better	27.5
	Satisfactory or better	87.5
	Less than satisfactory	12.5

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. At the time of the last inspection, the pupils achieved above average standards in English, and average standards in mathematics, science and religious education. Standards in information technology varied between unsatisfactory and good, with the higher standards being achieved at the end of Key Stage 2.
2. The children's attainment when they enter the school and join the Reception class is broadly average. Overall, their personal and social skills are generally less well developed than their early reading and mathematical skills. The pupils' overall attainment at seven and eleven in the National Curriculum tests in 1999 was broadly in line with the average. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading fell below the average and was average in writing. Attainment in mathematics and science was average. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English was slightly above average, below in mathematics, and broadly in line with the average in science. In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' attainment is good in English, well below average in mathematics and below average in science. Progress, as measured by the tests, would appear to indicate that the pupils' progress is inconsistent. However, inspection findings show that this is not the case. The results have been influenced by the differences in the cohorts of pupils taking the tests and the large percentage of pupils who have special educational needs.
3. Results over the past three years indicate that by the time they are eleven, the pupils achieve above average standards in English and science and broadly average standards in mathematics. Care should be taken when analysing the results. Variations year by year are related to the size and composition of the cohorts of pupils. The cohorts are often comparatively small. The number of pupils achieving at levels higher than expected in English and science was more than the average.
4. The overall trend is one in which standards are being maintained at average levels overall. The school has recently focused its attention on mathematics, with the adoption of the National Numeracy strategy, and is firmly seeking to raise standards.
5. Inspection findings confirm that most of the pupils at Key Stage 1 are on course to achieve at least average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they are seven years old. Their progress in design and technology, and physical education is average and, in religious education, it matches the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils' progress is good in music, and often good in art. It is insufficient in information technology, and therefore unsatisfactory. The inspection gained insufficient evidence to make appropriate judgements for geography and history at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations. Progress in religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history, and physical education matches expectations. Music is a strength of the school and the pupils' attainment in this subject is generally above average.
6. The pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are effectively developed at both key stages. They use their literacy skills effectively to support their work in other subjects and they develop their research skills satisfactorily. An example noted during the inspection was the work of the oldest pupils accessing a range of texts about the Second World

War. The pupils used the texts efficiently and effectively to find information about evacuees, rationing and the 'Blitz'. The pupils' writing skills are effectively developed when they prepare notes for a debate about the environment, or, as at Key Stage 1, when adding descriptions to their own painted portraits. Numeracy skills are efficiently developed when the youngest pupils are asked to calculate the numbers present during registration and when older pupils use number lines to calculate the number of years between historical events. However, limited use is made of information technology to record data or to make graphs. This is a weakness.

7. The progress of the children under five is unsatisfactory. This is a weakness. The children do not have access to an appropriate curriculum, based in the areas of learning considered appropriate at this stage. They are taught alongside older pupils, including those participating in the Programmes of Study of Year 1 of the National Curriculum. The youngest children have too few opportunities to learn in an active way and spend much of their time listening. Consequently, they make less progress than expected.
8. The overall progress of the pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory, and in many lessons it is good. The pupils' progress in most areas of the curriculum, apart from information technology, is particularly good in Year 2 and in Years 5/6. The pupils make good progress in reading, mathematics, art and music towards the end of Key Stage 1, and satisfactory progress in other aspects of the curriculum, including speaking and listening, science and religious education. The pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in developing their reading skills, in writing, and in mathematics, art and music. Their progress in other aspects of the curriculum is satisfactory and is increasing. However, the pupils' progress in information technology is unsatisfactory at all stages because they have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills across the range of the curriculum. The pupils who have special educational needs make generally good progress in relation to the targets set for them. The work for this group is carefully planned and they are well supported in the classrooms. This ensures their general success and good development.

10. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

9. The positive attitudes shown by the majority of the pupils, including those under five, make a substantial contribution to their progress and general attainment. These positive attitudes were noted during the last inspection, and again during a recent denominational inspection. The pupils of all ages want to be actively involved in all aspects of their learning and they show good levels of concentration, enthusiasm and enjoyment. As a Year 3 pupil stated during the inspection: "The school finds fun ways to learn". However, where the teaching is less secure, or where the curriculum provision is inappropriate and tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of the children, these good attitudes tend to deteriorate. This variable attitude is particularly evident amongst some of the under fives and the younger pupils at Key Stage 1. The majority, however, listen well to their teachers and to their peers, concentrate hard and participate well in the tasks set for them.
10. The behaviour of the pupils is good overall. This is endorsed by the responses of parents to the questionnaire, and in discussions with them. The parents appreciate the emphasis the school places on developing appropriate values and behaviour. During the inspection, those pupils with behavioural problems were well supported in a sympathetic, caring and professional manner. The pupils know and respect their class rules, and they increasingly take responsibility for their actions, on occasions moderating the actions of others with both tact and good humour. The staff generally

have high expectations for the pupils' good sense of responsibility and older pupils set good role models for the younger children. Bullying is known to be unacceptable and the pupils are swift to report any problems to adults, older pupils, or the 'Special Person' appointed in each class. The pupils play together well in the playground. They show respect for one another and, for example, observe the rules which allow the children under five and the younger pupils to enjoy exclusive use of a climbing frame. Exclusion from school is very rare, with one fixed period exclusion for unacceptable behaviour recorded in the academic year prior to the inspection.

11. The relationships between the staff and the pupils are sensitive, warm and friendly. Some parents speak highly of the quality of the pastoral care given to the pupils and their parents, particularly in times of family crisis. There is a general feeling of consideration for the well-being of others, of helpfulness, and increasing maturity amongst the pupils in the school. The personal development of the pupils across most age groups is good. Their ability to take responsibility and develop self-confidence is clearly seen in the pupils' commitment to class duties, and monitoring roles about the school. Very young children are helped to integrate into school routines. Activities, such as the daily drink and biscuit sale at break time are organised by the Year 6 pupils without direct adult supervision. Seating for assemblies is set out quickly and with the minimum of fuss by appointed monitors. The pupils show a good level of self-confidence in talking to visitors, and happily discuss the development of the 'miniature dinosaurs' growing in a tank in their classroom, or specific aspects of enjoyable work in literacy. The pupils are beneficially helped to set targets for improvement of their skills or behaviour. Some of those under five show less assured personal development, but most show sufficient maturity to be able to learn and an interest in doing so.

13. **Attendance**

12. The previous inspection reported consistently high rates of attendance. These have been well maintained. There is little unauthorised absence, and the pupils are punctual and eager to attend school. Registration periods are brief, efficient and sociable and form a pleasant start to the day. They include dinner and bus registration concurrently, and a range of administrative items and sharing of information. The consistently high level of attendance has a good impact on the pupils' overall attainment and progress.

14. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

14. **Teaching**

13. At the time of the last inspection the quality of the teaching was satisfactory in almost all lessons, and good in over half of them. There was evidence of some very good teaching. Insufficient evidence is contained in the last report to indicate at which stage, or in which aspects the good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory qualities of the teaching occurred. Additionally, the teaching staff has completely changed since that time, including the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. Some current staffing is temporary while the school is involved in appointing more permanent staff. It is not possible to make reliable comparisons with the situation during the last inspection.
14. During the current inspection, almost ninety per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. Of this, much was good and well over twenty-five per cent was

of the highest standard. A significant percentage of the lessons seen were excellent. Twelve per cent of the lessons seen had unsatisfactory elements.

15. The unsatisfactory teaching largely related to the provision for the children under five in the Reception / Year 1 group, where the curriculum provided did not match their needs.
16. The school does not provide a curriculum for the children under five years of age that takes sufficient account of the learning needs of this age group. The teaching is insufficiently focused on ensuring that these children make maximum progress in relation to the areas of learning considered appropriate to this stage. The link between the Desirable Outcomes for Learning for the children under five, and the progression into the National Curriculum Programmes of Study has not been developed. Consequently, the teaching often fails to promote learning through activities which encourage the children's full participation, and which encourage them to make contributions. It is too passive. The periods in which the children are expected to sit and to listen are too long. They become restless and their attention wanders. Their progress in learning is then slower than expected.
17. At Key Stage 2, not all of the teaching promotes the development of the pupils' information technology skills sufficiently. This leads to inconsistency in the quality of the work. Lessons have clear objectives, but these are not always fulfilled. The carefully planned time for activities using the computers is not always adhered to, and some is wasted when the pupils in need of direct supervision do not receive it. These lessons do not build on the pupils' previously acquired skills. Their progress then is slow. Other teaching is often good, and sometimes very good.
18. Most of the teaching is at least good at Key Stages 1 and 2. A great deal of the teaching is very good. Overall, the lessons are well planned, well organised and well managed. The teachers give clear instructions about what they require the pupils to do, and how it needs to be tackled. Support is given to individuals readily. Small-group work is used effectively to ensure that ideas are shared and that the pupils are supported when they tackle new aspects. The work of the learning support assistants is carefully organised. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and as well as praise being given for good effort, the pupils are set targets for improvement. The pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate tasks to ensure that they can cope with the learning, but at the same time they are also challenged to improve.
19. The excellent teaching promotes the progress of the pupils emphatically. Standards then are good. This is due to the clearly defined learning objectives, the thorough planning and the very effective management of the lessons, the pupils, and the resources. The teaching is perceptive, thorough and imaginative. The lessons are interesting as, for example, when the pupils are required to read and write about the 'Blitz' during World War II and explore an almost full-size model of an air-raid shelter, built in the classroom. Assessment information is used to guide the teachers' planning and homework is used to support work done in the classrooms. The pupils are expected to maintain high standards in their work and to make considerable efforts. They are effectively and beneficially challenged. This maximises the learning opportunities and fosters the pupils' increasing independence. It does much to promote good standards and the pupils' often very good progress.
20. The teaching of literacy is good and the teachers are making a firm effort to incorporate the new numeracy strategy into their daily work. Currently, the teaching of this latter aspect is satisfactory overall. The higher attaining pupils are being

increasingly challenged to attain at higher levels.

22. The curriculum and assessment

21. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. All subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education, are taught. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, but there are limitations in the curriculum for the pupils under five, and in some aspects of information technology. The curriculum for the under fives is not firmly based in the key areas of learning considered appropriate for this stage. An appropriate amount of teaching time is allocated to each subject, except for information technology. Emphasis is placed on the development of the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Less time is devoted to English than is the average, but the pupils generally achieve at least satisfactory standards. This is efficient. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities, although the progress and general development of the children under five is less than expected.
22. The school has effectively established the National Literacy Strategy in its daily work, and this is having a positive impact in raising standards. The teaching ensures a balance of activities which motivate the pupils well. A satisfactory start has been made in introducing the National Numeracy strategy and this is helping to raise standards at Key Stage 2 by challenging the highest attaining pupils to achieve higher standards. However, in some lessons, the mental arithmetic sessions are insufficiently imaginative. They lack stimulation and consequently fail to develop an appropriate sense of urgency in the pupils' learning.
23. The curriculum for information technology was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection. The pupils had limited opportunities to use the resources to develop their skills. This is still a weaker area of the provision. The school has developed a computer suite to ensure that the pupils are taught basic skills, but the time available is limited. Insufficient attention is given to ensuring that the pupils use information technology to enhance their learning in other subjects.
24. Time is carefully allocated to the development of the pupils' personal and social development. This is making a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. The pupils develop good listening skills and are willing to discuss a wide range of sensitive issues, including bereavement. The school has effective policies for sex education and for drug awareness, which are included in the personal and social education programme. The teachers deal openly and frankly with the pupils' questions on any issues relating to health and sex education.
25. The previous inspection identified the need to extend the school's curricular framework and to develop policies and schemes of work in all subjects. This issue has been successfully addressed and there are now satisfactory policies and schemes of work for all subjects and aspects. The schemes of work are central to the teachers' planning which is monitored by the Headteacher and the Acting Deputy Headteacher. The teachers meet regularly to plan and to share ideas and to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met. The plans for literacy and numeracy are very detailed. Each lesson has a clear learning target for the pupils, which is reinforced during, and at the end of lessons. The developmental role of the curriculum leaders in monitoring and evaluating the school's work has been identified, but the many recent staff changes have slowed the progress of this development. As a result, this initiative has not yet been fully implemented.

26. The curriculum for the children under five is not appropriate for their age and stage. A school policy outlines the areas of learning which young children are expected to experience but this is not sufficiently well developed in practice. Too few opportunities are provided for them to develop their practical skills, to explore, to make choices, to solve problems, and to increase their level of independence.
27. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The pupils have opportunities to participate in competitive team games. Almost half the pupils take part in football, netball, rounders and cricket. There are clubs for gymnastics, drama, art, French and a choir. All the activities are well supported and apparently enjoyed. The swimming pool is used in the Summer Term and throughout the summer holiday. This helps to ensure that all the pupils can swim at least twenty-five metres by the age of eleven.
28. The school arranges, and values, regular day and residential visits to museums, gardens, a local airport, and outdoor pursuits centres, to extend the opportunities for learning, and to enhance the pupils' general development. Good use is made of visitors to provide the pupils with insights into the past, and to talk about specific interests.
29. The school has an assessment policy which provides clear guidance for the teachers. The procedures are good, although initial (Baseline) assessment is not used sufficiently to focus on the learning needs of the pupils early on in their school career. The academic progress of the pupils is systematically recorded, particularly in relation to those pupils who have special educational needs. There is a clear marking policy and most of the teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and positively, commenting on what the pupils should do to improve. The information from assessments is used effectively to set targets for the pupils' individual and collective development and to guide teachers in their planning. It is also used effectively to focus the school's attention on areas for development, as for example, in the case of mathematics and spelling standards.

31. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

30. The provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good and the school's provision for their spiritual development is a strength. The four aspects are linked across the curriculum, and the assemblies add an important dimension to the pupils' personal development and understanding. The staff are aware that the personal development of the pupils underpins all that takes place in learning, and good encouragement is given to pupils in expressing themselves, and to take part in discussions and activities. The previous inspection found that the school successfully met most of its aims in this regard. The current inspection confirms that this position has not changed.
31. The provision for spiritual development is very good. The school's values are clearly identified in its aims and mission statement. The pupils have many opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs, in discussions and in personal and social education lessons. The teachers listen to the pupils' ideas and show that they value them. The pupils' singing in assemblies is spiritually uplifting. Time for meditation and reflection allows the pupils to think about how religious beliefs and values influence the way people live and give structure to society. Values of a Christian nature are considered. The study of works by artists, such as Jackson Pollock, Van Gogh and Picasso, allows the pupils to express themselves in descriptions of sounds as colour, or mood. These feelings are extended through music and group discussions, where for

example, the sharing of sadness in bereavement is handled with sensitivity and calmness.

32. The provision for moral development is good. The school teaches the principles that distinguish right from wrong effectively. There is a clear framework of values, reinforced by class rules, that helps to regulate personal behaviour. There is a strong moral code which is used as a basis for behaviour, and the adults set good examples. Studies of World War II, for example, give the pupils opportunities to debate moral issues, and to reflect on the complexity of remembrance, often through poetry and stories.
33. The provision for social development is good. The pupils are encouraged to relate well to others. They take responsibility readily, participate in community events, such as the planting of the village millennium wood, and gain an understanding of citizenship. The strong leadership of the headteacher reinforces what is socially acceptable behaviour, and provides the staff with good support in managing the pupils. This results in good cooperative work and play. The 'Special Person' initiative, in which a pupil is appointed in each class for special praise by the pupils, enables them to appreciate good social qualities and reward them.
34. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. It has been strengthened with the provision of artefacts and books which reflect the diverse cultures of the world. The pupils study the traditions and customs of their own and earlier communities, such as their grandparents' generation, Ancient Egyptians, the Romans and to make comparisons with those of the present day. Music and art are linked in these studies. Students from different cultural backgrounds attending a local language college visit the school to talk to the pupils, to 'take tea', and to socialise. The pupils visit many places of interest, such as museums, theatres and galleries, and have an opportunity to attend the school's French Club as an out-of-school activity.
36. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
35. The school has strengthened further the procedures for monitoring and recording the pupils' academic progress and personal development, previously reported as being good. The staff provide good quality pastoral care for the pupils. This feature is endorsed and appreciated by the parents. The promotion of positive values, which is reflected in the warm relationships, and the emphasis on respect and courtesy, have a direct impact on the happiness, safety and general orderliness of the school community. Health, safety and security issues are efficiently managed.
36. The school has established strong links with the local playgroups and nursery schools, and there are comprehensive transition arrangements for the Year 6 pupils, which include the transfer of relevant academic information to the next schools. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make generally good progress. Those pupils with behavioural problems are also sensitively supported. The school has consistent procedures for monitoring attendance and these have a good impact on ensuring satisfactory standards. Registers are regularly scrutinised and absence is followed up when notification has not been received. There is regular contact with the Education Welfare Officer.
37. The procedures for Child Protection are clear, well informed and supported by the outside agencies. The designated member of staff is knowledgeable and trained, and informs staff of any change in procedures, or recent developments of which they need

to be aware. Designated personnel for First Aid have received training. The pupils are made aware of safe practices in classrooms, in the playground, and during physical education lessons. They are supervised well at lunchtimes and during breaktimes. However, some younger children are sometimes inclined to jump low walls in the playground during playtimes, and incur a hazard to themselves and to others. The school is satisfactorily maintained, orderly and purposeful. The facilities are clean, and the grounds are generally litter free.

38. The systematic recording and assessment of the pupils' progress on a daily formal and informal basis is undertaken. The information is used beneficially to inform many aspects of the teaching and planning, and to focus support where it is needed. The teachers know the pupils well. The use of initial (Baseline) assessment to develop an appropriate programme of work for the youngest children is less effectively used.

40. **Partnership with parents and the community**

39. The previous inspection found that school life at Castle Camps was enriched considerably by the positive partnership which existed between the school and the parents. The staff and the governors were very active in consulting and communicating with parents. The school has maintained these good features. The close involvement that parents have with the school, and the school's contact with the local community, have a beneficial and positive influence on the quality of education provided and the progress made by the pupils.

40. The quality of the information provided for the parents, and the active participation of the governors in seeking parental views, is consistently good, and effective. The parents appreciate the regular newsletters and the opportunities to have informal talks with class teachers on a daily basis, when they bring their children to school, or collect them in the afternoon. Notice boards contain all current, relevant information, including governors' reports and notice of forthcoming activities. The class teachers provide specific updates on topics being studied, and the individual pupils' homework diaries offer a further means of daily communication between school and home. The school works hard to involve the parents as partners in their children's learning, consulting them over levels of homework, and canvassing parents' views whenever there are changes in the curriculum or in policy. The inspection found that the school consults with parents at every opportunity and is open to discussion and the resolving of any issues raised. No foundation was found for the criticism of some parents in the pre-inspection questionnaires about lack of information about the pupils' progress, homework and in dealing with complaints.

41. The annual written reports to parents about their children's progress meet statutory requirements. They comment on all the areas of curriculum and on personal and social education. However, they are not consistent in providing levels of attainment, or progress, or in setting targets for improvement. All contain space for comment by the pupils themselves, and an invitation to parents to meet with the appropriate teaching staff for further discussion. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in the formal review procedures.

42. A number of parents and other helpers work in school, supporting the staff and by organising the library, for example. The 'Friends of the School' are active in fund-raising, and in providing social events, where the school and the local community can join together. Well-constructed climbing equipment has been provided in the playground as a result of this fund-raising. The pupils are eager to show their climbing

prowess, and to share the quiet sitting area and surrounding garden, which the parents have helped to provide. The good parental support is invaluable to the school.

43. Visiting speakers, such as the local police, firemen, builders, surgeons, theatre groups and parents, help to enhance the curriculum, and provide contact with the wider community. Numerous visits, for example, to botanical gardens, reservoirs and museums support the pupils' topic work well. Residential trips give the pupils opportunities to experience adventure activities and promote their personal development. The close links the school maintains with other local schools is also beneficial.

45. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

45. **Leadership and management**

44. The headteacher's leadership is strong and purposeful. Since taking up her post in September 1997, she has initiated significant developments in the curriculum, in staffing, and in extending and improving the accommodation. The teaching staff has changed completely since the last inspection. The situation has not yet been completely resolved with the employment of more permanent staff. Despite a sixty-per-cent teaching commitment, the Headteacher manages to support the work of all the staff, and she provides the catalyst for a clear educational direction for the work of the school. In this she is ably supported by the Acting Deputy Headteacher, and other permanent staff, and the committed and involved governing body.
45. The school is moving forward rapidly. It has adopted the National Literacy Strategy to increasingly good effect, and is currently incorporating the Numeracy Strategy. Policies and schemes of work have been produced for all aspects of the curriculum. This was a key issue following the last inspection, and it is significant that new staff express the opinion that they are efficiently inducted into the school, know what they have to do, and can immediately make a contribution to its development.
46. The governing body is informed and active. The governors meet regularly, and are effectively informed by a series of smaller committees who have clear terms of reference and responsibilities for the various aspects of the school's work. Among these is the Strategic Planning Committee which takes an overview of developments and seeks to plan the most efficient way forward for the school. This is efficient. Both governors and senior staff monitor the school's work, including the teaching, the pupils' progress and the overall standards in the core subjects of the curriculum. Effective use is made of the local education authority's resources to support the school's planning and development. The subject coordinators' role, however, has not been fully developed.
47. The school is committed to achieving higher standards, and the ethos is very positive. The pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is informed and hard-working. Systems are firmly in place to monitor the pupils' progress and the records are comprehensive. Additional support is often given to some pupils at lunchtimes to ensure their continued development. The school is increasingly providing for those pupils whose attainment levels are higher than average.
48. The school works hard to match its aims. The statutory requirements are met in all aspects, except in information technology. The school has clear plans to improve this

aspect of its work, and to improve the provision for the children under five. The leadership of the school is purposefully taking the school forward.

50. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

49. The school has an appropriate number of qualified and experienced staff, an adequate level of accommodation, and a satisfactory range of resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum.
50. There are sufficient teachers to teach the National Curriculum and religious education effectively. The teaching resources and experience to match the needs of the children under five are less adequate, and this aspect is unsatisfactory. The teachers have clear job descriptions and all have curriculum responsibilities. They work as an effective team with the support staff, despite the present difficulties caused by some instability in staffing. The curriculum responsibilities have been recently re-allocated and the coordinators' roles in monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and provision across the range of the curriculum have still to be developed fully.
51. The school has good strategies to support new staff. They are given clear guidance in policies and schemes of work. The appraisal procedures meet statutory requirements and are used effectively to promote staff development. Attendance at literacy and numeracy in-service training has helped to enhance the teachers' and support staff's understanding and skills. The school values the support staff. They make a valuable contribution to the work of the school and to the quality of the education provided, especially in relation to those pupils who have special educational needs. Other staff help to create a welcoming atmosphere at the school. The staff relate well to the pupils.
52. The accommodation is in a state of change. The four 'mobile' classrooms are soon to be replaced in a current, extensive building project. The staff work hard to minimise the disruptions caused by the adverse conditions. The new building is planned to provide new classrooms, a computer suite and other facilities. Most of the teachers ensure that classroom displays and the use of artefacts help to stimulate the pupils' interest in learning. The under fives, Reception and Year 1 classroom has adequate space but is insufficiently stimulating. It also has a designated play area outside. The staffroom is currently being used to house the library, the computer suite and the staff-room. This arrangement is inconvenient, and it limits the opportunities for the pupils to use computers and to use the library freely. The school has valiantly attempted to timetable each class for sessions of information technology on a regular weekly basis so that the pupils' learning can continue in modified form.
53. The school has an outdoor learner swimming pool which is used well to promote the pupils' skills. There is a small field containing a 'wild area' and a pond which is used beneficially for environmental studies and science. There is a shaded area and picnic tables, and a range of good quality climbing apparatus. The playground is relatively small, but adequate.
54. There are adequate resources for all the curriculum areas, to support the development of literacy and numeracy, and the pupils with special educational needs. The resources for the children under five are limited. The school has increased the number of computers available, including the number of 'laptops'. These are not used sufficiently to support learning across the range of the curriculum, and the pupils themselves express some frustration over the limited opportunities to develop their

knowledge and skills through this medium.

55. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed and developed the use of the support staff, put into action a plan to improve the accommodation, and extended the information technology facilities. The latter, however, remains a weaker aspect.

57. The efficiency of the school

56. The quality of the school's financial planning is good. The Finance Committee maintains a careful overview of income and expenditure and it reports regularly to the full governing body. The finances are linked efficiently to the School Development Plan, and good use is made of any additional funds. The terms of reference for the transfer of funds are clearly stated, as are the terms of reference within which the Financial Committee works. The school is currently using grants from central government, and from the diocese, to increase the classroom space to incorporate new classrooms and a computer suite. This is timely, in view of the steadily increasing roll, and the need for improved facilities.
57. The report of the last financial audit in July 1997 made a number of recommendations to ensure that the accounting arrangements and systems were satisfactory. There is evidence to confirm that the recommendations of that audit have been fulfilled. The level of retained funds is currently approximately eight per cent of the school's income. This is appropriate during the period of rebuilding and extending the resources. Recently purchased learning resources, including those for literacy and information technology, are having a beneficial impact upon the standards and the pupils' progress, particularly those for literacy, where standards are increasingly good. The funding for special educational needs is efficiently used. This, combined with the good teaching and learning support provision, ensures that the needs of the pupils who have special needs are met. The deployment of the teaching staff is satisfactory, despite the recent difficulties in staffing experienced by the school.
58. At the time of the last inspection, the school was judged to be providing good value for money, although the previous terms of reference were not made clear. Since then there have been many changes, in staff, in the accommodation and in the demands in resources. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are average and their attainment on entry into school is average. The pupils' progress overall is good and their attainment by the time they leave is at least satisfactory. The quality of the education provided is generally good, except for the children under five, and in some aspects of information technology. Here, the quality of education is unsatisfactory. The unit cost per pupil is average. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

59. There were seven children under five years of age at the time of the inspection. Initial (Baseline) assessment information indicates that there is a wide spread of abilities within the intake, but that the overall picture is one of average attainment. The children's personal and social skills are generally less well developed than their literacy and mathematical skills. The children are taught in a mixed age class, which includes Reception and some younger Year 1 pupils. The classroom area is relatively spacious and includes its own facilities, and an outside play area. Insufficient use is made of the learning environment and resources to interest and challenge the youngest children.
60. By the age of five most of the pupils are prepared to engage with the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. There is a weakness in the provision for the children under five, however. The children do not gain sufficient experience in the areas of learning considered desirable for this age group. They are too quickly advanced, alongside their older classmates, into National Curriculum work. There are insufficient opportunities for them to take part in practical activities that would extend and reinforce their learning. The teaching fails to differentiate the work sufficiently to ensure that the youngest pupils make appropriate levels of progress. Many of the lessons are based on listening, rather than in doing. This leads to the children sitting for overlong periods. They consequently become restless and lose concentration. The teaching for the older pupils in the class is satisfactory overall, but for the youngest it is unsatisfactory. The skills of the Learning Support Assistant are not fully used. The children make good efforts to respond to the work provided, but they are sometimes out of their depth. Their good attitudes to school and to work are not effectively fostered at this stage.
62. **Personal and social development**
61. The children develop positive relationships with their peers and with the adults who help them. They show a good awareness that they are part of a group and are generally friendly and enthusiastic. The personal and social education lessons the children engage in, help them to think about themselves and their place in the world about them. They share well and show concern for others. However, they do not develop sufficiently, the ability to investigate and solve problems, to make choices, or to increase their confidence in tackling the challenges of new work. Their independence is limited due to the lack of stimulating activities. The opportunities to show a range of feelings such as wonder in their experiences are too few. The teaching fails to foster the children's progress sufficiently.
63. **Language and literacy**
62. The children's language and literacy skills are satisfactorily promoted. They are given opportunities to talk and to write, and to listen to stories, rhymes and accounts of events. They follow the teacher's instructions readily and are encouraged to share their ideas and feelings, and to give opinions. They extend their vocabulary, and develop an enjoyment of books. They use writing tools, and most can recognise and write their own name, and some familiar words, forming recognisable letters. The opportunities for the children to extend their learning through structured play in real life situations are limited. During the inspection, no work was seen that encouraged the children's independence by placing them, for example, in a model shop or post-

office, or cafe situation, so that they could learn in role-play, serving customers, do 'office' writing tasks, use the telephone, or make up menus. Interestingly, the pupils at the other end of the school, in Years 5 and 6, had a large model of an air-raid shelter in the classroom to extend their understanding of life during wartime and to inspire their language skills. The teaching of this aspect for the under fives is unsatisfactory overall. It does not make use of the range of learning options.

64. Mathematics

63. The majority of the children can recognise and order numbers to ten. They are able to sort and match objects and describe which are longer, shorter, bigger or smaller. They can recognise simple shapes and patterns. They are learning to find sequences in events in everyday life, in numbers and in stories. Some can add simple numbers and record them. Their vocabulary for mathematics is satisfactorily extended. The teaching does not reflect the areas of learning for this age group however, and the opportunities provided for the children to use apparatus, to solve problems, to predict answers, and to try out ideas are very limited. There are few opportunities also to use computers, or other learning tools in the children's mathematical experiences. The teaching is unsatisfactory, and the consequence of this lack is that the children do not make the expected progress, and the progress of which they are evidently capable.

65. Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. The children show appreciation of the natural and man-made world and develop an understanding of themselves, their family and the community in which they live, work and play. By the age of five they can reflect upon the recent past and are beginning to understand that things happen in the future and can be anticipated, such as birthdays and holidays. They learn about weather and seasonal changes. The children gain an insight into the wider world through looking at photographs and pictures and listening to stories and accounts. They are able to recognise, for example, photographs of artefacts in the church they visited. Again, however, the teaching does not sufficiently extend the range of activities, so that the children have regular opportunities to explore, using actual artefacts, sand, water or construction kits with active tasks that promote their learning and maximise their progress.

66. Physical development

65. The children's physical development is catered for satisfactorily. The children can join with their older peers in exploring space during physical education lessons, and use equipment effectively to promote the use of their bodies. They run, and climb, and jump and change speed and direction confidently. They are learning to control their body movements and are developing hand and eye coordination skills. They are becoming aware of their own safety needs and those of others. When the opportunity arises, the children can use simple tools like scissors and paint brushes effectively. The teaching of this aspect is satisfactory overall, but does not reflect sufficiently the objectives for children's physical development contained in the Desirable Outcomes for Learning.

67. Creative development

66. The children's creative development is adequate. They have opportunities to paint and draw, to sing, and to listen to and play music. They explore colour, tone, and line, and create interesting and lively paintings and drawings when given the opportunity. They respond with enthusiasm to stories and rhymes, and to musical sounds. They join with their older peers and sing with increasing confidence from memory. There

are too few opportunities for role play to encourage the children to use their imaginations and experiences, and to increase their creativity. The teaching of this aspect is satisfactory overall.

68. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

68. **English**

67. Overall standards in English are above average at both key stages. Results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 indicate that the pupils' attainment at seven is just below the national average in reading, and average in writing, but this is not borne out by inspection findings. In the same year, the results of tests for pupils aged eleven indicate that standards are average in English. In 1998 the results of the national tests indicated that the pupils' reading and writing skills were above average by the end of Key Stage 1, and average at Key Stage 2. Over the period from 1996 to 1999, the school has maintained a steady profile of average or above average pupil attainment. Compared to schools of similar type and size, Castle Camps compares well in relation to attainment at eleven.
68. Inspection findings in 1996 showed that standards in English were good across the school. This position has been maintained. The current inspection findings indicate that the pupils' speaking and listening skills are good, that their reading skills are effectively developed, and that their writing skills are good. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have developed keen listening skills. Most show good confidence in speaking to the class, and they do so clearly, and with an increasing vocabulary. Most can read simple texts accurately and with understanding, and their phonic skills are well developed. They express opinions about books, and why they like or dislike them. The higher attaining pupils have good reading skills, and those with special educational needs make firm progress in developing them. The pupils acquire good writing skills which they use for a range of purposes, for example, in writing letters, accounts of events, poetry and stories. They do not, however, use word-processing sufficiently in their English work. This places a limitation on their range of skills. The school has recently targeted spelling as an area for development. The pupils' spelling skills are improving.
69. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of the pupils have well developed language skills. They listen carefully, and comment pertinently upon what they have heard. Most speak clearly and lucidly about what they are doing, and they contribute well to the frequent class discussions. The pupils' reading skills are average overall. Some higher attaining pupils read very well, with excellent understanding. The pupils recognise key characters in stories, name favourite authors, compare books, and express their views very well. Most of the pupils can read efficiently from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, and use their reference skills to obtain information. The pupils' writing skills are good. They write sensitive poetry, interesting stories, and clear accounts of events. Those noted during the inspection about the events of World War II showed good insight and much sensitivity. A positive feature was the clear development of writing styles. However, as at Key Stage 1, the pupils' word-processing skills are under-developed due to the lack of opportunity to use computers to support their learning. Spelling is improving at both key stages.
70. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy very effectively. The overall planning for this is well done, and the consistent work is leading to benefits in terms of the pupils' involvement, interest and overall standards, at both key stages. The teaching of English is good overall. Some excellent lessons were observed, where the level of challenge for the pupils was high, where the learning was planned in steps to suit the differing abilities of the pupils, where the topic being studied was interesting, and the teachers enthusiastic. These features ensured that the pupils made good progress. On one occasion during the inspection, laptop computers were used to

provide the pupils with alternative means of putting their work together. This high quality teaching in English lessons was also supported by the teachers' positive approaches to discussion in lessons, for example, in personal and social education.

71. The pupils respond well to their English lessons. They join in discussions readily and listen well to their teachers and to each other. They show very good levels of interest, and behave well. These features make a positive contribution to the pupils' generally good progress at both Key Stages. However, the quality of the presentation of work by the pupils throughout the school is not good enough. It is satisfactory, but sometimes detracts from the good quality of the thoughts in the writing. The pupils' handwriting skills are good when they practice them, but these skills are not readily transferred to the work in other lessons.
72. The resources for English are good. They are well managed by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic coordinator. Assessment information is effectively and efficiently used and the teachers mark the pupils' work constructively. The work of the school in English has been effectively monitored, and clear targets have been set for future improvements in standards, as in the case of the school's spelling initiative. The school ensures the involvement of parents in supporting the development of the pupils' literacy skills through home/school diaries. These detail the required homework, the books currently being read, and targets for individual pupils' development.

74. **Mathematics**

73. The pupils' attainment in mathematics in tests is below average, although inspection findings indicate that it is line with national expectations at both key stages. The pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1, to achieve above average standards. Progress is variable at Key Stage 2 but is good overall. The level of attainment is improving and most of the pupils achieve average standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
74. The end of key stage 1 National Curriculum results in 1999 show that more than ninety per cent of the pupils achieve the expected standards, and that twenty-five per cent achieve at the higher standard, Level 3, above the national average. The results are similar to those achieved in 1998 which were in line with those of similar schools. The overall trend is one of improving performance. Current inspection evidence indicates that good standards are being achieved.
75. By the age of seven, the pupils achieve a secure foundation in number skills. They recognise place value to one hundred and can count in twos, fives and tens. They can recognise multiples of ten and know that any multiple of ten will have a zero as the last digit. They understand odd and even numbers, and can explain that all even numbers can be divided by two without a remainder. Most of the pupils can sort shapes by their mathematical properties and describe quadrilaterals, pentagons, hexagons and octagons. They can gather data in simple tables and record their findings in block graphs. The higher attaining pupils develop mental strategies to add and subtract numbers with two digits and understand place value to one thousand.
76. The 1999 results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that most of the pupils achieve below the standards expected of pupils of eleven. The 1999 results fall below the national average, but are a significant improvement on the 1998 results which were well below the average, and very low in comparison with

pupils in similar schools. The school identified the reasons for the poorer results then. The cohort of pupils included many who had special educational needs and there were absentees during the tests. The results were analysed and external advice was sought to ensure standards improved. The developments that followed, and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, are ensuring that standards are improving. Current inspection evidence confirms that more pupils are in line to achieve the national standard, and approximately a quarter of them are achieving at the higher standard of Level 5.

77. By the age of eleven, most of the pupils have a secure understanding of place value. They can make horizontal and vertical recordings of addition and subtraction problems with three-digit numbers. Most of the pupils can solve multiplication problems without a calculator and initially determine approximate answers. They understand how to calculate perimeter, area and volume. They are confident in using coordinates to specify a location. Most can describe acute, obtuse and right angles. They can identify the symmetries of two-dimensional shapes and say if a shape will tessellate. All the pupils can use a data-base and construct line, pie and block graphs.
78. The pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1. Progress is variable at Key Stage 2, but overall it is good. The teaching is demanding at both key stages, and is helping to achieve, higher standards. The progress of the pupils at the end of each key stage is good, especially in mental computation. Most have a secure knowledge of the multiplication tables. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Numeracy skills are used effectively in other subjects, for example, using time-lines in history to calculate chronological events, and in design and technology to measure accurately. In a weather project, the pupils at Key Stage 2 read scales to record temperature and rainfall.
79. The pupils show positive attitudes towards learning throughout the school. They enjoy their work in numeracy lessons and are eager to answer questions. They work cooperatively and sustain their interest, behave well, and relate well to one another and their teachers.
80. The quality of the teaching at both key stages ranges between satisfactory and very good. Overall it is good. The best teaching occurs at the end of each key stage. In these lessons, the teachers show a high degree of personal enthusiasm. They have excellent class management skills, and they ensure that the pupils experience a balance of activities. Expectations are high. The pupils are continually reminded about the aims of the lessons, and the resources are used effectively. For example, at the end of Key Stage 1, the teacher uses a 'dragon' mathematical aid to stimulate the pupils' interest. The pupils are encouraged to write multiples of numbers on the dragon's back in a variety of ways. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' mathematical vocabulary is interestingly extended, for example, to using 'trapezium', 'perpendicular' and 'equivalent'. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. When teaching is satisfactory, the generally good planning has clear learning targets and the teachers have secure management skills, but the lessons lack urgency and pace, and the expectations for presentation of work are lower. Assessment is generally used effectively to help in planning future work.
81. The previous inspection identified standards as average. These have improved at Key Stage 1, and standards are being raised at Key Stage 2, but this is not reflected in the test results.

83. **Science**

82. Overall standards in science are average at both key stages. There is evidence of some good standards being achieved, and the pupils make at least satisfactory progress. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
83. The 1999 National Curriculum assessments indicate that the pupils' achievements are in line with national expectations at seven and at eleven. The previous year's Teacher Assessments show that the pupils attained at levels well above the average at Key Stage 1 in all aspects including that for Experimental and Investigative Science (SC1), and above the average for similar schools. At Key Stage 2, the 1999 assessment results indicate that attainment is average when compared to those found nationally and that they are broadly in line with those of similar schools. However, almost a third of the pupils achieve at the higher level, Level 5. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, and the sound standards have been maintained over the period since 1996.
84. By the age of seven, the pupils have a firm knowledge of living things, of some materials and their properties, and an increasing knowledge of physical processes. They can name the parts of the human body and the conditions that plants need in order to survive. They can identify a range of common materials and describe their differences in terms of weight, hardness and softness, and their texture. They gain a basic knowledge of electrical circuits and know how a bulb works. By the age of eleven, this knowledge and understanding is extended. The pupils can identify the organs of the human body and their function and they know about food chains. They use an increasing range of scientific terms to describe their experiments with liquids and solids, and can draw diagrammatic representations of electrical circuits. In one lesson seen at Key Stage 2, the pupils carried out a series of experiments with magnets and circuits. They were confident in carrying out the various tests, and could make predictions about different insulating and conducting materials, and about the reactions of magnets in different conditions.
85. The pupils are very involved in their science work, which most seem to enjoy. They follow instructions well, and are confident enough to experiment for themselves, often in small, supportive groups. They are aware of safety issues when carrying out science experiments, and they share equipment and resources readily. They can use mathematical tables when collecting data and use their numeracy skills well when using equipment, such as a thermometer. The pupils make satisfactory progress. However, they have insufficient opportunities to use computers to record their work, and this is a missing element.
86. The teaching is satisfactory throughout both key stages. The lessons are well planned and the appropriate resources are made available. These are used effectively. The pupils are expected, at appropriate times to access them for themselves, which is good practice and increases their independence in learning. The lessons are well organised and managed, and good attention is paid to issues of safety. The teachers' expectations are appropriately high, and marking is used effectively to promote learning, but the general standard of the pupils' presentation of science work needs to be improved.
87. The resources for science are adequate. The policy of the school is that all classes explore an aspect of science at one time, and then move on to the next. This means that all classes study Materials and their Properties (SC2) during the same part of the year. This is efficient in ensuring that the teachers are well supported by each other

for the duration of the topic, but also means that the resources have to be divided or shared rapidly. Some of the resources, such as the magnets for example, are showing signs of wear and will need to be replaced if the accuracy of experimental work is to be maintained. There is an enclosed 'wild-area' in the school grounds which contains a pond. This is a useful resource and there is evidence of its effective use. The coordination of the subject does not cover the aspects of monitoring and evaluation of the school's overall work.

89. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

89. Information technology

88. Attainment in information technology at the end of both key stages is below expectations. Standards have not significantly improved since the previous inspection, when they varied between good and unsatisfactory. The highest standards were achieved then by the oldest pupils, who had developed many of their skills at home. Currently, the pupils do not make consistently satisfactory progress through the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. During the inspection, classes were time-tabled to use a temporary computer suite. Scrutiny of the pupils' work and discussion with them, confirms that the opportunities provided are too few to develop their skills fully.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are familiar with the keyboard and the mouse. They are able to type their name and use the capital lock. They know how to change a font, the colour and size of text. They can tell the computer what to do, but they are not confident in combining text and tables. Few can explain confidently how to save and retrieve, amend and print a final copy. Most of the pupils can satisfactorily program a floor computer.

90. By the end of Key Stage 2, most of the pupils attain the standards expected of eleven-year-olds in word-processing. They demonstrate good keyboard skills in combining text and graphics. They know how to edit, store and retrieve work from a file. Many of the pupils have access to a personal computer at home, and they develop the skills to present individual projects as part of their homework. Few of the pupils are confident in compiling and interrogating a data-base, although they can describe how doctors, the police and travel agents make use of them. Many of the pupils know how to access CD ROM and the Internet, often using skills learnt at home.

91. Progress in information technology is unsatisfactory at both key stages. This is directly linked to the lack of 'hands-on' opportunities provided for the pupils. The strand in which the pupils make satisfactory progress is that of word-processing. Information technology is not used sufficiently to support learning across the range of the curriculum. Not enough use is made of computers to enhance the learning of the pupils with special educational needs.

92. In the lessons observed, the pupils showed positive attitudes towards their work. They enjoy working co-operatively and they sustain their concentration well. The pupils who have developed skills are pleased to help those who are less confident. They are well behaved and respond readily to their teachers. They follow instructions well and show disappointment when lessons end. They also quietly express frustration at the limitations of their opportunities to use the school's equipment.

93. The quality of the teaching ranges between excellent and unsatisfactory. It is inconsistent. The school has made good efforts to support the less confident teachers. Most have a secure subject knowledge and they plan lessons well. These have clear learning targets for the pupils. When the teaching is excellent, it develops the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The teachers give clear instructions and readily recognise the pupils' difficulties. In one excellent lesson at early Key Stage 2, lap-top computers were used. The teaching was very supportive, but ensured that the pupils gained some independence in using them. When teaching is unsatisfactory, it is related to insecure class management and inefficient use of the available time and resources.

94. The school has a clear policy and scheme of work for information technology. It is recognised as a core subject in the National Curriculum and as a cross-curricular skill. The policy is not effectively followed. The school has recognised this and it has become a priority area for development. A computer suite is to be included in the new building. The coordination of the subject is not fully effective and teaching and learning have not been monitored to ensure that the appropriate standards are being reached.

96. **Religious education**

95. The quality of the school's work in religious education is satisfactory at both key stages. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The pupils make steady progress in their learning throughout their time at the school. The work is based firmly in the locally agreed syllabus, and the pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations. The work is linked effectively to the school's programme for personal and social education, and to the themes of assemblies.

96. The pupils at Key Stage 1 learn about themselves and their place in the world, about families, friends and about 'special things' and places. They hear and re-tell stories and parables from the Bible. Prior to the inspection, some had visited the local church, and studied it and its purposes. At Key Stage 2, the pupils extend their knowledge and understanding through lessons about significant religious festivals, such as Passover and Harvest, and learn about the Christian Calendar. Symbols of a variety of different faiths are studied and their meaning is interpreted, looking closely at what religious belief means to people, and how it affects their life and behaviour. The similarities and differences between various faiths are reviewed and discussed, and topics such as 'Peace and Conflict' are developed. The pupils hear and retell many stories about faith, for example, of Abraham and Isaac, The Plagues of Egypt, and the gospels of Luke and John.

97. The pupils are generally interested in their work. They work hard and maintain concentration, even when, as happens on occasions, the lessons lack an imaginative spark. The teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are efficiently planned and organised, but the methods of teaching are rather low key. Much effort has gone into developing the closely linked personal and social education programme and assemblies, and these provide a more creative stimulus for learning than the current religious education work in classes. The coordinator for the subject has only very recently been appointed. The role in monitoring and evaluating the school's work in the subject has not been developed. Good use is made of the Ely Resource Centre to obtain artefacts and books used in lessons, and of the regular visits of local clergy, to promote the pupils' awareness in religious education.

99. **Art**

98. Much of the pupils' art work is of good quality and they make good progress in their learning at both key stages. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The pupils develop a good range of skills at both key stages and can work confidently in a range of media. The scheme of work is carefully followed, and, for example, moves on from initial experiments with pencil and paint to the use of fabrics and clay, and mixed media. There are numerous examples of good work, notably in colour-mixing, self-portraits, and paintings by the pupils following the style of artists such as Van Gogh. The examples of three-dimensional paper sculptures, and the mixed-media work on fabric for an Advent Calendar observed during the inspection were striking. All the pupils use sketch books to practise with techniques and media, and to record ideas. This is good practice. There is a need, however, to ensure that these are maintained as careful records of ongoing and past work, and are not used simply as jotters.

99. In the lessons seen, the teaching was well organised and planning was thorough. The pupils and the resources were well managed. A feature of the lessons is that, within the confined and carefully thought out learning objectives, the pupils are given choices. This encourages their creativity and allows some independence in a secure and supportive framework. The pupils experience a good level of success and grow in confidence. The resources for art are adequate, but the present situation whereby the classes are housed in temporary classrooms, provides the teachers with management difficulties. Most overcome them well. Art works are used in effective displays around the school and they help to promote the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The pupils enjoy their work in art and are confident in discussing it, and the work of others. They work with enthusiasm and are proud of their finished creations.

101. **Design and technology**

100. One lesson only was observed during the inspection. There was insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of the teaching. Other judgements are based on discussion with teachers and pupils, and scrutiny of samples of the pupils' work. As a result of changes to the curriculum, the school has reduced the coverage of design and technology. Nevertheless, the work produced is appropriate to the pupils' age and stage of development. The pupils make satisfactory progress.

101. The pupils at Key Stage 1 confidently use a range of materials and techniques, and generate ideas. They can make moving pictures using pivots, levers and sliders as mechanisms. They can suggest ways in which their models can be improved. At Key Stage 2, the pupils can cut and shape materials with increasing precision, as when making musical instruments and Diwali lights to celebrate the Hindu Festival of Light. They have opportunities to develop their design skills. In discussions with pupils, there was no evidence of the pupils investigating, disassembling and evaluating products.

102. The previous inspection identified the need for the school to develop a policy and scheme of work. This has been done. The subject coordination role for design and technology has not been developed to incorporate monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. The resources are adequate but the accommodation for the subject is restricted.

104. **Geography**

103. One lesson in geography only, at Key Stage 2, was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on scrutiny of samples of the pupils' work, classroom displays, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the pupils' progress in geography at Key Stage 1.
104. Most of the pupils at Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress. They know how to use an atlas and four figure grid references. The pupils have a clear understanding of how human activity can change an environment, and how an environment can affect peoples' lives. They have considered how building a superstore near their own village would have advantages and disadvantages. At the latter end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have enacted the roles of residents, unemployed people, parents, councillors and business representatives, when debating the issues raised by a proposed new development.
105. Most of the pupils have a clear understanding of the weather cycle, and they can describe the processes of evaporation and condensation. They demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of their own country, but only limited knowledge of others. The last inspection noted the weakness of a lack of a planned and systematic study of places farther away. The need to develop a policy and scheme of work was identified as an area for development. This has been addressed, but there is little evidence of improvement in the pupils' knowledge in this aspect of geography. The role of the subject coordinator has not been fully established.

107. **History**

106. One lesson in history at Key Stage 2 was observed during the inspection. This was supplemented by the scrutiny of samples of the pupils' work, classroom displays and discussion with pupils. Insufficient evidence was obtained to make judgements for Key Stage 1. The quality of the older pupils' work in history is average overall.
107. The classes at Key Stage 2 are currently studying 'Britain Since 1930'. The younger pupils recognise changes that have taken place in industry and transport, including the impact of new technology. An example is the invention of television and the progression from black and white receivers to colour and digital television. They recognise the impact computers have had in helping businesses to be more efficient. They develop a sense of chronology and can record the major inventions and events on a time line. They learn songs from the music hall era and compare these with the music of today. Older pupils can describe the impact of the Second World War on the people of Britain. They can describe the plight of evacuees, rationing, and the 'Blitz'. By the end of the key stage, the pupils develop a firm sense of chronology. They can describe something of life in Victorian Britain, and the lives of people at home, at work, and at school.
108. The pupils are positive in their attitudes towards history. They talk enthusiastically of visits to local castles during their study topic on the Normans. A very positive aspect of the teaching is that artefacts are used to promote the pupils' interest. During the inspection, for example, a member of staff wore a different costume each day to demonstrate the changes in fashion from Victorian times to the present day. This created much discussion, and enhanced the quality of the learning considerably.
109. The previous inspection identified the need for the school to produce a policy and

scheme of work for history. This has been completed, and is now central to the teachers' good planning for the subject. The subject coordinator's role for history has not been fully developed.

111. **Music**

110. The quality of the school's work in music is good. The pupils achieve well at all stages and they make good progress, particularly at Key Stage 2.

111. The pupils can sing a variety of songs, some of them known by heart. The singing in whole-school assemblies is particularly melodic and inspiring. The pupils sing with clear diction, and excellent control of volume and tempo. They maintain their melody and lines in two-part singing to very good effect. The quality of this work is outstanding. The pupils play simple pieces and accompaniments on percussion instruments effectively, and make sounds to suggest feelings and movement. They listen well to a range of music and can describe sounds, differences and changes.

112. The pupils enjoy their music-making and work hard to perfect their performance. Their listening skills are well advanced and they handle instruments with increasing skill. They behave well in lessons, and listen well to their teachers' instructions. They offer ideas and critical comment readily, and work together well. The teaching is often inspiring. The lessons, and the overall programme of work are well planned. Good support is given to staff who have less confidence in teaching music, so that the work is generally developed to a good standard. The organisation and management of the pupils are very good, and this has a significant positive impact on the quality of the pupils' experiences.

113. The leadership of the subject is very strong and the ethos for learning is excellent. A policy and a scheme of work for music have been developed since the last inspection. The enthusiasm for music and the quality of the school's work have been maintained. The resources are adequate, but the quality of the accommodation in matching the needs of the subject is unsatisfactory. There are no extra-curricular activities in the form of peripatetic instrumental work, but the school has a choir.

115. **Physical education**

114. The pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress in physical education, including those with special educational needs.

115. At Key Stage 1, the pupils show confidence in planning and performing a combination of movements. They demonstrate good control in linking actions and they strive to improve their performance. At Key Stage 2, the pupils work well as a member of group. They practice and refine their movements, and show increasing control and accuracy. They can sustain energetic activity and know what happens to their body during exercise. The pupils recognise the importance of 'warm-up' and 'warm-down' sessions. Records show that most of the pupils can swim at least twenty-five metres by the time they are eleven.

116. The pupils evidently enjoy physical education. They are well behaved and attentive. From an early age, they follow instructions sensibly, for example, when putting out floor mats. They work hard at improving their skills and performance, and sustain their interest when watching others perform.

117. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall, and very good at the ends of the key stages. When the teaching is very good, the teachers plan lessons effectively to ensure a balance of activities. The pupils are well motivated and enjoy each strand of the lessons. Class management skills are excellent and the pupils' attention is maintained. In the satisfactory lessons, the teachers ensure that attention is paid to health and safety issues, and they provide appropriate challenges. Weaker aspects are related to the limited use of the resources and the lack of pace of lessons.
118. The curriculum is enhanced beneficially by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The pupils participate in team games and compete against other schools. They have the opportunity to join netball, rounders, cricket, football and swimming clubs.
119. The school's position with regard to physical education is similar to that at the time of the last inspection.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

120. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governors.
- A pre-inspection meeting was held with parents.
- A questionnaire about the school's life and work was provided for the parents and the results analysed.
- Documentation was scrutinised, including policies, planning and financial information and minutes of meetings.
- Forty lessons or parts of lessons were observed.
- Samples of the pupils' work from Reception and Years 2, 4 and 6 were scrutinised. Additional work spanning all the age groups was also scrutinised.
- A sample of pupils was heard reading aloud.
- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, the teaching and non-teaching staff about their responsibilities and work in school.
- Discussions were held with a sample of the pupils about their life and work in school.
- Additional meetings took place with members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors and the Finance Governor.
- The attendance registers were scrutinised.
- Lunchtimes, playtimes, and the arrival and departure of the pupils were observed.
- Assemblies were attended.
- The accommodation was inspected.

1. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	122	1	43	7

3. Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	32.5

Financial data

Financial year:	1999
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	£
Total Income	219196
Total Expenditure	218539
Expenditure per pupil	1681.07
Balance brought forward from previous year	16917
Balance carried forward to next year	17574

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

122

Number of questionnaires returned:

37

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	51.3	40.5	5.5	2.7	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	56.8	40.5	2.7	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	18.9	29.7	32.5	18.9	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	24.4	48.6	13.5	13.5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24.4	51.3	21.5	2.8	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24.4	54.1	16.0	5.5	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	29.7	45.9	18.9	5.5	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21.6	54.1	8.1	16.2	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32.5	45.9	21.6	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	24.4	62.1	10.7	2.8	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	45.9	48.6	5.5	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

The progress of pupils in mixed-age classes was commented upon. The inspection found that the pupils' progress overall is good at Key Stages 1 and 2, but that the progress of the youngest children in the Reception and Year 1 class was unsatisfactory.