

INSPECTION REPORT

**BRUTON FOUNDATION PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

BRUTON

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123899

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Stephens

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 25th to 29th November 2002

Inspection number: 248516

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Higher Backway
Bruton
Somerset

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Paul Taylor

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

Information about the inspection team

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23708	Geoff Burgess	Registered inspector	Science Information Technology Physical Education	Results & achievements Teaching & learning Leadership & management School improvement
02392	Frances Hurd	Lay inspector		Personal welfare & care Partnership with parents Adequacy of resources Attendance
24760	Susan Barton	Team inspector	English Music Religious Education	Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development
24342	Denise Franklin	Team inspector	Geography; History SEN	Attitudes, values & personal development
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bruton Foundation Primary School serves a wide spectrum of families of almost entirely British heritage mainly from the town and surrounding villages but with a significant number from further afield by choice. The number of pupils on roll has fallen steadily over the past few years with large year groups leaving the top of the school but is stabilising at around 310 to 320. The take-up of free school meals is low but there is evidence of other families living on low incomes in the rural economy. Of the below average number of pupils on the special needs register, two have statements of special need. Attainment on entry is above that found in most schools especially in expressive language, mathematical and personal development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with no significant weaknesses, which has improved greatly in the past year. Academic standards, pupils' personal standards, teaching and overall leadership and management are very good, Current expenditure per pupil is similar to most schools and attainment on entry is above average. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching across the school and very good work by support staff, ensures that pupils achieve well in each class and eleven-year-olds regularly attain very good standards
- Four and five-year-olds make good progress thanks to the high quality provision made for them in the youngest classes
- It provides a very rich and varied range of learning opportunities much enhanced by cross curricular and community links, special weeks, visits, visitors and extra curricular activities
- Pupils' personal development has a very high priority. They work hard, enjoy learning, behave very well, happily take more responsibility as they get older and get on very well together.
- The school takes very good care to ensure that boys and girls are safe and happy and able to do their best while carefully monitoring their progress and development.
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader and manager who has in one year, with the considerable help of the deputy head, senior managers, a committed staff and the governing body, turned a good school into a very good school

What could be improved

- Arrangements for monitoring provision and standards in the foundation subjects are not as effective as those for literacy and numeracy
- Despite very good instrumental and choral provision for some older pupils, lower levels of staff expertise and confidence in teaching music and the limited quality of support materials for teachers is meaning that many pupils are currently not achieving well in class lessons

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in November 1997, results in national testing for 11 year olds have improved by very much more than the national trend while standards in Year 2 remain above average. Current standards match these very good outcomes. All the areas for improvement noted then have been addressed with provision for information technology, spiritual development and problem solving very much improved. Staff changes have inhibited progress in art in Key Stage 2 but good plans are in hand and standards are already good. In addition, the new focus on self-evaluation and professional development has led to a culture of looking for continuous improvement throughout the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	B	A	A	well above average A
mathematics	B	C	B	D	above average B
science	A	B	A	A	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Apart from a dip to average in mathematics in 2001, results achieved by school leavers in national testing have been above average and in English and science usually well above average. The school achieved its best ever results in all three subjects in 2002 with an average improvement over 1998 scores the equivalent of two terms per subject better than the national improvement. This showed a good improvement since the same group of pupils took national tests in Year 2 in English and science in 1998. Year 2 results in 2002 fell from very high levels in reading and writing with a small gain in mathematics but overall results in all three subjects remain above average. Current standards in the core subjects match the above in both key stages. Overall standards in most other subjects are better than those seen in most schools. Boys and girls, including those who find learning difficult, are achieving well throughout the school in almost all subjects and areas of learning in the foundation stage.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Boys and girls enjoy coming to school and joining in the many activities it has to offer. They work hard, do their best and take a pride in their school and their achievements. Most are very willing to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences in class discussions and follow up schoolwork at home. Attitudes to school and learning are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	With very few exceptions, behaviour is very good and this makes a strong contribution to learning. Pupils understand and abide by the school and class rules and teachers and helpers rarely have to take up time sorting things out. Playtimes and lunchtimes are calm, sociable occasions with little need for adults to intervene.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: Everybody gets on very well with everybody else and visitors and newcomers are made to feel very welcome. All adults act as excellent role models in this respect and help to foster the family feel of the school. Pupils are growing into very confident, sociable and sensible citizens who recognise their own worth and appreciate the contribution made by others.
Attendance	Boys and girls enjoy school and their parents are very keen for them to do well. Consequently, any absences are unavoidable and any unpunctuality is due to the geography of the area.

Pupils make a very good contribution to their own learning and achievements and to the happy and positive ethos of the school. The very good quality of relationships between all members of the school community is one of its most significant strengths

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good
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Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses

The great majority of teaching is at least good with very little unsatisfactory. Very good or excellent teaching was observed in every year group and in all subjects observed except class music. This amounted to better than two in every five lessons in each stage. All teachers manage their pupils very well and boys and girls understand exactly what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and work habits. Their very good attitudes to learning are a strong factor in ensuring that it is almost always at least good. Lessons are very well planned and prepared. Literacy skills are particularly well taught and the school is making very good progress in developing the teaching of numeracy. More than a half of lessons in the two classes containing foundation children were very good with the teachers providing a rich range of appropriate activities matched to pupils needs. Teaching assistants and volunteers form a very important resource especially in helping pupils who find learning difficult and in supporting teachers in the foundation classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and suitably varied curriculum much enhanced by the contribution made by extra-curricular activities, cross-curricular links and the school's emphasis on visits, visitors and special weeks. Literacy and numeracy are strongly represented and science, the arts and humanities provide stimulation and balance. Good planning arrangements ensure adequate coverage in mixed age classes and that parallel classes receive a similar diet. Much very good provision is made to enhance pupils' personal, social and health education. The curriculum for under-fives is very well developed and appropriate and relevant to their needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Any children who show signs of not achieving as well as hoped are identified early and the school now has a comprehensive system for assessing and meeting their needs and monitoring progress. Parents are fully involved and appropriate learning targets in their individual plans are regularly updated. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to ensuring that pupils with special needs make good progress. The school takes very good care of pupils with very special needs who are included in all the school has to offer.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make excellent provision for the development of pupils' social skills and attitudes and for boys and girls to appreciate their own cultural heritage and learn about and value cultural diversity. Very good arrangements are made for pupils to reflect on their feelings & life and to raise their moral awareness. With very good procedures for monitoring and supporting the personal development of individual boys and girls, this adds up to excellent provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils. All areas of their health and welfare are taken very seriously and staff are constantly checking to ensure that all is well. Physical arrangements and procedures for ensuring pupils safety are well known by the whole school community. Good attendance has a high priority and very good behaviour is maintained with very effective procedures. Assessment procedures are much improved in the core subjects and are now very good but there is room for improvement in other subjects. Information provided by this and national tests is very well used to track pupil's progress, identify gaps in learning and guide planning.

The great majority of parents are very pleased with the way the school is helping their children to learn and mature. They feel comfortable in their formal and informal dealings with school and make a very good contribution to their children's learning and the life of the school community.

The school provides a very good range of user-friendly information and keeps parents well informed about their children's progress. Links with parents are excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The contribution that the head has made to the substantial recent improvements in the school is outstanding. Very well supported by the new deputy, she has shown admirable determination and clarity of purpose in managing the full agenda she inherited with numbers on role falling. A key element of this has been the way all staff have been encouraged and helped to develop their leadership roles and they now form a significant force for good in the development of the school. Very clearly expressed aims and values drive the school's work and these are reflected in its very efficient and unobtrusive management, focus on improvement and positive, caring ethos. The leadership provided by the head and deputy is excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has developed greatly over the past year thanks to the sustained commitment of longer standing governors and the enthusiasm of newer members. With much help from the head and the local authority, governors are now much more aware of their responsibilities and the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are seeking to improve the way the workload is managed through committees and individual responsibilities. Many are now active in the school observing, evaluating and discussing what is going on in their areas of interest. They are making a good and ever-improving contribution to the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A significant factor in the school's recent improvements is the very good way the head leads an on-going analysis of what the school is doing and the impact it has. Staff and governors are actively involved in the process, which is leading to a good deal more informed discussion about the way forward. Relevant data at every level, starting at the baseline, is now being used to set priorities and targets and to evaluate the impact of actions taken. The very useful school strategic plan based on this process appropriately identifies specific areas for improvement, each of which is directly related to standards, but also includes a thorough programme for maintaining what is already working. The schools commitment to improvement and the impact of actions already taken are excellent.
The strategic use of resources	With numbers of pupils on roll falling, the school has little room for manoeuvre with its budget but has been very effective in managing its reduced funding. Carefully managed improvements have been made to the buildings and the way they are used. These have made much better use of the available space and improved security. Best value principles are applied and where the school has choice, funds are spent on what staff and governors agree is important. This has recently resulted in a significant increase in the number of teaching assistants. Good use is made of all teaching and support staff and a generally good supply of resources are effectively stored & well used.

The head has, with optimism, great common sense and refreshing openness, made the most of the school's existing strengths, changed what needed changing and brought in the best of recent developments in good practice. Pupils, parents, governors and staff are all enjoying the opportunity to make their full contribution to the life of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children enjoy going to school • teaching is good and their children are making good progress • pupils work hard and do their best • the school is helping pupils to grow up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the work their children are expected to do at home • information about how well their children are doing • the range of extra activities the school

sensibly and behaviour is good • the staff are very approachable • the school is well led and managed	provides
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Inspectors agree with all the positive judgements made by parents but judge that homework, extra curricular activities and reports and parent discussions are better than in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school maintained the high standards it had set itself recently by doing better in national tests for school leavers in 2002 than it had ever done before. Results for English and science were especially commendable in that they were well above the average for all schools and when compared with schools with the same low number of free school meals. In addition, they showed an improvement since 1998 of more than the equivalent of two terms more than the national improvement over the same period. Following a long-term school trend, results in mathematics were not as good but were still above average and still showed a one term better improvement than the national trend. Even more encouraging is the fact that standards in all three subjects improved by the equivalent of over a term from 2001 to 2002 after a dip in 2001.

2. From 1998 to 2001, standards achieved by seven-year-olds in national tests for reading and writing were well above average and improving at the same rate as most other schools. A much smaller year group with more pupils with difficulties in reading and writing in 2002 brought about an expected fall but standards were still well above average in writing and above in reading. Historically, results in mathematics had not been quite as good but with a lot of attention focused on improving the teaching of numeracy throughout the school, results in these tests actually went up and remained at above average. Most of this gain came from a substantial increase in the number of pupils achieving higher grades.

3. Very good teaching in literacy and numeracy, improved provision for higher and lower attainers and the much enhanced support provided by extra teaching assistants is seeing good achievement in these subjects throughout the school. Standards remain above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6 in reading and writing and above in numeracy in both key stages. Speaking and listening skills are above average throughout the school with many pupils very articulate in discussions and in answering questions. Very good use is made of literacy skills in reading and writing for specific purposes in other subjects such as history, science and design technology. Rather less use is made of learned numeracy skills. Standards in science are above average throughout the school and with continued good teaching in Year 6, these pupils should achieve well above average results in national testing before they leave.

4. Boys and girls in their foundation year have made good progress in most areas of learning in the short time they have been in school with a growing number starting to read, almost all writing their own names and many able to do simple 'sums' in their heads. Several children have already achieved most early learning goals and the great majority will match them in most areas of learning well before the end of the foundation year. The exception is in their physical development where the lack of an easily accessible secure outside area means that boys and girls do not have daily access to physically challenging and vigorous outdoor play.

5. Standards in most other subjects are at least better than expected for the ages of the pupils concerned with higher standards in some classes where teachers have particular expertise. This includes information and communications technology where achievement in several classes is very good and overall standards are building at a good rate through the school. However, pupils in year six have only had access to the computer suite and focused teaching for a fraction of their school careers and understandably there are several gaps in their learning which will not be filled before they leave. Unusually for a school with such a strong musical tradition, the one subject where standards for most pupils are not as strong is music. A significant number of older pupils who are learning instruments with visiting specialists have a better knowledge and understanding of music and are able to perform at much higher levels than might be expected for pupils of their age. However, provision for the majority is much less well developed and their current progress is much slower.

6. Pupils who find learning difficult make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment because of very good provision in lessons. Clear measurable targets in individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Review outcomes are recorded so that progress can be tracked and so support decisions about the next steps in learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' very good attitudes to school and their learning have been maintained since the last inspection. As a direct result of very good teaching and interesting lessons, they are enthusiastic and purposeful in their studies. For example, in history lessons pupils are given a wide range of interesting resources and experiences to support them and as a result they are extremely enthusiastic, concentrate very well and achieve high standards in the subject. They work well together in pairs or groups, sharing ideas and equipment good-naturedly. Pupils contribute positively to short dialogues in lessons and appreciate one another's comments. For example, in a dance lesson constructive comments were made on each other's performances. Attendance is very good, being well above national averages and unpunctuality is very rare.

8. Behaviour is very good. This is a view also held by the parents. Pupils have a keen sense of self discipline and display very good patterns of social behaviour. The school is an orderly place and pupils are courteous to adults and to one another. They know exactly what is expected of them. For example, at the end of each break-time and lunchtime they respond immediately to the adults and return quickly and quietly to their classrooms. One parent told the inspectors that members of the public complemented the pupils on their behaviour during a visit to a museum. No oppressive behaviour was observed and there have been no exclusions.

9. Personal development and relationships are very good which is evident in the whole ethos of the school. Pupils confidently share their thoughts with staff and a very good rapport exists between pupils, and between adults and pupils. They have a healthy respect for each other and value one another's achievements. Good work and endeavour is evident at the end of lessons when the class discusses whether the learning objectives have been achieved. They really appreciate visitors who support them with their learning. During the inspection, pupils listened with great interest to a member of the local community talking about his time as an evacuee during the Second World War.

10. Staff relationships are excellent and they set a very good example to the pupils. During a literacy lesson one teacher shared a piece of written work prepared by another teacher, explaining carefully to the pupils that it is good to share successes because you cannot be good at everything. Pupils responded very well to this comment by the teacher. All pupils really enjoy little responsibilities given to them within the classroom and know that they will have more responsibilities as they get older. Pupils in Year 6 take all their responsibilities very seriously. For example, they organise and monitor the play equipment, set up the hall for assemblies, ring the bells and help in the office. Many are representatives on the School Council, or act as House Captains, Librarians or Games Captains.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. When the school was last inspected, teaching was said to be good overall with very good teaching in the reception classes, three-quarters of lessons good and better in Years 1 and 2 and half in Years 3 to 6. A few lessons were unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teaching is now very good overall. The great majority of lessons are at least good in Key Stages 1 and 2, all lessons are good and better in the foundation stage and at least two fifths are very good and better in each of the three stages. Very good teaching featured in every year group and in almost all subjects, and two lessons were judged to be excellent. The strongest teaching was observed in the foundation year, Year 1 and Year 6 and in literacy, physical education, design technology and information technology with at least half the lessons observed very good and better in each. Only in class taught music were more lessons satisfactory than good and just one literacy lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory.

12. Several whole school developments have contributed to this very much more consistent and higher quality picture since the last inspection. These include:

- The effective implementation of the literacy strategy and more recently, the numeracy strategy and the adoption of national schemes of work in other subjects which has provided a detailed agreed planning structure to ensure consistency and progression
- Regular planning meetings ensure that learning objectives and expectations for pupils in parallel classes are the same and that best use is made of subject strengths in planning
- A much bigger emphasis on making learning more cohesive by relating work in many subjects to a common theme such as currently in history
- Much better use of information from assessments to identify trends, priorities, specific gaps in learning and to modify planning
- A large increase in the number of learning support assistants, focused training and the enhancement of their role especially in supporting pupils with extra needs
- Much improved arrangements for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils who find aspects of learning difficult as part of their normal classroom entitlement
- The upgraded computer suite and associated training has had a profound effect on the confidence and competence of teachers and pupils in information technology.
- Performance management procedures have added structure, focus and purpose to the monitoring of teaching and continuing professional development procedures.

13. However, the contribution which pupils make to their own achievements by their enthusiasm for learning, their very good behaviour and their willingness to try is one aspect of learning which has not changed since the last inspection. The combination of very good attitudes to learning and teachers' very good management of pupils and activities means that the maximum amount of time is spent on constructive work. It also allows teachers to attempt all kinds of activities confident that the boys and girls can cope with whatever demands are made on their self-control. This was often seen in busy, excited classrooms such as in a very good Year 1 science lesson where young faces lit up with excitement even brighter than the chains of bulbs they joined with batteries to make electrical circuits.

14. Nearly two-thirds of all teaching in the foundation year is very good with the rest good. Very good use is being made of their well-resourced accommodation by the two foundation stage teachers to provide pupils with a rich range of learning opportunities. A very good example of this came in a language session where the teacher used a wide range of strategies to identify the letter 'S' and write it properly. This in turn leads on to a very good range of activities planned to meet the needs of the different ability groups. A very good session in the hall showed how all the very good elements displayed in the classroom are extended into work around the school. Not a moment is wasted, boys and girls know exactly what to do and with everything well prepared and very clear instructions, the pace of learning is very good. Constant praise and great sensitivity to the needs of individuals means that children are happy and confident in their movement. A small number of pupils are spending their second year in school in a class with foundation children. The teacher skilfully adapts her planning to ensure that both groups receive the same high quality provision as boys and girls in the two single age classes.

15. Various combinations of the factors listed above came into play in the many very good lessons observed in Years 1 to 6. In an excellent Year 6 literacy lesson, very good use was made of the strategy structure with very clear targets for each group and a very good awareness, through assessment, of the needs of various groups and individuals. Excellent use was made of the available extra help with lower attaining pupils very well supported. For their part, pupils made an excellent contribution and the quality of discussions and the very high levels of collaboration made all the difference to an outstanding piece of teaching. Two very good design technology lessons in Year 5 illustrate the impact of joint planning and the way work related to learning in other subjects adds relevance to pupils learning. In both classes, the learning objective of designing a musical instrument was actively related to work on sound in science and work on instructional writing in literacy. Once again, pupils very positive attitudes to learning meant that teachers could concentrate entirely on supporting and extending learning and, in both classes, the virtuous circle set up made for high quality, very purposeful work.

16. Many other examples of these and other factors including the impact of very good subject

knowledge by coordinators are noted in the various subject sections in Part D. However, the one subject where this is not the case is music. Here, the loss of the previous coordinator revealed that most staff lack the same level of expertise and confidence that they show in all other subjects, and that the planning support available is not good enough to help them teach National Curriculum music effectively. This is mitigated for a minority of older, higher attainers through the high quality instrumental teaching they receive from visiting teachers and by the contribution of various after school groups and choirs. However, for the majority, music teaching is not of the same high quality as seen in all other subjects.

17. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are well supported by teaching assistants who clarify teaching points and give enough support to enable the pupils to achieve very well. Tasks are very well matched to meet the needs of the pupils and the teachers know the pupils very well. For example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 6 the teaching assistant often made things clearer for a small group of pupils when they were calculating the perimeter of rectangles and also enabled them to take part in a game of bingo with the whole class. Teachers target individuals very well during lessons to enable them to succeed. In a literacy lesson in Year 6 the teacher often asked individuals questions, referring to their individual targets at the same time. Teaching assistants keep detailed records of contents of lessons and outcomes in relation to the pupil's individual education plan. The special educational needs co-ordinator supports teachers in formulating targets to meet the needs of individual pupils very well, taking responsibility for writing the targets and using a commercial computer programme.

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

18. The quality and range of learning activities provided by the school is very good. In 1997 inspectors reported that while the breadth and balance of the curriculum was generally good, there were some shortcomings in exploration, investigation and problem solving and that there was a need to implement a scheme of work for art. The school has worked hard to ensure that the points raised in the last full inspection have been addressed so that it now provides a rich and varied curriculum which more than fulfils the statutory requirements.

19. All pupils have access to a very wide range of interesting and stimulating experiences that cover all the required elements. A consistent approach to planning and evaluation enables the school to build a good curriculum with full coverage. However, the lack of a secure outside area in the foundation stage inhibits the provision of on-going opportunities for children to develop their large movement skills. The consistent use of national strategies and National Curriculum guidance through national schemes of work gives full entitlement to all pupils. In religious education the school has adopted the county syllabus ensuring good provision. The personal, social and health education curriculum is greatly enhanced by its very good approach to citizenship and obvious links with worship in the school.

20. A suitable emphasis is placed on the teaching of English, mathematics and science and the Literacy strategy has been very effectively implemented. Last year the school recognised that the Numeracy strategy had not been introduced as well and has since taken considerable steps to ensure the full implementation of this strategy and with some training still to be completed, the achievement in mathematics is building throughout the school. Strengths of the curriculum are the focus weeks and cross-curricular projects that have enhanced pupils' learning. An excellent Science week was held in 2001. Year groups often have focus weeks at the end of half terms; such weeks have recently focused on the Tudors and the Victorians. An excellent project linking with local business in the construction of the new community centre next door involved real work in mathematics, design technology and science, pupils produced high quality work supported by a curriculum pack supplied by the Federation of Master Builders.

21. Comprehensive curriculum planning covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. Most subjects have appropriate policies in place and base their schemes of work around national guidance. However, in music the lack of similarly well developed support materials is inhibiting class music teaching. Overall thorough planning involves all the teaching staff and this has a positive

impact on teaching and learning. Joint planning in year groups strengthens the delivery of the curriculum, ensures even coverage and encourages staff to share their expertise. Lesson plans seen clearly identified the learning intentions for each session, indicated differentiated activities where appropriate and showed the links to previous sessions. Thorough evaluation at weekly and half-termly intervals allows the opportunity for adaptation wherever necessary. The school has a very positive attitude to equal opportunities, which is reflected in the overall caring nature of the establishment. Although the structural layout of the school can create problems of accessibility, procedures are taken to assist children with physical disabilities. The school makes good use of subject expertise and the role of the coordinators is considerably enhanced. Where possible, when staff are new to a post of responsibility they are ably supported by previous co-ordinators.

22. Since the last inspection, pupils have had greater opportunity to increase their information technology skills by the provision of a computer suite and accompanying software. The creation of a school library has provided a stimulating well-stocked resource. Pupils regularly play competitive team games against other schools. In music the school has an active choir and orchestra and provides individual instrumental teaching for some of its pupils. Where pupils miss part of a lesson for instrumental tuition, staff ensure that they are made aware of what they have missed and what they need to do. A rolling programme for this tuition stops pupils consistently missing the same lesson.

23. Provision for supporting pupils who find learning and conforming to school rules difficult is very good. The school's full commitment to inclusion is evident in the high priority placed on special educational needs to ensure that the individual needs of all pupils are met. It has recently changed its provision from teaching in small groups, withdrawn from the classroom at various times during the day, to more focused support in the classroom. The special needs coordinator continues to give some support to individual pupils within the classroom, working closely with the class teacher, and also regularly monitors individual pupil's progress. Some parents have been concerned about the support provided for their child, following the change in provision but the inspection team felt that the current level of support is very good. It fully ensures that all pupils have access to the same curriculum as the rest of the class at all times.

24. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good though mainly targeted at older pupils, which is the case in most schools. During the inspection pupils could attend lunchtime and after-school clubs for environmental studies, chess, choir, football, French, drama and music, country dancing, golf and netball. In addition, pupils play in the school orchestra by invitation and others had been selected to take part in the school's Christmas drama production. In the last year, there have also been short tennis, rounders, gymnastics, athletics, hockey, sewing, art, and cricket clubs. After many years when extra-curricular sports provision had focused on football, the school decided to broaden the range of sporting activities offered within the curriculum, with the aim of attracting a wider range of pupils to participate in sport and perhaps creating additional clubs for sports which prove particularly popular. A privately run football club uses the school field at weekends.

25. Pupils also benefit through visits by artists and music groups. A day of pop and information technology workshops was held, when pupils composed songs and dance tracks and did a concert. The school staged a summer pantomime (Ali Baba). All year groups have at least one off site visit. Reception pupils visited Charmouth Beach; Year 1 visited the Somerset Rural Life Museum; Year 2 visited the Roman Baths; Year 3 did a walk along the River Brue and visited Whatley Quarry; Year 4 went to Mill on the Brue, an outdoor pursuits centre in the town; and Year 5 visited a theatre workshop, had enrichment days at a secondary school, and staged a Tudor Day at school. Year 6 had an 'evacuees' day' at Nothe Fort, made pizzas at Pizza Express, took part in a Science Week and had a residential trip to Okehampton in Devon.

26. Links with the local community make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. The school sends its newsletter to former parents, governors, all local schools and the community centre, and by this means generates further support for its activities. Events are well supported by all these groups, often by practical help as well as by spending money. It also reports on its activities in the town newsletter and the church magazine. Several sports activities and a few clubs use the school's premises out of hours, but lettings are limited since Bruton has many hall facilities. The

school has close links with the local churches, whose clergy regularly visit to take assemblies. Christmas and Harvest Festival services are held in the parish church, which is running a confirmation class at the school. Year 6 pupils delivered the Harvest Festival produce to local elderly people. The school is running an information technology training course for local people. Pupils always enter the local horticultural show classes for children. The town council funded the planting of a garden designed and planted by one of the Horticultural Show organisers in memory of a former teacher at the school.

27. Bruton Cricket Club provides coaching and some facilities. A local arts workshop helped design and print the school's Christmas cards (sold to raise money for a children's hospice) and calendar (sold to raise money for the school itself). Older residents often come into the school to talk about their experiences such as during the Second World War and husbands of two members of staff come in to run extra-curricular activities. The building of the new community hall next to the school was used as an opportunity for real-life maths and science experiences. The building firm held seminars and provided materials for the school to work with and have undertaken to help with making a 'quiet area' with seating in the corner of the school field.

28. Very good links have been formed with the school's partner institutions. It works closely with its two feeder playgroups. Class teachers visit them to meet their future pupils and children and their parents are welcomed on visits during the summer term. Well-established transfer arrangements are made with local secondary schools. Teachers from the various secondary schools meet their future pupils at the school for a chat. Most pupils transfer to King Arthur's School in Wincanton, which has recently become a sporting technology college and offers its feeder schools sports training opportunities. It also hosts musical events for older pupils. The school has made use of the swimming pools and the halls at two Bruton secondary schools, as well as those at King Arthur's. One of the secondary schools will be offering football coaching, and another is working with the school to improve curriculum links. The school welcomes work experience pupils from four secondary schools. It works closely with neighbouring primary schools, organising joint training days for staff and special events for pupils.

29. Since the last report, much has been done to make the provision for the spiritual development of pupils very good. Many opportunities are provided in collective worship and all subjects for a time of thoughtful quietness in which pupils may reflect their feelings, thoughts and concerns. A very good example came in a very special religious education (RE) lesson in Year 1 where boys and girls talked animatedly about books that are special to them before being given the time to think quietly about why they are special. Teachers value pupils' questions and encourage discussion. Collective worship is very well planned with a weekly theme and links are made throughout the week with other areas of learning. The week's theme, living in a community, enabled pupils to recognise the importance of values in society. Pupils are helped to make connections between different parts of their learning, such as by studying Lord Shaftesbury in history and the impact of values on people and themselves in RE.

30. Pupils acquire knowledge and insight into Christian values and beliefs and those of some of the world's other great religions. The personal, social and health education programme provides opportunities for pupils to understand how feelings and emotions affect people. Pupils are encouraged to recognise that we are all different with differing qualities and to show respect for other people. They are given time to develop what interests them, for example personal skills, such as sport, music and drama. There are close links with the local church and the minister visits the school regularly to share in collective worship and religious education, which adds to the spiritual dimension offered. A confirmation class is held after school for those who are interested in becoming confirmed members of the Anglican Church.

31. Provision for pupils' moral development is also very good. The school is very successful in teaching the difference between right and wrong. A moral code is being positively and sensitively encouraged throughout the school. Pupils know how to achieve rewards, which promotes fairness and consistency. They value the achieving of house points, teacher and lunchtime awards. Pupils are involved in organising and contribute to a nominated charity each year. Personal, social and health education makes a strong contribution to the provision of moral education through the use of

circle time. This enables pupils to share problems as well as provide support and respect, and to value other people. The school council provides an opportunity for pupils to share opinions and to make democratic decisions. Adults within the school provide very good role models through the provision of a caring ethos and respect and concern for one another. The school promotes an understanding of environmental issues, such as recycling milk bottles and making right choices through day-to-day activities. An environmental club strongly promotes care for the local environment.

32. Staff provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' social skills and attitudes. Boys and girls are encouraged to recognise this as a key value on which community life is based. They are encouraged to work co-operatively by working in pairs or small groups, sharing ideas and helping each other. House points are on offer for achievements in work and behaviour and are worked for as a team. Pupils are good at accepting responsibility in class and around the school and take their roles seriously. Pupils in year six undertake many duties throughout the school day, which provides good support for other pupils and teachers. Residential visits provide opportunities for further team building and the value of working together is emphasised. Very positive links between a local building firm and the pupils have been established providing ever-widening experiences. Links in the town include the positive feeling that the school is at the heart of the community with whole community events being centred on the school. Care is shown for other people within the town and very close relationships established with other schools. There is a very strong policy for all pupils to be included in all aspects of school life. Boys and girls with special educational needs are well integrated into the school.

33. The provision for pupils' cultural development is also excellent. Pupils' awareness of their own culture is acquired through the programme of many and varied visits made to places of educational interest related to the curriculum. Their English cultural heritage is studied through such areas as literature and the study of folk tales, history and the study of the Victorians, Tudors and their dancing, and more recently the study of World War II and the difference in diet; and after school in the country dance club. Local artists, authors, musicians and theatre groups visit the school providing opportunities for specialist learning as well as fun. Pupils' are encouraged to develop particular gifts and talents, especially in literature, sport and music. Opportunities arise within the curriculum, for example in the study and comparisons of other faiths, to extend awareness of other cultures. The painting of self-portraits includes looking at pictures by Rembrandt, and a study of work by Mondrian results in paintings in a similar style. The school reinforces its cultural values through the use of good quality displays and artefacts related to pupils' learning. A visit by a teacher to The Gambia has given rise to African artwork and a study of comparative life.

34. Opportunities offered to extend the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are constantly monitored through the very detailed personal records of individual pupils' development alongside the continuing discussions of the school's values with governors, all adults in the school, and with pupils. All in all, the provision which the school makes for pupils' personal development is excellent.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The care, support and guidance of each child as an individual are of the utmost importance to all adults in the school and pupils are well known and well cared for. Their attendance, behaviour and personal development is monitored very well to ensure needs are met and support provided if needed. Good standards have been maintained and built upon since the last inspection to provide a safe and supportive learning environment.

36. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are very good. The coordinator for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has done a good deal of work in assessing materials and in preparing these for her colleagues. She works closely with colleagues responsible for religious education and science to ensure that cross-curricular topics are fully covered. The school adopted a scheme of work last year, and has now adapted it to include citizenship. All classes use 'circle time' as a format for teaching PSHE, some with more success than others. A library of relevant books has been built up which are available on loan to all staff. The

coordinator has tried hard to ensure that PSHE lessons convey the school's values and beliefs to pupils, although she has not yet been able to monitor this in action.

37. Weekly evaluations undertaken by teaching staff include comments on individual pupils' personal development ('he listens and responds well when taught in a small group'). Teachers note differences between classes of children: in one year group, one class preferred practical tasks, while the other needed discussion time. Pupils' opinions are valued, whether voiced through the school council or via a suggestion box. They all take on responsibilities in their classrooms. Older ones look after the school office at lunchtimes, set out and clear the hall for assembly, and help to manage the playground. Pupils are encouraged to organise charitable or fund-raising events themselves. The Environmental Club, intended to raise pupils' awareness of their own environment as well as larger issues, has proved very popular. Pupils are constantly being asked to evaluate and discuss their work. For instance, in a Year 6 dance lesson, pupils explained what they felt needed to improve ('I didn't really fit my ideas enough to the music').

38. Procedures for child protection, and for ensuring pupil welfare, are very good. The fully trained child protection liaison officer (CPLO) updated her training in 2001 and the school's policy follows local authority guidelines giving clear guidance. Staff are given a full briefing on arrival, and a whole staff update is provided annually. The school works closely with the relevant external agencies with a half-termly meeting between the CPLO, the headteacher and the school's educational social worker. A detailed health and safety policy, separate ones on journeys and visits, and others on crisis management clearly outline everybody's responsibilities. Both site entrances are controlled electronically by the office. The governors carry out an annual risk assessment using the local authority's checklist with teaching staff assessing the classrooms. Good follow up systems are in place and all actions taken to deal with perceived hazards are recorded and dated. Electrical and physical education equipment is tested annually by appropriate contractors.

39. The dedicated medical room has first aid supplies and a small bed for a sick child. Epipens and prescription medicines are kept in a locked cupboard in the office. A basic first aid course was held for all staff last term and two members of staff have full qualifications, which are regularly updated. The school uses 'alert cards' kept in the school office and by relevant class teachers with a photograph and full medical guidance for pupils with severe allergies, diabetes or other long-term health problems.

40. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The school has detailed policies on behaviour management, equal opportunities, bullying and racial harassment. Expectations of pupil behaviour are made very clear through displays, teacher instruction, and most of all, through the very good role models given by adults. Consistent behaviour management in class is nearly always of a very high standard: unobtrusive yet effective. Adults treat pupils with great courtesy. Positive behaviour is rewarded with stickers, house points, and certificates. Lunchtime supervisors award stickers and good lunchtime behaviour is reported in assembly daily. In a weekly celebration assembly, good behaviour is praised alongside good work and a cup is presented weekly to the winning house. New arrangements for playtimes in wet weather, whereby pupils are given the option of quiet activities or a video to watch in designated classrooms, have been very successful. Pupils questioned were confident that staff would deal with bullying effectively: 'the grown-ups will sort it out'. In those cases where pupils find conforming and concentrating difficult, the school first monitors their behaviour closely and then if necessary draws up an individual behaviour management plan, in consultation with the pupil and his or her parents.

41. Arrangements made for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registration is quickly and quietly managed during a relaxed ten-minute start to the day and registers are returned to the school office by ten o'clock. These are completed manually but the data is entered onto a digital system by the administrative staff. Parents are very good about informing the school if a child is going to be absent and they are asked for a written explanation of absence when they return. Class teachers ask for a printout of an individual child's attendance record if they have any concerns. The headteacher monitors patterns of attendance at least twice a term and the school receives good support from its attached educational social worker. Office staff record the reasons for the small number of late arrivals.

42. The school is very effective in identifying pupils with learning difficulties and providing them with additional support wherever possible. Individuals are continually assessed to check whether they are meeting the targets set on their individual education plans. Additional assessment criteria provided by the authority are also used very well so that additional support may be sought from outside agencies, to guide teachers and to ensure that the appropriate provision is available for the pupils. Annual reviews are appropriately completed and all agencies involved contribute to the meetings. Provision for pupils with statements of special need is very good.

43. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved in line with national expectations since the last inspection and are now very good, although some elements, particularly in the foundation subjects, are still being developed. Procedures used include the statutory assessments for pupils in years two and six, the optional tests in years three to five, and additional nationally accepted standardised tests in reading in years three and six. These are recorded electronically and the information analysed is very well used to set targets in English, mathematics and science related to national curriculum levels. There is a whole staff commitment to assessment and, through whole school involvement in target setting in the school improvement plan, targets are translated from this to year groups, classes and individual pupils. Teachers have worked hard at becoming skilled at matching pupils' work in the core subjects against national curriculum levels. However, although individual pupils' portfolios contain a selection of work over time to show progress, it is not maintained systematically and the work is not annotated against National Curriculum levels. Pupil progress is well recorded in their individual information and communication technology logbooks. National curriculum levels are clearly stated and pupils know what they need to achieve to reach the next level.

44. Assessment is used very effectively to guide planning. Teachers' weekly evaluations are monitored by the headteacher half-termly and planning is modified in terms of teaching, organisation and support. While the monitoring of pupils' overall academic performance is good, to raise standards the school has identified the need to develop the use of half term evaluations by all co-ordinators to assist them in developing assessment in the foundation subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school has excellent links with parents. It is extremely welcoming and encourages parents to contact them immediately with any problems. Class teachers are available for informal contact at the end of the day and the head or deputy can be seen at short notice. In September, a 'Meet the Teacher' evening is held, and parents' consultation evenings are held in the other two terms. Parents are invited to share special visitors and events, for instance during Book Week, as well as class assemblies and events like the Christmas production. A crèche is always provided during school events. The school runs information evenings on statutory assessment tests and various aspects of the curriculum. It frequently canvasses parent opinion on important issues, for instance on the future of the elderly swimming pool, by using questionnaires. Parents are given feedback on the results and their comments are used in drawing up the school development plan. There is also a suggestion box for parents' use. The school is extremely good at finding ways for parents to get involved with school life. For example, parents who helped with Book Week were sent a follow-up letter, asking if they would like coming in to read stories or helping with the library. The school offers parents and other members to continue of the community the opportunity to have training in information technology.

46. Parents make a very good impact on the life and work of the school. Many parents, grandparents and great grandparents of current pupils attended the school and still feel a strong affection for it. There is always intense competition amongst parents to become a governor or a teaching assistant. Thirty-one regular parent helpers, besides other volunteers, support learning throughout the school. Two parents run a craft club, one manages the library, one has offered to redesign and repaint the playground markings, one helps with ground maintenance and one helps with the Environmental Club. Others regularly help with trips to Wincanton for swimming lessons and with transport to sporting events. Parents always help with one-off occasions, such as the distribution of produce to local elderly people after Harvest Festival, and the Book Week. The

parents' association raised more than £5000 last year and provided the school with £9,300. It draws up a list of the range of expertise parents can offer each year, which helps the school enrich the curriculum or obtain expert help. It has set up a 'Small Jobs' list of parents who are unable to make a regular commitment to help but can perhaps provide cakes or help with teas.

47. The quality of information provided for parents is very good, an improvement from the last inspection. Good, attractively designed annual reports clearly demonstrate teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils. Comments on English and mathematics reflect good assessment procedures. All pupils are given targets for improvement, generally in English and mathematics but sometimes in personal development, for instance 'to play with different friends sometimes'. Suggestions for activities at home, for example keeping a diary, are included. Pupils write a report on themselves, ranging from a simple sentence by pupils under five ('I like doing sums') to full reports by older pupils ('I am in the highest maths group and I am good at it, but I need to concentrate more'). The school provides parents with the results of all annual tests done to assess progress but some parents say they find the presentation confusing.

48. A clearly presented prospectus and governors' annual report fulfil statutory requirements. Parents are given curriculum information at a meeting in September and a written copy is supplied to non-attenders. Regular newsletters are lively and informative: a bumper edition at the end of each term contains a complete overview of all activities in a very accessible format. Small notice boards outside each classroom give urgent messages or reminders and a bigger central one a wide range of useful information. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the learning process. Targets are regularly shared and reviewed with parents and both parents and pupils contribute to target setting.

49. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning as at the last inspection. Virtually all parents come to parent consultation evenings and a good proportion attend other school information events. They give good support to other school-related fundraising or social events. The overwhelming majority of parents help their children by providing them with appropriate facilities and support for their homework. Virtually all homework set gets done. Parents are often asked to supply special resources to support learning, and do their best to help. The majority of parents, particularly in the lower age groups, hear their children read regularly. The attendance rate is very good and very few families take holidays in term time.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. Leadership and management were said to be very good at the time of the last inspection with the long serving head giving a strong lead. Strengths were the contribution of governors and senior managers, the detailed school development plan and the commitment to high standards. Financial control and management were described as excellent. The new head inherited a very popular school which inspires great loyalty and affection in the local community, with high standards and a very hard working, committed staff. However, the school's previous status increasingly had led to a degree of professional isolation and with a very stable staff, recent initiatives observed in most schools did not have the same impact in Bruton School. In addition, fundamental issues concerning a falling role and school security had not been addressed. In the relatively short time she has been in charge, the head has involved the whole school community in identifying what is urgent and important. With the considerable help of the new deputy head and senior colleagues, she has been largely responsible for bringing about very necessary change while maintaining the school's many strengths. Just as important, she has carried everyone with her and kept up morale through multiple redundancies. All this has been exceptionally well managed and communicated and, by making a good school very good, she has shown excellent leadership.

51. Vital to this have been the high levels of consultation with all members of the school community, the much increased levels of monitoring of outcomes and provision especially teaching, and the involvement of all staff and governors in the evaluation of all the information gained and in the decision making process. Very good use has been made of performance management to introduce a much more structured and developmental approach to professional development and to school improvement. A rigorous approach to interpreting assessment data has led to an increased focus on

mathematics. The careful analysis of special needs provision has brought about a fundamental change in the way pupils are supported and monitored. The urgent need to rationalise staffing to match numbers on roll has been used as an opportunity to substantially increase the number and effectiveness of teaching assistants and to create space to make the hall available all day.

52. A key element of the basic change in the culture of leadership and management has been the encouragement, training and opportunity given to the rest of the staff so that they can manage their areas of responsibility properly and make a full contribution in the development of the school community. An excellent illustration of the quality and commitment of existing staff has been the wholehearted and very positive way they have accepted and thrived on their expanded roles. The quality of leadership and management by all the established coordinators and of those within the school who have taken up new responsibilities has been very good. An area for development in subject management is the provision of time during the school day for coordinators to monitor classroom practice in their subjects. The school recently achieved 'Investors in People' status.

53. A good example is in the management of special needs (SEN) which now has its proper profile in the school with much better use being made of available resources to support pupils in need. The SEN coordinator is adapting very well to the change in her role. She is monitoring individual pupil's progress very effectively and reviewing the targets on each pupil's individual education plan with the teachers. Regular discussions and assessments are held with pupils and she monitors the work of the teaching assistants. All paperwork is very well organised and easily accessible for all adults who are concerned with the child's education. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and training has a high priority. The SEN governor is very supportive and the governing body is kept fully informed about provision and outcomes.

54. The governing body has always been very supportive of the school but until recently, had not traditionally been involved in taking an active strategic role in decision making or in monitoring the school's work. Governors were over reliant on the previous head for information and so not sufficiently aware of the appropriateness of decisions made or the consequences of those not made. Many of the present governing body are new but it is clear that, individually and as a group, they all have the best interests of the school at heart and are prepared and have the capacity to fulfil the role the school requires of them.

55. A very important element of this has been the sustained commitment of several long-serving members, including the chair, who are taking a lead role in helping the governing body to match fundamental improvements in leadership and management practice in the school. Most have undertaken relevant training, appropriate structures and procedures are in place and business is being conducted efficiently and well. A good sign of the changing culture among governors is the fact that despite this, they are still seeking to improve the way they work. Very straight-forward and detailed reports provided by the head and staff, and governors increasing involvement in 'hands-on' monitoring in school, mean that they are now much more aware of its true strengths and needs. Very good evidence of the good contribution the governing body is now making to the welfare of the school is the positive consequence of the many, very well managed, difficult decisions in which they have been involved over the past year. The positive tone of this report is a testament to the high quality of the process by which this was achieved.

56. Very good overall financial planning to support the school's educational development is generated through open consultative procedures. With numbers of pupils on roll falling, the school has been very effective in managing its reduced funding, while carefully managing improvements to the building to improve the use of space and security. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) provides a sensible framework to identify priorities, costings, timescales and the person responsible for each action. Agreed success criteria make it possible for judgements to be made about the effectiveness and value for money of improvements. The headteacher delegates appropriate levels of responsibility for spending to staff with management responsibilities. Best value principles, including consultation with the parent body and comparing relative costs of similar size schools, are very well applied and where the school has choice, funds are spent on what staff and governors agree is important. This has recently resulted in a significant increase in the number of teaching assistants.

57. Arrangements for financial control and administration are very good and all audit recommendations have been addressed. The school bursar's very effective financial procedures provide valuable support to the headteacher and the governing body to which she is also clerk. She works very well with the school secretary to provide a welcoming 'front of house'. Good use of information technology supports the management of the budget and individual pupil information is stored electronically to record academic progress. Teachers are increasingly improving their skills and using information and communication technology to aid their planning and assessment. Specific grants are used effectively for designated purposes. Good use is made of teaching and support staff and a generally good supply of resources is effectively stored and well used.

58. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good with thirteen full-time and one part-time teachers, ten teaching assistants and one nursery nurse. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified: a music specialist will take up post next term in the one area not currently covered. Additionally, there are two clerical and three premises staff. Arrangements for induction are very good and the school takes pains to ensure that new arrivals, whether they are teaching or non-teaching staff, quickly feel part of the team. Staff attend training sessions and social events together. The numbers of staff are appropriate for the number of pupils on roll. All staff have job descriptions which are discussed with them. Teaching assistants nearly always work with one particular class. All staff are regularly consulted about the school development plan and any suggested major changes.

59. Resources for learning are good overall, as at the last inspection. They are good for English, science, art, design and technology, history, physical education and religious education. Those for children under five are good, except for outdoor physical activities. Resources for other areas of the curriculum are satisfactory. Music resources need updating, as do those for geography. The storage of those for mathematics could be improved. While computers in the suite are of good quality, those in the classrooms are elderly and need to be replaced by newer models. The mobile classrooms are currently used for lunches and the central area of the building is used as a resource storage area. The school has not yet amalgamated the two storage areas because it is waiting to learn whether it will lose the mobile building next summer.

60. The accommodation is adequate: it was judged good at the last inspection. The main school building, built in 1932, surrounds a courtyard, with protruding glass roofs forming a 'cloister' with a step down to the playground in the centre. It houses eight classrooms (one used as a resource room), the good-sized library, the hall (too small to accommodate all pupils comfortably), two rooms used for special needs support and musical work, and a small medical room, awkwardly situated down a narrow flight of stairs. Children under five have to leave their classroom, go outside and in again to reach the toilet. A new classroom block was built some years ago containing two classrooms and a cloakroom area. There are also a Horsa hut (which will be demolished in summer 2003) and a mobile structure, the future of which has not yet been decided by the local authority. The school is kept immaculately clean and tidy by the very conscientious caretaking and cleaning staff.

61. Some of the brickwork of the main building is in need of repair. 1930s metal-framed windows are starting to show their age. The building incorporates a great deal of glass, none of which conforms to modern safety standards, and is not double-glazed. Heating costs are therefore very high and the classrooms can be uncomfortably hot in the summer. The school grounds consist of an additional hard play area laid out as a netball court and a large field with mature trees. Much of the site is only accessible by steps and access for wheelchairs would be difficult. At the top of the site the learner swimming pool, built in 1961, is in need of considerable repair and maintenance. Its pipework runs underground and a series of leaks have caused the school expense and caused damage to surfaces.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To help to bring standards in the foundation subjects in all classes up to the same high level, the governors, headteacher and staff of Bruton Foundation Primary School should:

- (1) Seek to make arrangements for monitoring provision and standards in the foundation

subjects as effective as those for literacy and numeracy and so make standards consistently high in all of them by:

- using national and local guidance to establish what most pupils should know, understand and be able to do in each year group and each subject and ensuring that teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are aware of this
- in those subjects with recorded outcomes, building up a bank of annotated work at the agreed levels to act as benchmarks and exemplars
- using these year group benchmarks to determine whether pupils do or do not meet expectations or exceed them
- identifying on-going assessment opportunities based on the above in each unit of work and developing user-friendly means of recording the information gained by applying them
- making use of teaching assistants and helpers to monitor and record specific competencies in music and physical education lessons as part of this process
- building on the pupil self-assessment approaches introduced in information technology by applying the technique in other subjects
- providing coordinators with sufficient time to monitor teaching and learning and work alongside colleagues as part of this process
- using all the information gained from this process to monitor standards, progress and trends and modifying provision accordingly

(Paragraphs 43,44,96,98,102,114,118,123 & 127)

(2) Ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to good quality music provision in class and so achieve expected standards in their knowledge and understanding of music by:

- developing a detailed scheme of work with sufficient support materials to help non-specialists teach the subject with some confidence
- providing sufficient good quality support and practical in-service training to bring the expertise and confidence of all teachers up to the necessary levels
- integrating music lessons and instrumental tuition so that higher attainers can make better use of their knowledge and performance skills for the benefit of their classmates
- using all the procedures noted in (1) above to monitor and evaluate the impact of the improvements made on the progress made by each year group and all pupils including those who the school identifies as gifted and talented in music

(Paragraphs 5,16,21,116,117 & 118)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Boys and girls in their foundation year do not have an easily accessed, safe, outdoor environment in which to develop their physical skills each day (Paragraphs 19, 63 & 70)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	30	32	7	1		
Percentage	3	42	44	10	1		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		324
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		22

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.05

National comparative data	4.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	17	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	20	21
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	34	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (96)	95 (96)	97 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	21
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	34	38	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (98)	97 (98)	97 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	35	20	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	28	33
	Girls	20	19	20
	Total	53	47	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (81)	84 (70)	95 (88)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	27	33
	Girls	20	19	20
	Total	46	46	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (79)	82 (79)	95 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	321	0	0
White – Irish			
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	27

Financial year	2002
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Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	194

	£
Total income	749340
Total expenditure	759258
Expenditure per pupil	2227
Balance brought forward from previous year	55797
Balance carried forward to next year	9918

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

144

324

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	2	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	3	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	46	9	2	1
The teaching is good.	63	33		1	
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	43	20	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	3	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	2		1
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	9	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	37	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	50	10	1	8

Other issues raised by parents

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. The provision for children in the foundation stage is very good. Children are taught in two classes, one with entirely reception age children and the other a mix of reception and year one. The well equipped classrooms are imaginatively arranged in areas that focus on children's learning. However, the absence of a secure outdoor area stops some aspects of the physical and creative areas of the curriculum being fully integrated into the daily planning. The very experienced early years co-ordinator and reception class teacher have successfully developed their strengths since the last inspection by maintaining the very good quality of teaching, planning the curriculum in line with the nationally accepted early learning goals, improving assessment procedures and developing the roles of teaching assistants and other adult helpers. This has contributed significantly to the good improvement since the last inspection. Children enter the school in September on a part time basis for the first half term. A well-planned programme to introduce the new children and their parents to the school ensures that positive relationships are quickly forged with families. Links with the two main feeder pre-school providers and the four or five others are well established through visits.

64. All children work very hard in response to very good teaching and high quality support from the teaching assistants and other adult helpers who are used effectively to support group and individual children's learning. They are always well briefed and know how to guide and encourage the children. At times they observe and record, for example, the contribution individual children make to group discussion, as part of the assessment procedure. Planning is very thorough and teachers are very skilled at challenging children to extend their knowledge and vocabulary and seize every opportunity to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. The quiet but firm management of pupils and consistently high expectation of very good behaviour, have achieved a calm purposeful working atmosphere where relationships are very good. Attainment on entry is above that found in most schools especially in expressive language, mathematics and personal development. Several children have already reached some early learning goals and most will do so in all areas of learning by the end of their reception year and be confident and ready to start in Year 1. This represents a good level of achievement.

Personal, social and emotional development.

65. Boys and girls are eager to come to school and have settled very quickly into class routines. They self register and have quickly learned the rules and conventions related to the classroom and school life. Parents and adults welcomed into the classroom with the children each morning, are involved in helping them to change their reading books, which contributes to a calm and purposeful start to the day as well as providing an opportunity to discuss any concerns. This area of development is very well taught and teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils should do for themselves. Boys and girls dress sensibly for physical education and put on their outdoor clothes and collect their belongings sensibly at the end of the day. The use of circle time contributes to their development by providing structured opportunities to share views and experiences. For example, when discussing, 'Why we are special? ', they are taught the importance of sharing views. They play and work happily together and know the rules associated with taking turns, tidying up and listening to others.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Teachers provide many purposeful activities that make a valuable contribution to this area. Children recount their news and learn to sing a large repertoire of rhymes, which helps them to

practise putting words into sequence. Children's good speaking and listening skills helps them contribute well to class and group discussions. Further opportunities for speaking are provided as children develop their imagination and language through role-play as, for example, in the shared area currently set up as a bedroom linked to their 'night and day' topic. Children enjoy taking books home and their 'Red Book', in which their writing and pictures are pasted and taken home regularly to share with their parents, is very much valued. Comments in children's home school reading journal indicate a high level of support and encouragement of reading. Boys and girls handle the books carefully and understand that print is read from left to right, talk enthusiastically about the pictures and predict what will happen next. They are beginning to recognise many clearly displayed captions and display notices in the classroom and when following text, make plausible guesses at covered words and letters. A good range of initial letter sounds and letter names are well known. While most children recognised their name none had a sight vocabulary on entry, yet in the very short time they have been in school many are reading books with simple text. This is due to the very good teaching they receive, the support at home and children's readiness to read. They are starting to copy words and simple sentences, know where to find words around the classroom to help them and have regular practise at writing letters. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce reading and writing and they play a big part in lessons.

Mathematical development

67. Teachers encourage children's development of mathematics through day-to-day use of number effectively. Boys and girls enjoy their work with numbers responding quickly and with a good degree of accuracy in their mental maths work. They 'count on' given a random number below ten and know numbers less than and more than a given number. In a lesson adding numbers to five many knew that $5+4$ equalled nine, while in another lesson children used cubes to make different combinations of two numbers to equal six, recording them confidently on their small individual white boards. They use language such as 'circle' and 'bigger' to describe the shape and size of solids and flat shapes. These practical activities, such as, acting out the customer and the shop keeper to the rhyme '...five currant buns in the bakers shop...' give children a range of experiences to consolidate their understanding. Number songs, such as this, daily routines and number lines around the classroom are used to reinforce counting activities and, as a result, the children learn quickly and progress well.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

68. Children are gaining a good understanding of the world in which they live through their topic about night and day. They can sort pictures into activities that happen at different times and know the main animals that are nocturnal. Children speak confidently about the habitats of these nocturnal animals in whole class discussion or in small groups when painting or modelling them. Examples such as, 'bats look like flying mice or dragons' show pupils' increasing understanding. Computers are used to support their learning with a range of programmes. In religious education children learn about 'special people'. Teachers use the extensive school grounds very well and children are regularly taken to different vantage points on the hill to note seasonal changes. This also gives them an awareness of places in relation to each other. Boys and girls have good opportunities to use a variety of construction kits to make their own models. Good teaching enables children to have a good balance of formal investigation and guided play. This helps them to 'discover' new knowledge and make good progress.

Creative development.

69. Teachers organise the curriculum well and provide the children with regular planned opportunities for music, play dough, paint and a range of materials. They paint, draw and model nocturnal animals with clay. Creative areas allow children the opportunities to explore the use of paints and play dough, pastels and wax crayons. In music children respond to songs with actions and are beginning to understand how pace can be varied. In time they will use a range of percussion instruments. They know a variety of rhymes and jingles and are beginning to develop a sense of time and rhythm through clapping.

Physical development.

70. The area of physical development is well taught but is restricted by the lack of a secure outdoor area, although teachers do make good use of the extensive grounds for walks. Children

have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, glue sticks and scissors. They frequently put together and take apart construction materials and work with jigsaws and other tabletop equipment. These activities are making a significant contribution to their physical development. However, only two sessions a week are planned for time in the hall, and although well used, as for example by children responding to music as robots and developing their physical and cooperative skills in activities with a parachute, more opportunities are needed.

ENGLISH

71. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 attain above and at Key Stage 2 attain well above average standards, which is an improvement on the findings in the previous report. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans.

72. Throughout the school pupils attain well above average standards in speaking and listening. Their diction is clear and they speak with expression. Pupils are eager and confident to answer questions in class and assemblies. They are able to order their ideas sequentially. Vocabulary used is wide and varied and specific words linked to subjects are used accurately. Pupils listen attentively, concentrating on what teachers and pupils say, as well as to recordings and music. They ask questions of each other and develop their own ideas taking account of others' views.

73. In reading the attainment of seven-year-olds is above the national average. Pupils read accurately for a range of purposes. They understand the purpose of punctuation and use a variety of strategies to help with pronunciation of unfamiliar words. Boys and girls have a growing knowledge of books, which they enjoy talking about. By the age of eleven, pupils are well above the national average. Book reviews encourage pupils to identify reasons for choosing a book as well as identifying the main parts. They show understanding of a wide variety of texts, identifying features and themes within it. Pupils are able to offer comparisons of the characters and skim and scan text efficiently to remind themselves of the content. They read books for information and understand the value and use of the contents, index and glossary pages. Lower attaining pupils read independently and with expression. They are able to self-correct their reading when the meaning is inappropriate, as well as explaining the story.

74. Standards in writing are well above average throughout the school. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are taught systematically and pupils make good progress, extending the range of formal and informal writing. They develop their awareness of how writers use words and varied sentence structure to hold the reader's attention. Across the school pupils write for a wide range of purposes using suitable formats including stories, poetry, plays, letters and descriptions including non-fiction recording of facts and the sequencing of instructions as well as biographies. Pupils in year one develop their use of words and spelling through rhyme and sound blends. They are developing confidence in self-correcting skills and can spell many simple words unaided. In year two opportunities are provided for pupils to work together to write longer stories. These are presented in book form. Following a visit by a local author and illustrator Michael Dickinson, they are inspired to write poems which include simile, for example 'moves like a duck in warm water' and adjectives to describe the 'The Pony-headed Croco'. Recording is appropriate to the task, which includes pictures and lists. Handwriting is clearly formed and legible. Some pupils are beginning to join letters.

75. In year four a greater awareness of the power of words in writing is encouraged. Poetry writing is advanced with the use of alliteration, such as 'snowdrops stand up stiff', onomatopoeia, 'as gold as a new shiny penny', simile and verbs to excite the reader. Joined handwriting is taught establishing a fluent, well-formed and legible style. Pupils are confident in using a dictionary and use word processing skills to help with editing text they have created. They have an increasing knowledge of grammar and parts of speech, knowing why and when to use words such as imperative verbs. Year five work extends their sentence structure into more complex writing and pupils understand the effect changing the order of words has on the meaning. Year six enjoy reading stories by different writers. In studying 'Rumpelstiltskin' pupils identify crucial features in the text and justify a viewpoint in writing a well-balanced account for a newspaper article. They are aware of the readers they write for and use appropriate vocabulary and style. Time is spent on drafting and editing

skills are a focus to improve interest for the reader. Pupils with special needs make good progress as a result of well-focused teaching and good support

76. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Additional literacy support provided effectively with the help of the learning support assistants has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have a very good understanding of the content and requirements of the curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons are very well prepared and teachers' plans have clear objectives, which are shared with pupils so helping to focus their learning. Subject knowledge is very good and skilful questioning by the teachers appropriate to the ability of pupils promotes responses, which have encouraged pupils to think about the subject. Very clear explanations have a positive effect on pupils' confidence and interest. They settle promptly to their tasks working independently when required in a very calm atmosphere. The pace of lessons is good with suitably challenging work for all pupils. Teachers use praise to reward pupils' efforts and to encourage them to achieve as well as they are able. This has a positive impact on learning and progress. On the rare occasions when teaching is less satisfactory, work is not sufficiently well matched for pupils to achieve their potential.

77. Since the last report the literacy strategy has been successfully implemented. The coordinator has worked to increase staff confidence in agreeing standards against the National Curriculum levels. A portfolio of work is being collected for reference. Pupils in years three and four are set for work focused on spelling to ensure an accurate match to ability. A variety of assessment tests are used throughout the school and individual tracking of pupil progress is beginning to be undertaken. Resources have been reviewed to support the revised curriculum. The Literacy loan scheme and School Library Service support the curriculum and the library has been restocked with help from the parents and pupils.

78. The coordinator has a clear view of her role and has monitored the implementation of the literacy strategy effectively. She monitors planning and checks the standards of pupils' work through moderated work samples. Class targets are identified for specific work. The visit by writers in Book Week encourages a high standard of writing throughout the school. Pupils in year six are encouraged to enter the Threshold Poetry competition and the school has had success in works being published. Boys and girls make very good use of the school library, both as a centre to read fiction and to research for information. They understand the cataloguing system and retrieve books quickly and efficiently. Pupils in year six make a valuable contribution to the effective running of the library at lunchtime by issuing books and providing support for younger readers.

MATHEMATICS

79. Evidence obtained during the inspection from lesson observation, talking to pupils and analysis of work shows that standards in mathematics of both 7 and 11 year olds are above the national average. The levels of attainment in the school were similar at the time of the 1997 inspection. However, there is now a slightly lower level of performance in mathematics in comparison to standards in English and science, this is more noticeable at Key Stage 2. The school has recognised that there is this difference and that this has been a trend over the last few years. There has been much hard work in the last year to improve the achievement in mathematics and the levels of achievement are rising through the school.

80. The National Numeracy Strategy was not fully implemented when it was first introduced but with a focus on this in the last year, and with some training still to come, the school has made significant improvement in the delivery of the mathematics curriculum. It was made a Numeracy Focus school by the local education authority (academic year 2001 – 2002), training needs were identified and the teaching of mental maths strategies was targeted as a particular area for improvement. As a result of this necessary recent focus together with the staff's commitment to raising standards, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making good progress and achievement is rising. Pupils in Year 1 subtract numbers mentally and are able to solve problems finding the difference between two numbers by using simple multilink apparatus. They also draw and name common two-dimensional shapes. In Year 2, pupils use replica coins to price articles for sale, they are confident in the use of money and able to give change for items that

are priced up to fifty pence. They can interpret and construct bar graphs and they are able to measure accurately in centimetres and use appropriate mathematical language to compare height and length. Pupils work well together and those in need of extra help are well supported by the teacher and the teaching assistant.

81. Year 3 pupils are improving their quick recall of multiplication facts in the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and are using mental strategies to work out tables by doubling numbers. They estimate and then measure different parts of the body, using appropriate equipment. Correct mathematical language is used in the course of this work. Year 4 pupils try different approaches and use more sophisticated mathematical strategies to investigate number patterns and to increase their knowledge of mathematical facts. They identify two-dimensional shapes and classify them by identifying lines of symmetry. Year 5 pupils use self-evaluation to help personal target setting; they add and subtract decimals to two places and can recognise when two or more fractions have the same value. In the oldest classes pupils use a variety of mental strategies to calculate a range of 'sums' in timed oral activities. So pleased were they about the improvement made over the week that they wrote to the inspectors to tell them. Boys and girls calculate the perimeter of rectangles and simple compound shapes that can be split into rectangles using correct mathematical terminology while explaining their methods. The focus on developing mental strategies is clearly seen in pupils' ability to use different methods of working out a problem in their head.

82. Pupils' attitude to mathematics is good. They are nearly always fully engaged in their work, interested and working hard. Boys and girls respond enthusiastically, particularly to mental maths, and are eager to answer questions and explain the strategies they are using. During lessons they are able to apply themselves independently to dealing with a mathematical problem. Pupils apply effort, work well on task and generally listen attentively. They work collaboratively and respect the efforts of their classmates.

83. The quality of teaching in mathematics in both key stages is good. In all the lessons seen the teaching was good and in Year 6 it was very good. The pace of the lessons is brisk, planning is well linked to previous lessons with clear learning objectives, questioning is skilful and challenging and pupils are encouraged and congratulated on their efforts. Teachers have secure and often good subject knowledge. Planning is now thorough and systematic using the best of the National Numeracy Strategy advice and a thorough commercial scheme. These plans are combined and adapted with learning intentions clearly defined. In most classes work is appropriately matched to the ability of the pupils by the provision of work at different levels. Mathematics is set into ability groups in Key Stage 2, which further enhances the matching of pupils' work to ability. In Years 3 and 4 this setting is in three mixed groups. While this is successful this year, care will be needed to ensure the appropriateness of mixed age sets next year. Pupils with different needs in terms of lower and higher ability are catered for with a range of support. Classroom assistants are used effectively as well as other support strategies and booster classes throughout the school. Able pupils attend days organised by local secondary schools and enrichment courses organised by the LEA. The availability of a computer in each classroom gives the pupils the chance to consolidate their learning by using programmes containing maths related activities, and good use was made of a multiplication activity in two Key Stage 2 classes.

84. Assessment arrangements are good and improving. Following baseline assessment on entry, information obtained from national tests (SATs) in Years 2 and 6 and non-statutory tests in other years is analysed to assess standards and form the basis for assigning pupils to sets in Key Stage 2. Teaching is observed by the headteacher and the senior management team and pupils' work is moderated by the staff with the use of the national exemplification of standards booklet. Units of work are assessed half-termly and evaluated weekly and half-termly and kept on file for monitoring. Alongside these more formal assessments on-going teacher assessments are made indicating the progress against the class and group targets. This combination of information will be useful in tracking the attainment and progress of pupils to ensure that they are performing as well in mathematics as they do in English and science. Pupils' work is regularly and consistently marked but more use could be made of constructive comments to help develop pupils' learning.

85. The two mathematics coordinators are new to their posts but are ably supported by the previous co-ordinator. Their combined enthusiasm and desire to raise achievement throughout the school is already having an impact on the delivery of mathematics. Local authority support and training has already helped to raise standards and further training in Years 1 and 2 should continue this process. Well developed improvement planning backs up the raising of standards in the school. The future role of the coordinators should include in-class monitoring in order to develop their expertise and more use could be made of the demonstration of good teaching in the school as a means of professional development for less experienced staff. Resources for mathematics are adequate but larger quantities will help the full implementation of the Numeracy Strategy and better storage will improve accessibility.

SCIENCE

86. In 1997 standards in science were 'in line with the national average' and progress was satisfactory. Teaching was good overall but the skills of experimental and investigative science were underdeveloped. As noted in the Results section above, the improvement in standards since then has been very dramatic and pupils throughout the school are now operating at levels above those seen in most schools. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6 with pupils achieving well throughout the school and very well in the older classes. Pupils throughout the school develop very good investigative skills and are able to record and measure their observations and write up their experiments. They make simple comparisons, identify patterns and relationships and offer explanations based on their knowledge and understanding. Boys and girls are confident in making predictions and have a good understanding of fair testing.

87. Pupils in both key stages are provided with a comprehensive programme of science activities that enables them to acquire a knowledge and understanding of the world around them, of materials, living things and physical processes. The necessary evolution of mixed age classes in the younger classes has meant that the coordinator has introduced a rolling programme in these year groups with Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 and 4 covering the same topics. Years 5 and 6 continue to follow their own science programmes. Since the present Years 2 and 4 had already covered the Years 1 and 3 content last year, this has meant that this year the mixed age classes are covering work set out for Years 2 and 4 respectively in the national scheme. A very good indication of the quality of teaching and the capacity of the pupils is the way the younger year groups have thrived on the challenge of the work presented.

88. During the inspection week, pupils in four different Key Stage 1 classes were investigating how to make a light bulb light up away from the battery having made it work just using the terminals the week before. In each class good and very good teaching made it possible for pupils to gain great satisfaction and real understanding about the nature of an electrical circuit from hands on experience. Using scientific vocabulary such as terminals and current, even the youngest pupils were able to describe and draw their own version of their circuit. Older pupils thoroughly enjoyed extending the circuit by adding in more batteries and bulbs noting the changes in brightness that resulted. Even younger pupils understand that electricity 'likes' metals but does not 'like' plastic and so could predict what would happen if we put a coin or a pen top into a circuit. Pupils' books showed they have covered the nutritional content of their lunchboxes, learned about drugs that are and are not medicines, and looked at a torch at the start of their electricity unit. In conversation, year two pupils could talk eloquently about all these things and showed a real awareness of what it all meant for them.

89. The three Year 3 and 4 classes were being introduced to the idea of keeping warm and the concept of temperature. Good use of practical activities and thoughtful questioning made it possible for teachers to judge how much pupils actually knew about the topic and also to move from the general ideas and vocabulary of warm, cool and hot to the specific idea of measuring temperature. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning was shown in their eagerness to explain the difference between what the thermometer read at room temperature and when they held the bulb. Previous work this term has centred on habitats and mini-beast with investigations on the sort of habitat woodlice like, sorting mini-beast by characteristics & identifying them using keys.

90. Current work in Year 5 is focused on sound and is related to other work in music and design technology. In the very good lesson observed, the science coordinator made very good use of Zak's guitar to introduce the learning objectives which were to set up an investigation to determine what affects the pitch of a note produced by a vibrating string. Pupils soon agreed that length, thickness and tightness would make the difference with one pupil explaining that 'If a thick string vibrates, there's more to vibrate'. With the main focus of the lesson to construct a fair test, pupils' confident response to the challenge of identifying the variables and choosing the one they would test showed just how far the school has come in eliminating the weakness in this area identified at the last inspection. Reference to the use of a data-logger for measuring volume in the previous lesson showed a development in the use of information technology in the subject but this is not general. Very well recorded work on liquids and solids including the effect of heat on various solids and the way temperature affects how well jelly cubes dissolve illustrated the very good learning going on in Year 5.

91. Much the same can be said about the impressive volume of work completed by pupils in Year 6 this term. High quality work on the natural world is very well recorded using well developed literacy skills. This includes work on the requirements for germination, an account of photosynthesis, an investigation of the inter relationship between plants and animals on the school field, food chains and an investigation to see which plants grow best in which soils. Other work introduced the current topic of light looking at light sources, the eye and vision. In the lesson observed, the teachers introduction required pupils to recall all they had learned so far about vision and light - the answer was a lot with information about the optic nerve and rods and cones and the use of words such as translucent and opaque. In the main activity of setting up an experiment to investigate opacity and the size of shadows, pupils soon took over and demonstrated how familiar they were to the whole idea of creating a fair test and using controls.

92. The experienced, enthusiastic and very effective coordinator is very aware of everything that is happening with her subject throughout the school even though she has not yet had the opportunity to watch it being taught in the classrooms. This is planned for next term. However, she monitors planning, evaluations and pupils work very closely and more recently, has taken advantage of the local authority analysis of national test data to analyse strengths and weaknesses in depth. Despite already high standards, she has used this to identify priorities for the coming year with the stated objective of achieving even more than the current very high percentage of pupils achieving high grades. As part of this she plans to improve existing assessment arrangements to make them more consistent and related to specific learning targets. Resources are in good supply but even so are being stretched by the new curriculum organisation in Years 1 to 4.

ART AND DESIGN

93. The way the curriculum is organised for the teaching of art and design and design and technology meant that the only art lessons seen were in the year three and four classes, all other classes were studying design technology for this half term. From pupils' previous work, teachers planning and displays through out the school, standards are above those seen in most schools. This represents good pupil achievement and a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection where standards of work were judged to be below average.

94. Improvement are due to a revised curriculum, based on national guidance but thoughtfully adapted to the needs of the school, and a depth of approach that reflects the above average ability of the pupils. For example, in the year three and four lessons seen, pupils collected visual information to help them form ideas about patterns. In one class pupils divided the page of their sketch book into eight to sketch patterns they observed around the school, while in another lesson pupils worked in groups looking at patterns from Africa, North America, India and China to help them to design their own motif. The lesson was further developed by reminding pupils of the typical Hindu and Sikh Rangoli patterns which they discussed, before working in pairs to develop their own. In another lesson in the information and communication technology suite pupils used an art programme to produce Rangoli patterns.

95. In other examples around the school, Year 1 pupils inspired by Van Gogh had painted their

own portraits at the start of term and then again two months later to show improvement. Year 2 pupils looked at the painting of Piet Mondrian and created their own using an art programme. The many large figures around the school are a result of a Year 6 study of 'people in action'. Pupils initially sketched 'stick figures' in actions such as pushing, running and gliding and looked at watercolours of dancers and took photographs of themselves in action. Their final design incorporated the materials they would use and an evaluation when it is finished.

96. The teaching of art is very good; a big improvement since the last inspection, and this contributes to pupils' very good response. They are enthusiastic about art and work hard to produce their best. Teachers plan very well and evaluate their teaching and their pupils' results. The recently appointed art coordinator works hard to promote the subject, through arranging visitors to the school and organising events such as the school's Christmas card and calendar competitions. Her leadership and management of the subject is good. To further develop the subject the coordinator needs to monitor teaching; ensure that in mixed age classes higher ability pupils are sufficiently challenged; continue to develop assessment procedures and develop the already good resources to support the planned units of study.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

97. Standards in design and technology, from lessons seen, displays of work and discussion with pupils, are above those seen in most schools, an improvement since the last inspection, and pupils achieve well. A revised curriculum, based on national guidance, yet thoughtfully adapted to the needs of the school and one that the staff feel confident with, and a depth of approach that reflects the higher than average ability of the pupils have contributed to the improvement. In years 1 and 2 pupils draw their design, appropriately labelled, for a timer in their DT books. They select materials and using their previous knowledge, use a variety of ways of joining. Year five pupils link their study of sound in science to design and technology by designing musical instruments. In their design brief they show what it will look like, how they will make it, which materials they will use and what their instrument will do. Pupils understand the use of the imperative verb when writing instructions. Year six pupils look in depth at food technology through making their own pizza at a national chain of pizza restaurants. Following this they compare the trends in food since 1940, their area of study in history, by looking at data from that period and the present, and then plan a meal to meet a set of criteria. It is the quality and depth of study that contributes to the higher than average standards that pupils achieve.

98. The teaching of DT is very good, an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, plan very well and evaluate their teaching and their pupils' results. The links with other subjects gives a greater relevance to DT and pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and show sustained concentration when applying themselves. The coordinator works hard to promote the subject, through arranging visits, links with business and design challenge days. The planned monitoring of teaching, developing pupil assessment and improvement in resources for food technology and control technology are appropriate and will further develop a well-resourced subject. Her leadership and management of DT has been very good.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Standards of work seen are better than expected. It was not possible to observe any geography lessons during the inspection because geography was not being taught during this half-term. However, the school provided plenty of evidence to support the judgement that all pupils are achieving well and standards have improved since the last inspection.

100. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are beginning to describe and compare the physical and human features of different localities in different parts of the world. They compare the weather in Greece with Britain and Finland and compare life in Gambia with that of Bruton. Pupils show their knowledge, skills and understanding in studies at a local scale. For example pupils in Year 1 make their own postcard of Bruton after a walk around the town. These are sent to relatives and friends. In Year 2, pupils keep a diary of places they visit during the holidays. Many are beginning to use geographical language well and can identify features such as river, mountain, lake and forest on a simple map.

101. Year 6 pupils are well able to describe and recognise physical and human features of different localities. They understand how any changes in these features can affect the lives and activities of people living there. Years 3 and 4 investigate the local area and identify important features of their town on a map of the area. They also produce their own independent studies of rivers and settlements, such as Honiton in Devon, Batcombe and Bruton. In Year 5, pupils investigate the wider world and study rain forest areas and the impact of the climate on the vegetation and living conditions in this area. In Year 6, pupils are beginning to develop a link with a school in London in preparation for a topic in the spring term and long term planning indicates that the pupils will be studying 'coasts' in the summer term. There has been no geography topic in the autumn term. However, two geography topics run continually throughout the year for pupils across the age range; one called 'What's in the News?' and another linked to work started in the very youngest classes when any pupil in the school can take 'Barnaby Bear' on holiday with them. Pupils identify the town, city or country he visits and describe what they do during the visit.

102. No lessons were observed during the inspection, so no judgement can be made on the teaching of geography. The scheme of work is comprehensive and evidence from pupils' work indicates that the scheme is used well to support planning. Teachers are planning assessment tasks to ensure pupils are making sufficient progress. However, these are not yet directly linked to the National Curriculum attainment targets. Good cross-curricular links are made with other subjects, particularly literacy. Pupils use their literacy and information technology skills very well to record their work and for research purposes. This is an area identified for further development on the co-ordinator's action plan. Geography provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own culture and those of others in the wider world. For example, pupils have gained very good knowledge of the Gambia from a member of staff who visited the area.

103. The new coordinator manages the subject well and has a clear action plan for the further improvement of the subject. Resources appear satisfactory but the coordinator has identified the need to complete an audit of resources, particularly since the library has recently been reorganised. The portfolio of pupils' work with photographs needs to be updated to reflect what is happening in geography now. Pupils' work in the portfolio is not matched to national levels of attainment to support teachers with assessing individual pupil's work. The school makes very good use of the local area and links with the wider community to enhance pupils' learning.

HISTORY

104. Attainment in history exceeds national expectations by the end of Year 6 and all pupils are achieving well. This is because of the very rich and interesting opportunities provided for the pupils to develop their historical knowledge and understanding and the great enthusiasm for the subject by both teachers and pupils. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

105. By the end of Year 2 most pupils show a good sense of chronology by talking confidently about the passing of time. They can arrange a number of clocks in the order of when they were invented. Most are beginning to understand the impact of events and changes over a period and compare the past and present. For example, they show a good awareness of how life has changed with the use of electricity. They have a good level of understanding when they compare pictures of everyday life in the past and present.

106. Year 6 pupils show increasing depth of factual knowledge of aspects of history in Britain and the wider world. In Years 3 and 4, pupils use a wide range of sources to gain knowledge and understanding of life in Victorian times. They use a local census to compare the lives of the rich and the poor families and extracts from a logbook and information books to discover about life in Victorian schools. Pupils also gave the inspector details of a visit to a local museum when they were able to take on the roles of people living in the time of Queen Victoria. Year 5 research food eaten during Tudor times and understand that it reflects social differences in that time as they plan a simple meal for Tudor people and a banquet for the rich gentry. They have a clear understanding of the impact on Britain of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I and have drawn up a Tudor family tree. In

Year 6, pupils describe and make links between events and changes and give reasons for, and show the results of, these events and changes. They recall the main events of the Second World War and explain why Britain could not return to normal straight after the war. Some pupils interviewed a local resident about his experiences as an evacuee. They have written newspaper articles about the outbreak of war and fact files of significant people such as Adolf Hitler.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Teachers are enthusiastic and planning is carefully matched to pupils' interest and range of abilities. As a result, boys and girls are very keen and concentrate very well during lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons have a good pace, which holds the pupils' interest well. Throughout lessons teachers seek out ways for developing historical vocabulary, for example in a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher continually reinforced the use of terms such as timeline, history and chronological order. Resources are well organised and clear instructions are given for tasks, which enables pupils to settle promptly to tasks. Teachers provide good assessment activities at the end of each unit of work and use this information well to assess individual pupils' attainment for reporting to parents. However, although projects and assessment tasks are well marked and positive comments given, there is no indication of the level each pupil has achieved using the National Curriculum attainment targets.

108. Very good cross-curricular links are made between history and other subjects, particularly literacy. Pupils use their literacy skills very well in history lessons both in research and in presentation of their work. For example, Year 6 pupils have produced interesting newspaper articles titled 'We are at War' and in Year 3 and 4 pupils use books and a school log book very well, writing down detailed information in their own words. Other cross-curricular links include Tudor dancing during a physical education lesson, the study of food eaten by the Tudors in design technology lessons and in the younger classes, putting clocks in chronological order links well with work in mathematics and design technology. History provides very good material for pupils' social and cultural development. They confidently and thoughtfully reflect on the past and its impact on changes in society. The wide range of interesting visits and visitors to school enhance pupils' cultural awareness very well.

109. Subject management is very good. The coordinator has very detailed information to support the development of the subject, particularly how the scheme of work is being adapted for mixed aged classes. A comprehensive scheme of work is very well supported with lots of visits, visitors and interesting resources to enhance pupils' learning. Very good displays, including artefacts loaned by parents also support pupils' learning very well. The detailed portfolio of pupils' work includes photographs but it does not indicate the national level of attainment achieved by each pupil so cannot yet be used to support teachers with assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

110. Provision for ICT has improved immensely since the last inspection with a dedicated computer suite making it possible for teachers to actually teach computer skills and pupils to practice them regularly. With the barely adequate equipment then in use, very little direct teaching taking place and a lack of expertise and knowledge among staff, pupils were said not to progress as well as they could. Focused staff training and the accumulation of appropriate software has meant that the subject operates at a completely different level from the way it did then. Expectations as expressed by the national scheme of work used by the school are now very much higher and skills, knowledge and understanding grow year on year as staff and pupil confidence and the profile of the subject grows.

111. Up to and including Year 5, most pupils are already achieving the expected levels in the national scheme of work and in some classes, higher attaining pupils are beginning to exceed them. The progress being made in each year group is at least good and in some classes with especially confident teachers, it is sometimes very good. A key factor in this is the enthusiasm and motivation pupils of all ages and levels of previous experience have for work in information technology. Their capacity to absorb new ideas and skills and move onto unexplored areas using their initiative and creativity is sometimes remarkable. This was very well demonstrated in an excellent Year 5 lesson where the enthusiasm and confidence of the teacher rubbed off on his pupils. After a brisk and purposeful introduction reminding pupils how to use the technology to turn a screen 'lighthouse' on

and off, they took him at his word and used trial and error to exceed what he had expected and turn every light source including the sun on and off in a series of complex patterns. The final peer evaluations using the digital projector and self-recording in ICT Logbooks showed how aware the class were of what they were trying to achieve, how well they understood the process and how well they knew they had done.

112. Only in Year 6 where pupils have had to try to cover a great deal of ground in the short time the computer suite has been available to them are standards below those expected. However, even here confident teaching and well-motivated pupils showed that before they leave, the gap will be much closer. By the end of a lesson on linking pages in a document in preparation for creating their own presentation about World War II as part of their history work, every pupil created working links and 'back' buttons and several had moved ahead to create even more 'sneaky' links. Year 2 pupils showed the same confidence in using a word-processing programme to write a list of the materials they were using to make a timer in design technology. All knew how to log on and save their work and could explain how to access and use folders. Prompted by the inspector, pupils changed the typeface and size of the print and were delighted to find out how to make it a different colour.

113. Very good links between ICT and other subjects were also shown in Year 3 and 4 lessons where pupils were using the stimulus of work in patterns in art. In an art lesson the class computer was set up with a graphics programme for pupils to create their own 'Rangoli' patterns in pairs while in an ICT lesson, after reminding pupils about patterns and how to log onto the programme, pupils were encouraged to 'play' with the tools to create patterns. Over the period of the lesson pupils' attempts became rapidly more complex and adventurous with pupils learning from each other and the gentle prompts of the teacher and teaching assistant. A typical response to a child's efforts was a genuine, 'Amazing - how did you do it?'

114. The subject is very well led by the experienced coordinator who over the past seven years has grown with the subject and through her own enthusiasm and a comprehensive programme of professional development has become a very valuable asset to the school in this area. As indicated above, ICT is now included in planning for all subjects except physical education and the only inhibiting factor at the moment is the ageing classroom computers which limit the type of use to which they can be put especially in the older classes. Recently introduced ICT Logbooks show good signs of being a key factor in improving assessment arrangements for the subject which are at the moment not as well developed as other aspects of provision.

MUSIC

115. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities. Boys and girls in year two maintain a steady beat and enjoy a variety of activities to reinforce this skill. They listen to music and can recall the title and composer of the piece. Most immediately feel the pulse and are eager to conduct the orchestra. They show good control in playing untuned percussion instruments and know the names of the instruments they are to play. Pupils listen to and repeat rhythms with increasing complexity and are able to identify songs correctly from the rhythm. They sing with accuracy in pitch and rhythm and are confident when singing on their own. Boys and girls create different moods when singing 'Michael Finnegan' by the use of loud and quiet singing and control their voices well.

116. In years three and four, pupils know about how music is written and use musical words correctly, for example stave and notes. They continue to develop their singing with a good sense of tone. Year six pupils sing with confidence and are able to maintain their part against another and play challenging rhythms as an accompaniment. Singing for collective worship is of a high quality and pupils sing enthusiastically and well. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers in strings, woodwind, brass, percussion, keyboard, guitars and recorders considerably enhances the provision for the more able musical pupils. These pupils get a very good grounding in the more technical and performance elements, which enables them to achieve very well. However, they have few opportunities to use their individual expertise to benefit their classmates. A few instrumentalists take turns to play at the beginning and end of worship, displaying a high level of competence.

117. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are based on a commercial

scheme and are usually closely linked to the period of history being studied. Some lessons are challenging which maintains interest for the more able pupils; however, some of the less able pupils find the content too difficult. Instructions are clear and skills are practised and repeated to aid progress. Individual pupils' musical knowledge and ability is used within some lessons by encouraging pupils to take a lead or use the instruments they are learning. The end of the lesson is effectively used for pupils to identify what they have learnt and to extend their learning. Mixed ability groups enable the lower attainers to work alongside those with more developed skills.

118. Teachers plan lessons together ensuring that parallel classes receive the same diet. Plans are regularly evaluated and amended according to pupils' needs. However, the development of a consistent record of pupils' skills and attainments matching a scheme of work which is relevant to the school, will aid teachers' planning still further. The change from specialist teaching in two of the upper classes, along with the interim period prior to the newly appointed subject leader taking up her position, accounts for the decline in standards since the last report. All teachers, most of whom are non-specialists, are now involved in teaching music to their class. However, several lack the confidence and subject knowledge to achieve higher standards.

119. There is a satisfactory range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments including instruments from other cultures. The range of recorded music is wide offering pupils opportunities to listen attentively to various types of music. Use of appropriate music in worship, through singing and listening, supports their spiritual and cultural development. Some instrumental tuition takes place during school time but teachers are very aware of this and ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same subject each week. Instrumentalists combine to form the school orchestra, which performs on occasions. The school choir performs regularly within the community and they are actively engaged in performances and take part in the South Somerset Music event.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

120. Although mainly dance lessons were available for inspection during the week, Year 6 classes were observed taking part in good quality hockey sessions being taken by an outside specialist and pupils in Years 3 and 4 were seen returning from swimming lessons in a local pool as inspectors arrived for the inspection. In addition, older pupils were seen taking part in well run out of class activities such as football, country dancing and golf. A conscious decision by the physical education coordinator to broaden the range of sporting activities available out of class to encourage participation has meant that in addition netball, short tennis, rounders, gymnastics, hockey and cricket clubs have been available. This rich choice made available by the efforts of members of staff, parents and volunteers makes a very good contribution to overall PE provision.

121. With very good teaching in four out of the five lessons observed, performance levels were mainly better than expected for the ages of the pupils concerned. Year 1 pupils understood the need for a warm up and knew about the change in heart rate. They enjoyed rehearsing the floppy, loose movements of a scarecrow before changing to the jerky, stiff actions of robots from the toy shop. Lots of encouragement, good pace and use of music helped to produce plenty of activity and good quality movements. In two contrasting dance lessons in Year 3 and 4 classes, one concentrated on pure movement in prompting pupils to find many ways of performing turning or spinning movements while the other used the stimulus of the Victorians theme in history for developing dance routines based on Victorian servants getting ready for Christmas. In both, the warm up and cool down session were given due importance and pupils were able to explain their purpose. Both demonstrated pupils very good capacity for using their imagination and initiative to create sequences of movements unique to the individuals or the pairs involved. Half class demonstrations showed this and also how aware the rest of the class were about what would improve their work. Other Year 3 and 4 pupils were observed in a well structured and very well managed large ball game session involving marking and avoiding as well as throwing and catching.

122. A further example of work in PE supporting work in history came in a very good dance session in Year 5 where, with exhausting energy and enthusiasm, the PE coordinator cajoled the whole class into performing a set dance to some Tudor style music. Starting with some 'classic' aerobic type activity, he rapidly moved on to building up the dance half a class at a time so that

pupils learned by doing and watching. With everybody (including the student and the teaching assistant) making suggestions about how to improve, the dance steadily came together until before the end the whole class performed it successfully with great energy and enjoyment - if not very elegantly. This despite one pupil suggesting that 'people should be more serious, because it's a Tudor dance'. The same well structured lesson pattern was observed in a Year 6 dance about 'Rubbish' with good attention to warm up and shakedown, good use of half class demonstrations to get pupils to evaluate and improve their work and the same full involvement from adults and pupils. Again, the quality of thought and movement was better than usually seen.

123. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The school always had a tradition of being good at sports and games but the PE coordinator has sought to broaden the approach to include activities at every level at which all sorts of pupils can succeed. Work is based on national guidance and, as noted above, often relates to work in other areas of the curriculum. However, assessment procedures are under-developed in PE and the coordinator has not been able to monitor teaching or standards first hand. Resources and equipment are in good supply and the outside accommodation is more than adequate but the small hall inhibits vigorous activity in aspects such as gymnastics or indoor games especially for the larger pupils in the older classes. The school pool is unusable but very good use is made of pools at other local schools, which is enabling most pupils to achieve the 25 metres they could not in the old pool. Very good plans to combine this with making it possible for Years 5 and 6 to use the large hall at a secondary school will answer the problem about the small school hall for these pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Attainment in religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which is an improvement on the last report. Boys and girls in year one speak confidently about their special book and share reasons why it is special to them. They recognise the church as being a special place and the importance of special people in their lives. Pupils in year two have a good knowledge of major Christian festivals and can recall stories from the Old Testament as well as miracles performed by Jesus. They can explain the meaning behind some stories Jesus told, such as the lost sheep, and know their importance and meaning in our lives. Most know the meaning of some Christian symbols and when they are used, for example the cross, candles and water. They recognise that prayer is important to some people and that the Bible is identified as a special book for Christians. Pupils are aware of the Hindu religion and the festival of Divali and accept that others have opinions and different religions to be respected. They compare the hardships of people in Africa with themselves and display care and concern for others.

125. Pupils in years 3 and 4 are developing a greater awareness of Christianity and its teaching. They explore a link between people in the past, for example Lord Shaftesbury, and the values expected when living in a community. They suggested that some of the qualities needed should be to be loving, thoughtful and a good listener and to think of others before themselves. Pupils in year six have a good knowledge of religious belief and teaching, and of the Jewish and Islamic practices and specialist language. They understand the importance of religion to some people and respect others' views and opinions, being able to articulate supportive arguments very well and review their own thinking accordingly. They explain their feelings associated with their own experiences and are aware of the relationship between religion and everyday life. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported and make satisfactory progress.

126. The overall quality of teaching is good. Where it is particularly good, links with other subject areas are used to enhance and focus pupils learning, such as the making of masks for use in the dramatisation of a Hindu story, 'The Ramayana'. A time of reflection is provided for pupils to have their own thoughts. Adults and pupils show an open respect for others opinions and beliefs. The very good subject knowledge of teachers' ensures challenging work, which involves all the pupils. Where an appropriate atmosphere is created at the start of the lesson greater recognition of the spiritual dimension of the subject is apparent.

127. Christianity forms the main content across both key stages. An introduction to other world faiths is included in accordance with the local authority agreed syllabus. As yet, any assessment of

pupils' work does not follow a formal routine. Close links with the parish church includes regular visits from the minister to take collective worship and involvement in religious education. The church is also used as a resource for the teaching of religious education but visits to other places of worship within the planning would benefit the understanding of world religions. The subject is well resourced with good quality books, artefacts, pictures and videos.