

INSPECTION REPORT

CULVERHILL SCHOOL

Yate, Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucester

Unique reference number: 131808

Headteacher: Miss Alison Binmore

Reporting inspector: Hilary Gannaway
21527

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th June 2001

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kelston Close Yate South Gloucester
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Martyn Radnedge
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Culverhill School for pupils with complex learning difficulties was formed in 1999 from the amalgamation of two schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. This has resulted in a change in the school population with over half the pupils now having complex needs and a third moderate learning difficulties. There is a significant minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and a few with autism. The school continued to operate on two sites until September 2000 when, following building work, all pupils moved on to one site. The school now caters for 149 pupils, aged 7 to 16, of whom 25 are of primary age. There are twice as many boys as girls. The school has two travellers on roll and a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and their attainment on entry is well below that expected for their age. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. Most pupils come from South Gloucester with a diminishing number from Bristol.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Despite the considerable difficulties associated with the amalgamation, Culverhill is an effective school. Standards of achievement are good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory for other pupils. In the two years since the school has opened, pupils have begun to make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and, on the whole, behaviour is good. Teaching is good and contributes well to pupils' learning. The leadership and management are satisfactory and there is a clear understanding of priorities for the future. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall and contributes well to pupils' learning and progress. Teaching is consistently good at Key Stage 4. It is very good in music overall and science at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Provision for careers and work related learning is very good and contributes very well to pupils' transition to post 16 provision.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school. Relationships between all members of the school are good and this contributes well to pupils' personal development.
- The school's provision for moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Governors are skilled and supportive. They are proactive in helping to develop the school and monitor, challenge and keep its work under review.
- The transition from two schools to one has been effectively managed.
- Parents think highly of the school and are pleased with the education it offers.

What could be improved

- The way in which teachers assess and record pupils' achievements. There is inconsistent practice within and between subjects. Assessment is rarely used to inform planning or monitor progress.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils for whom present behaviour management strategies are not working.
- The role and responsibilities of subject coordinators including arrangements for liaison between joint coordinators to ensure consistent planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has not been inspected in its present form until now. It is therefore not appropriate to comment on improvement in this report.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	C	B	very good	A
reading	C	C	good	B
writing	C	C	satisfactory	C
mathematics	C	C	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C		

Although the school is new and it is difficult to judge progress over time, achievement and progress seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory. Pupils progress at a satisfactory pace in literacy and numeracy. Good gains are already being made at Key Stages 3 and 4 where good progress was seen in science, history, religious education, music, the resistant materials component of design technology and speaking and listening. Progress is also good in geography at Key Stage 3 and mathematics at Key Stage 4. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. At Key Stage 4, specialist teaching, a focus on key skills, and good personal support from staff ensure pupils gain a range of accreditation in the Certificate of Educational Achievement and the Youth Award Scheme. At Key Stage 2, progress is good in design technology, music and science and satisfactory in all other subjects. At this key stage, progress is sometimes limited by the differences in planning for, and management of, pupils. Progress in personal, social and health education is good throughout the school. This is reflected in pupils' good attitudes to school. All pupils make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets, most of which are specific to their needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good at Key Stages 2 and 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Pupils work well together and are keen to try hard and succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall and often good in lessons. It is good when pupils are out at college. However, there is a small minority of pupils whose behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory in class and at lunchtime.
Personal development and relationships	There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are cooperative and friendly. Personal development and responsibility are promoted well by personal, social and health education, although some pupils would benefit from increased opportunities to take more initiative in their learning.
Attendance	This is satisfactory in comparison with similar schools, but unauthorised absences are high. Punctuality for school is good, but not all lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. 57 per cent of teaching was good or better. Very good or excellent teaching amounted to 15 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is consistently good at Key Stage 4 where the curriculum provides good quality, appropriate learning opportunities that motivate pupils to do their best and achieve well. Specialist teaching by teachers with good subject knowledge benefits pupils at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 2, variations in planning and inconsistency in the way the curriculum is taught across the key stage occasionally limits learning opportunities and the progress pupils make. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, history, geography, personal, social and health education, religious education and the resistant materials component of design technology. It is very good in music overall and science at Key Stages 3 and 4. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects. Numeracy is taught well and effective literacy teaching is being extended to classes other than those at Key Stage 2. Most lessons are well managed but there is a limited range of strategies for behaviour management in some classes. The development of oral and written skills is well supported across the curriculum. The school suitably meets the needs of all pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of all pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4 where an increasing range of accreditation motivates pupils and enhances their self esteem. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. Community links are well planned and successfully contribute to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good opportunities are provided for pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Arrangements for spiritual awareness are satisfactory but limited by few planned opportunities across the curriculum. Personal development is promoted well for older pupils and includes access to a range of activities that equip them well for life after school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school liaises closely with a number of outside agencies to promote the welfare of pupils and to make them feel safe and valued. The procedures for monitoring good behaviour are satisfactory and good for supporting personal development. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and progress are at an early stage.
Partnership with parents and carers	The school's partnership with parents is good. There are beneficial links with parents and the school provides a good range of information. However, end of year reports do not always give enough information about progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher has a clear view of the educational direction and, with the senior management team, is developing effective working practices. The headteacher has taken the lead in monitoring teaching and this is having a positive impact on learning. There is inconsistency in the way subject coordinators carry out their role.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors carry out their duties well. They are active in policy making and keeping the school under review. Governors are fully involved in the process of financial planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a suitable improvement plan and performance management arrangements are good. Culverhill is a new school and as yet it does not have enough data to plan long term improvements. Best value procedures are satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	The school's annual educational priorities for improvement are becoming increasingly well supported through good financial planning as information is built up about the new school.

There is an appropriate number of teachers and support staff, well matched to the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is good and enhances the presentation of the curriculum, with the exception of facilities for physical education. Overall resources to support learning are good in quantity and quality. Procedures for professional development of staff are good and for learning support assistants, very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is well led and managed• Parents are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem• The teaching is good• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few feel that their children do not get enough homework• A few do not feel well informed about how their children's progress• There are not enough extra curricular activities• Some parents feel that their children do not like school

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. They find that most pupils enjoy coming to school and that parents are generally kept well informed. Inspectors find that homework is often, but not always, set. Extra curricular activities are underdeveloped but the school has plans to rectify this.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge the standards they achieve against age-related expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school population.

1. Culverhill is a new school that has recently moved to one site. Pupils are being taught by teachers, many of whom are new to them. This has made it difficult to judge progress over time. However, standards of achievement and progress seen during the scrutiny of work and in lessons are satisfactory overall. They are improving at Key Stages 3 and 4 where good gains in progress were seen in science, history, religious education, music, the resistant materials component of design technology and speaking and listening. Good progress was also seen at Key Stage 3 in geography and Key Stage 4 in mathematics. In all other subjects progress is satisfactory. At Key Stages 3 and 4, specialist teaching and good personal support on the part of staff, ensures pupils achieve a range of appropriate accreditation in the Certificate of Educational Achievement and the Youth Award Scheme by the time they leave school. All pupils make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets, most of which are specific to their needs.

2. At Key Stage 2 progress is good in science, design technology and music, and satisfactory in all other subjects. No judgement could be made about progress in religious education because most lessons consist of oral work and very little is recorded. Pupils progress at a satisfactory pace in literacy and numeracy where teachers have worked hard to implement both the strategies. However, progress does vary due to differences in planning and management of pupils. It is better for the younger pupils.

3. Progress in personal, social and health education is good throughout the school and this is reflected in pupils' good attitudes to school and the way most work cooperatively. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls or by pupils of different ethnic groups.

4. Pupils' achievement and progress is satisfactory in English. They make satisfactory progress in reading and writing overall and in speaking and listening at Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening at Key Stages 3 and 4 where they become confident by participating in group and class discussions in English and other subjects.

5. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to adults and to one another from the time they enter the school. At eleven years old, higher attaining pupils use a good range of vocabulary to talk about books they are reading while lower attaining pupils often use a simple vocabulary and short phrases. Higher attaining pupils, aged fourteen, show their competence during discussions in different subjects. By sixteen, all pupils develop the ability and confidence to speak in a variety of situations supported by well organised opportunities for role play.

6. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils develop pre reading skills by looking at picture books and suggesting possible stories. By the time they are aged eleven, higher attaining pupils are developing fluency and accuracy. However, lower attaining pupils have not developed strategies for unknown words and often lack confidence when reading aloud. The recently introduced phonics programme, which pupils are enjoying, is helping to develop these skills.

7. At Key Stage 3, good teaching ensures pupils continue systematically to practise and develop reading skills. This ensures that, by fourteen, higher attaining pupils are using a range of different strategies for unknown words while lower attaining pupils read confidently using phonic cues. However, for a few pupils, limited skills in reading affect their learning across the curriculum. By the time they leave school, most pupils read a range of materials including stories, poetry, plays and non fiction texts.

8. Younger pupils develop pre writing skills by tracing patterns and copying words. By age eleven, pupils are developing handwriting skills. They write short stories using simple punctuation and sometimes use word processing programmes for their final draft. Well planned lessons aimed at improving writing skills ensure that by the age of fourteen, higher attaining pupils show progress towards more independence in writing and by sixteen, pupils learn how to plan, draft and redraft. At this age, higher attaining pupils attempt to proof read. They know how to use a dictionary or thesaurus to find words to make a sentence more interesting. Most pupils do this independently, although some still require adult support.

9. In mathematics, achievement and progress are satisfactory at Key Stages 2 and 3 and good at Key Stage 4 where accreditation makes a positive contribution to achievement. Pupils enjoy mathematics. Eleven year old pupils have a good idea of shape. They identify the similarities and differences between a circle and a cylinder. They understand heaviest, lightest, tallest and shortest and construct simple bar graphs. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils benefit from individual attention they receive in achieving targets on their individual education plans. This ensures progress, so that at fourteen they use their knowledge of the rules of number to check answers to addition and subtraction calculations involving three figure numbers. By the time they leave school, good achievement and progress of pupils is recognised by both the Certificate of Educational Achievement and the Youth Award Scheme.

10. Pupils' achievements in science and their progress in each key stage is good overall. However, different approaches to teaching within Key Stage 2 result in achievement and progress over time being only satisfactory. Successful teaching ensures pupils develop research and investigative skills. For example, at Key Stage 2 pupils construct a circuit and at Key Stage 3 they test metals. This motivates pupils well and has a positive effect on achievement.

11. In the resistant materials component of design technology, progress is frequently good because the teacher has good subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can do. In music good progress across the school is the result of very good teaching of a range of practical activities. This ensures that pupils participate enthusiastically with high levels of cooperation. Planning for information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 2 does not focus on extending pupils' skills, and progress is generally limited to word processing. Progress across the school is suitably reinforced by the use of ICT in other subjects. However, there are few planned opportunities for control mechanisms and data handling and this hampers the progress in these areas. Progress in some aspects of physical education is restricted for older pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 by limited access to

outdoor activities. In art and design pupils with behavioural difficulties are less well managed and at times have a disruptive effect on the progress of other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good overall, as is the personal and social development of pupils.

13. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and, with few exceptions, are keen to learn. The majority listen well to instructions and openly offer their own ideas, such as in a Year 7 class when pupils talked about the effects of a break in the life cycle of a butterfly. Most are keen to talk about what they are doing both in and out of class although there are a few older pupils whose occasional unsatisfactory behaviour causes difficulties for other pupils. Pupils work well together listening to teachers and the views of other pupils.

14. Most pupils came to Culverhill last September from two schools with different approaches to discipline. Despite this, behaviour is satisfactory overall and nearly always good in lessons. All pupils know the class and assertive discipline rules and most respect them and are keen to earn rewards for good behaviour. However, there are a minority of pupils for whom the present behaviour management strategies do not work due to the nature of their individual needs. Pupils who attend college and go out on work experience behave well. Boisterous behaviour by a few older pupils in the corridors and playground, although not in the dining hall, can result in some younger pupils feeling anxious. The playground awaits the installation of equipment so that play times can be more structured. Currently, there is little for younger pupils to do. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have use of the Leavers common room. No pupil reported feeling bullied and all spoken to were confident that if worried, teachers would sort out the problem. There have been a number of mainly short term exclusions amongst a small group of older pupils. In some cases behaviour has improved as a result.

15. Relationships between all staff and pupils and groups of pupils are good. They are often very good between teachers and pupils. Pupils are co-operative and friendly and many work well in pairs and groups as well as on their own. Many pupils are relaxed, humorous and polite, both to staff and visitors, and friendly and helpful towards each other. Pupils have initiated and implemented ideas for fund raising. Through the school council, they have introduced changes to school lunches. These activities allow pupils to show what they can do while developing their initiative and sense of responsibility.

16. The personal development of pupils is good. The personal, social and health education programme makes a good contribution to this outcome. Assemblies about the general election contributed to pupils' awareness of citizenship and civic duty. Arrangements for eating ensure that this is a pleasant occasion where pupils relate well to each other and take turns to clear up. Some pupils would benefit from more opportunities to take further responsibility for their own learning through, for example, being encouraged to undertake more consistent independent research in class time. The emphasis on relating school work to future careers from Year 9 onwards is very good and ensures pupils participate confidently in work related activities in the community.

17. The level of attendance matches the national average for similar schools but the level of unauthorised absence is above that at similar schools. Most pupils are brought to school by taxi or bus and punctuality is good. Most, but not all, lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. 57 per cent of teaching seen was good or better and very good or excellent teaching was seen in 15 per cent of lessons.

19. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Since the amalgamation teachers have worked hard to get to know pupils they have not taught before and understand their individual needs. However, formal records of pupils' skills are, as yet, inconsistent and rarely used to inform planning. Nevertheless, increased teacher knowledge of pupils' needs is having a good effect on learning.

20. Teaching is consistently good at Key Stage 4. Accreditation, key skills and the work related curriculum are well planned by teachers. The curriculum is taught in a way that interests and motivates pupils very well. It keeps them focused, despite the behaviour of a few. This has a positive effect on pupils self esteem and results in them gaining a range of external accreditation. Although teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3, there is a significant amount of good teaching which, combined with high expectations, ensures pupils make good gains in learning. The majority of teachers at Key Stages 3 and 4 teach specialist subjects. Their good subject knowledge ensures pupils understand what is expected of them and that they complete work to a good standard. At Key Stage 2, where there is less good teaching, variations in medium term planning and inconsistency in the way the curriculum is taught across the key stage make it difficult to assess progress. This occasionally limits learning opportunities.

21. The development of oral and writing skills is well supported across the curriculum. In subjects such as history, geography and science, teachers introduce key words to pupils as they begin new topics. Likewise, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to practice numeracy skills in lessons such as technology where pupils apply their knowledge of measuring or weighing ingredients. The important skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively with the teaching of numeracy being good. The literacy and numeracy strategies are starting to have a positive effect on progress. This has led to aspects of the strategies being introduced to classes in Key Stage 3.

22. The majority of lessons are well planned with good introductions so that pupils understand what the lesson is about. Lesson objectives are appropriate and teachers finish with a review of what pupils have learnt. Most teachers ensure they plan so tasks are matched to the ability of pupils, who enjoy being active learners. However, in a few lessons, the pace of work slows when work is too easy for pupils and they become restless. This limits progress. Teamwork with learning support assistants is good, such as in mathematics where learning support assistants work individually with pupils helping them achieve their own mathematics targets. There are occasions where teachers do not sufficiently plan their programme of work to involve learning support assistants and they are underused. Good management of pupils' behaviour means that most pupils concentrate on their work. However, in some classes teachers have a limited range of strategies for managing the behaviour of older pupils with behavioural difficulties and younger pupils with more complex needs, and there is some disruption to learning.

23. There are good relationships between all staff and pupils in the classroom. Teachers expect pupils to do well and this is reflected in pupils' good attitudes to work. In good lessons, imaginative resources and a range of practical activities are successfully used to maintain interest and curiosity. For example, in a lesson on Sikhism a good range of artefacts and pictures were used to show Sikh customs. In a lesson on the Home Front, buckets, a helmet and a hand pump were used to make the experience of being in the war understandable to pupils. Speaking French was made relevant when pupils had to ask in French before they could taste a French breakfast.

24. The teaching of English is good overall. Most lessons are well planned with clear objectives that ensure pupils know what they are being taught. Useful plenary sessions at

the end of lessons, remind pupils of what they have learnt. Pupils are given strategies to help with their written work which they then apply in other lessons. However, in some lessons teachers do not always provide work that is appropriate to individual needs. These pupils find the work difficult to complete and have to be given a great deal of support.

25. The teaching of mathematics is good. There is effective teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy which, from the beginning, motivates the youngest pupils to enjoy the subject. This continues into Key Stage 3 where consistently good teaching ensures pupils make good progress. A strength of this subject is the strong support given by learning support assistants who are well prepared and reinforce the work of teachers. This team approach has a good effect on learning and well supports accreditation work at Key Stage 4.

26. The teaching of science is good overall and very good at Key Stages 3 and 4 where the teacher has very good knowledge of the subject. Very high expectations contribute to purposeful lessons where pupils progress well.

27. Teaching is especially strong in music where it is very good overall. There is excellent subject knowledge and very good knowledge of pupils' learning styles. Great care is taken to ensure every pupil has a suitable task. As a result pupils learn well and thoroughly enjoy the lessons.

28. Teaching is consistently good in all other subjects with the exceptions of art, French, food technology, physical education and ICT, where it is satisfactory. However, at Key Stage 3, one group of pupils successfully extended their learning in an ICT lesson due to well chosen activities and timely intervention by staff. The very good facilities for ICT ensure that aspects of this subject are taught in other subjects such as mathematics, history, geography and English.

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

29. The curriculum provided in the new school is satisfactory overall. It already provides a suitable range of learning opportunities for pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3 and a good range at Key Stage 4 where the curriculum prepares pupils well for the transition to life after school. The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of all pupils except for some aspects of physical education where it is insufficiently broad due mainly to inappropriate facilities. There is an appropriate balance between the National Curriculum and placing good emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills. Effective links with other agencies, such as the careers, speech therapy, physiotherapy and services for the hearing impaired, contribute well in meeting the needs of pupils who have additional learning difficulties.

30. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught including a modern foreign language at Key Stages 3 and 4. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively introduced in Key Stage 2 and these are having a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school development plan indicates that the school will extend the strengths of these strategies into Key Stage 3. Most of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 is taught by subject specialists and pupils benefit from access to specialist accommodation. During Year 9 access to careers education and a taster work course help pupils to prepare for Key Stage 4.

31. In Key Stage 4, good opportunities are provided for pupils to gain qualifications in nationally recognised courses. This includes the Certificate of Educational Achievement in academic subjects such as English, mathematics, religious education, science and history, and the Youth Award Scheme for vocational subjects. The school has successful links with local colleges. Older pupils in Year 11 attend college on a weekly basis to experience courses including pottery, horticulture, driving theory and home maintenance. The key skills curriculum links with the Youth Award Scheme, work experience provision and mini enterprise to provide a cohesive overall curriculum where pupils can be accredited for their achievements. This is well supported by very good careers education. Pupils understand the relevance of the course and have positive attitudes to their work. Their motivation is further enhanced because the key skills coordinator has gained accreditation in five modules. Pupils proudly collect all their certificates in their Record of Achievement folder.

32. Since the amalgamation, subject policies are being systematically reviewed and presented to the governing body for approval. Most subjects, with the exception of art and design and design technology, have appropriate progressive schemes of work, with which to plan, at Key Stage 3 and 4. However, not enough attention is paid to planning for ICT, history, physical education, science and religious education at Key Stage 2 due to differences in the role of subject coordinators. There are few planned opportunities for data handling and control mechanisms across the curriculum.

33. The requirements identified in statements of special educational need are successfully met in full. Additional specialist support or advice is provided, such as physiotherapy or speech therapy. When pupils are withdrawn from class, their curriculum entitlement is not affected. The procedure for annually reviewing the progress pupils have made is effective in identifying new targets. Currently, the school is readjusting after the amalgamation and there are no immediate plans for pupils to follow link or integration programmes with mainstream schools. However, all pupils have equal access to every activity provided within the school curriculum.

34. A number of well chosen out-of-school visits extend pupils' experience outside school. These include visits to Bristol Hippodrome and Bristol Museum together with local visits to a fire station, shopping centre and places of worship. Residential experiences include a three-day work experience event for Year 9 pupils to find out more about the world of work and to develop independence skills. At present, the provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory. Transport arrangements restrict after school provision and little opportunity is taken to provide lunchtime activities to enrich the curriculum.

35. The school has a well planned programme of community activities based in the local area which successfully contribute to pupils' learning. For example, pupils studying science visit the Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the Bristol Museum of Transport as well as doing ecological work on fast and slow flowing streams in Yate and Chipping Sodbury. The valuable Year 9 industry link day closely involves local businesses such as TESCO, and periods of work experience for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils involve local organisations and businesses, thereby providing a good link between school and the business community.

36. There is a strong and effective emphasis on personal development. A well-planned personal, social and health education programme ensures pupils make good progress in areas such as sex education and solvent misuse awareness.

37. The good curriculum provision for personal, social and health education is embedded in the whole school curriculum. There is a draft policy, a detailed scheme of

work and a thorough audit of developments in the subject. These form a firm basis for the good provision that exists in the school. The school development plan indicates the intention to introduce citizenship and circle time activities to enhance the existing provision. The deputy head teacher co-ordinates the subject and the present topic of 'democracy' is taught in three of the daily assemblies as well as in the classroom. After the topical mid-week assembly about the imminent General Election, pupils in Year 10 continued to discuss the political leaders as they researched national newspapers. During this session pupils worked co-operatively and harmoniously, improving their speaking and listening skills.

38. At Key Stage 2 much of the personal, social and health education is through discussion. Pupils consider how people are different and describe personalities they do or do not like. Pupils learn that some things such as vegetables are good for the body but that smoke is not, that it is safe to put body lotion, but not boiling water, on their skin. By the age of fourteen, pupils have been made aware of helpful people in the community, such as the police and fire services. They understand the need for personal hygiene and the physical changes that take place as they get older. Pupils also start looking at their own personal strengths prior to considering work and college courses. By the age of sixteen, pupils have embarked on a more vocational curriculum, which includes personal, social and health education. Though pupils continue to have discrete lessons, all subjects contribute to this aspect of pupils' development allowing them to develop skills in organisation, communication and relationships which provide a good basis for life after school.

39. The recent involvement of the school in the 'Schools for Health Scheme' means that staff, parents and pupils are all involved in looking at the school provision and identifying needs which affect the well being of pupils and adults. One very positive result of the school's commitment to the scheme is the establishment of the school council, which allows pupils to take responsibility and have opportunities to influence school decision-making.

40. The provision made by the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, provision for the pupils' spiritual development is no more than satisfactory. There are too few planned opportunities to develop spirituality across the curriculum, although some teachers do take time to encourage wonder and delight. For instance, pupils show genuine surprise and excitement at the appearance of bubbles of methane gas during a science experiment. Music in particular makes a significant contribution to spiritual development. In music lessons pupils invariably respond with joyous enthusiasm when singing and playing instruments. They listen to music calmly and reflectively, often closing their eyes whilst they do so. Further opportunities for spiritual development occur through the study of beliefs in religious education. Assemblies celebrate success and develop a sense of community.

41. Moral and social education is good. Increasing opportunities are taken to give a sense of responsibility as pupils get older. They participate in the school council. This group have had input into issues such as the development of the courtyard area and new recipes for school dinners. Personal and social education has an appropriately high priority. Time is regularly set aside for discussion and reflection. During Key Stage 3 assemblies for example, pupils consider the benefits of democracy in comparison to other types of government. This provides effective opportunities for social development and for consideration of moral questions at a level appropriate to the age and experiences of the pupils. Lunchtimes in the dining room are pleasant, social experiences and pupils are encouraged to be polite and to take turns. Throughout the school, pupils generally respond well to the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and are encouraged to take

responsibility for their own actions. Codes of conduct are in evidence and pupils work cooperatively.

42. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities and experiences, which enhance the school curriculum and help to foster pupils' co-operation, team spirit and sense of fair play. These activities include music groups, school productions and visits, all of which engender the idea of collective responsibility. Staff help pupils to develop a sense of citizenship and community by providing them with opportunities to contribute to local and national charities, for example, supporting a village in The Gambia, 'Shoe Box Appeals' and the National Spring Clean in Yate parks. Through the Youth Award Scheme Community Awareness module, Year 11 pupils are encouraged to 'give something back to the community'. They make boxer shorts and wash cars for charity. Such activities help to nurture pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

43. Class assemblies and school productions offer pupils further opportunities to work together and to perform to a wider audience. For instance, during the inspection Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils were working towards a performance of 'Jam Tomorrow' based on a history topic.

44. Cultural development is good. The link with a village, and particularly a school in The Gambia, has helped pupils to understand how others live. Pupils have opportunities to participate in a range, of cultural and multi-cultural experiences such as learning about Italian food, different religions and the ways in which people live when they study different countries. For instance, in geography Year 8 pupils study the rainforest, in history, Year 6 pupils visit Bath and study Greek architecture and in French, pupils learn about French culture. Through work in literacy, pupils are introduced to different authors and to a variety of literature. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to consider their own cultural traditions, as in visits to the Yate Heritage Centre and Chipping Sodbury Art Gallery.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The procedures for the support, welfare and guidance for pupils are satisfactory. There are termly fire drills and regular monitoring of the building by governors. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and comply with locally agreed procedures. The school liaises closely with a number of agencies to promote the welfare of pupils which makes them feel safe and valued. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal and academic development are satisfactory overall, although aspects of assessment are underdeveloped. Pupils feel safe and happy knowing that they are guided and supported by caring staff.

46. Support for personal development is good. The personal, social and health education programme and planned assemblies give good opportunities for developing pupils' confidence and maturity. The very well thought out careers education programme is very effective in making education relevant to the world beyond. Links with local further education colleges are used well to ensure that leavers take up a range of opportunities of further study. Links with the Connexions service, as well as personal contacts, ensure that all pupils are offered a well organised chance of work experience. There is a good range of outings during school hours, linked to the curriculum, which broaden pupils' horizons and aid personal development. Leavers, including those who opt to go straight to the workplace or take training, are very well served by the school's career education.

47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. There are merit awards, raffle tickets and certificates earned through the use of the assertive discipline code. Some teachers are more effective than others in its application. However,

the checks and balances that reward good behaviour and improve unsatisfactory behaviour and unacceptable language are not always effective. Exclusions of a minority of pupils have been used to reinforce the message that good behaviour is expected and insisted on in school. Current behaviour strategies are not as effective for a few younger pupils with more complex needs now entering the school. At present the school does not monitor behaviour by the racial background of pupils. However, procedures to monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils are confident that any worries or instances of bullying brought to the staff's attention will be dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively.

48. Learning support assistants sometimes support and promote good behaviour as effectively as teachers in the classroom and this consistency of approach reinforces the good behaviour message. At present the school has no policy for physical restraint and neither have staff received training in this area.

49. The school wishes to reduce the level of unauthorised absence and currently has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. First day call to parents when pupils are absent has recently been introduced, but it is too soon to assess its effectiveness. Registers need attention. They are not always correctly marked. The education welfare officer works closely with the school and this has begun to improve attendance. While the staff are aware and take immediate action if a pupil absconds, there is no formal school policy to be followed.

50. Although the monitoring of academic performance is satisfactory, the school's procedures for assessing pupils' achievements and progress are at an early stage of development and are currently unsatisfactory. At present, there are no baseline assessments carried out when pupils enter school nor are there more focused diagnostic tests used to assess specific areas of learning difficulty in areas such as literacy. Assessment to identify the small steps of progress made by pupils with more complex needs has not begun to be developed. Many staff do not yet have a full understanding of the need to identify pupils' achievements in terms of what they can do, know and understand in different subject areas. The school does not have procedures for moderating pupils' work to ensure consistency of assessment by different teachers. This leads to variation and discrepancies between teachers' assessments and test results at the end of key stage tests.

51. As a result, there is a great deal of inconsistent practice in the school between key stages, between different departments and within single departments, although there are pockets of developing practice in subjects such as mathematics and science in Key Stages 3 and 4, and for pupils taking accreditation. Consequently, assessment information is not consistently recorded, used consistently to track progress or used as effectively as it should be in planning future work to meet the needs of individual pupils. As a result, the different subject reports produced for annual reviews and annual reports to parents are of variable quality in identifying subject-specific progress over the preceding twelve months. The inconsistent practice also reflects the lack of clarity about the role and responsibilities of subject leaders across key stages.

52. The school is aware of the need to develop assessment and has appointed an assessment coordinator who has a good understanding of what needs to be done, but has not yet developed an appropriate process.

53. Individual education plans vary in quality but are satisfactory overall. Targets are generally, but not always, specific and the activities required to meet them are identified.

They focus on targets in literacy, numeracy and social skills and show a good link between the objectives set at annual reviews and their review the following year. However, the plans do not show the specific criteria that will be used to measure pupils' success in achieving these targets. In addition, the plans do not show any progression in the challenge of the targets as pupils move through key stages and from one key stage to another.

54. Annual reviews are held each year and transition reviews are held for pupils aged 14 years with parents. These meetings are sometimes combined with pupils' medical checks carried out by the school nurse. This enables a "whole picture" to be built up of a child's progress and welfare. The school takes good care with the induction of new pupils who are given the chance to visit the school prior to entry. However re-integration links with mainstream schools are not strong.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents and carers think highly of the school and are pleased with the education it offers their children. The school has good links with parents and the newly launched parent teacher association is starting to support the school well. A few parents and volunteers strengthen the home-school partnership by, for example, offering help in the classroom or accompanying school outings.

56. A minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire were concerned that there are currently insufficient extra curricular activities, although the school intends to expand lunchtime activities. Some parents also had concerns about the amount of homework and about school links. Homework, which reinforces and extends learning, is set regularly in some, but not all, subjects and classes. The school makes strenuous efforts at open evenings, and annual and transition reviews to inform parents about the progress made by its pupils and many parents attend these meetings. The end of year written reports clearly cover what has been studied in the national curriculum but do not always contain sufficient information about progress made.

57. The range and quality of information that parents receive from the school is good. Newsletters give parents clear guidance on many school matters. The prospectus, which is being combined with the governors' annual report to parents, is clear and informative. Parents are invited to open evenings three times each year and are free to talk to teachers at other times. Transport escorts provide an effective daily means of communication between school and home.

58. The home school agreement has been signed by most parents. Parents are asked to attend review meetings and contribute to individual education plans. Overall the partnership between parents and the school strengthens pupils learning and contributes to their positive attitudes to school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The school has been amalgamated for less than two years and on one site only this year. During most of this time there has been building work on one site and, until recently, specialist rooms such as design technology and science could not be used. Nevertheless, the transition to one school has been managed effectively. Despite these difficult working conditions, and her absence through illness, the headteacher has continued to provide satisfactory leadership. She has a clear view of the educational direction the school needs to take to best meet pupils' needs. There is a developing whole school ethos, shared aims and a commitment to improvement. Appropriate systems are in place to support teaching

and learning. The school has a suitable, draft, one year improvement plan which focuses on core subjects and reflects the priorities in the Local Education Authority (LEA) and school self review. However, the development of assessment needs to be speeded up so that the use of improved data on pupils can better support strategic planning to raise pupil achievement.

60. Teachers from both schools have faced the challenge of teaching across a more complex ability range and have been well supported by a wide range of good training. The headteacher has begun to develop a programme to monitor teaching and scrutinise planning, supported by advice from the LEA. The generally good quality of teaching and the gains pupils are making testify to the success of these strategies.

61. The senior management team, which consists of the key stage coordinators, headteacher and deputy head, are developing effective working practices. They have a suitable understanding of the way forward, meet regularly and are beginning to plan strategically in areas such as the school development plan. Since the amalgamation, the school has set up a system of subject coordinators all of whom have their own budgets and effective development plans. These are discussed yearly with the headteacher. However, currently, there is little consistent monitoring of subjects by coordinators with the exception of mathematics and English who have monitored numeracy and literacy. Some coordinators have a whole school role, while other subjects are split between a Key Stage 2 coordinator and an overall coordinator for Key Stages 3 and 4. There are other subjects where coordination is presently unclear. This has resulted in some uncertainty as to the exact nature of the role, although there is developing good practice in mathematics and music. The outcome has been that there is inconsistency in the way subjects are managed. This is mainly so within some of the subjects where there are two coordinators. The confusion is particularly marked between Key Stages 2 and 3 where limited opportunities for links between joint coordinators affect assessment and planning. This results in some pupils not always making maximum progress

62. The governing body fulfils its duties successfully. Governors have a range of skills that support the school well. Through their committees they are active in policy making and keeping the school under review, For example, the curriculum committee has already received presentations from staff about subject developments and individual governors are paired with subjects to gain a better over view. Governors have spent a considerable time dealing with, and being proactive about, all aspects of the amalgamation. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are developing their role as a critical friend. Statutory requirements are met.

63. As the school is only recently established, it does not have historical information on costs with which to build budgets. In addition, the two schools that were amalgamated both had significant sums of money that were carried forward into the budget of the newly formed school. Therefore, it was important that early financial decisions that were taken ensured sufficient funds were available for all areas of the school's work and that the large surplus that had been accumulated was spent wisely on the school's priorities.

64. These two aims have been achieved successfully because the school's governing body has a very good grasp of the school's financial position and is fully involved with the headteacher in budgeting and spending decisions. The school's annual educational priorities are becoming increasingly well supported through its financial planning as it builds up more information about the costs involved in running a new school and the likely amounts available for contingencies and planned developments. However, the school has not yet begun to compile extended development plans beyond a one year period and this

limits its medium and long term strategic effectiveness. The school uses delegated funds satisfactorily for their designated purpose and monitors and evaluates the impact of this spending.

65. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology which is beginning to be used increasingly in different areas of the curriculum. Teachers use it well for administrative procedures such as planning and writing individual education plans and annual reports. Administrative staff use technology for a range of purposes, such as pupil records and financial systems. However, it is acknowledged that this equipment is outdated and needs replacing because, for example, staff cannot even access some information that is transferred to them electronically from the local authority.

66. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily as it begins to examine its costs in more detail, but has very little historical data upon which to base its decisions. However, it has already taken over the contract for school cleaning and recognises that it needs to compare its costs with other schools and develop internal procedures that enable it to analyse and challenge its spending decisions through rigorous self-evaluation.

67. The school has an appropriate number of teachers and support staff who are well matched to the demands of the curriculum. Learning support assistants are very well trained and experienced. The number of premises related and administrative staff is sufficient. The work of the speech and physiotherapists and the nurse helps meet the additional needs of pupils and ensures their best access to all curricular activities. The induction programme for all staff is well planned and works well. There have been few new teachers joining the school since its recent beginning, but new learning support assistants and school meals assistants very quickly become integrated into routines and procedures.

68. Procedures for the professional development of staff are good. Arrangements for performance management are good. Each teacher is interviewed once per year by one of five team leaders, who are senior managers or teachers with considerable experience. Targets are agreed which link closely to the priorities of the school development plan. Money is made available to support training from the Standards Fund and from the LEA, as additional money to support the start-up of the school. The procedures for the professional development of learning support assistants are very good. Two members of staff act as assessors for National Vocational Qualifications. Learning support assistants have been quick to take advantage of this opportunity to broaden their knowledge and experience and to gain an accredited qualification. Since the opening of the school, almost half of the learning support assistants have gained relevant awards at Level 2 or better.

69. The accommodation is good. It enhances the presentation of the curriculum and, along with good quality displays of pupils' work, contributes well to pupil self esteem. It contains a number of good specialist teaching areas ensuring pupils access to specialist equipment and resources. These include the ICT suite, rooms for teaching science, resistant materials and food skills in design and technology, music and art. The two small libraries function well and allow pupils to seek information or to read for enjoyment. The dedicated rooms for speech and physiotherapy and for careers advice are also good and contribute well to opportunities available for pupils. The provision for physical education is unsatisfactory. The hall, which also acts as the gymnasium, has sufficient climbing equipment, but is too small for games such as basketball and gymnastics, especially for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. The playing field is small. It is unavailable for use at this time but is being prepared for games and athletics. Classrooms are spacious. The building is well decorated, clean and free of graffiti and litter.

70. The resources to support teaching and learning in subjects are generally good in quantity and quality. In information and communication technology, the range of computers, programs, CD-ROMs and the ease of access to the Internet are very good. Resource support is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history and music. It is satisfactory in art, geography, French and religious education. There are too few resources to support the teaching of physical education over the full range of the Programmes of Study.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) continue to develop the school's use of assessment by:
 - developing baseline assessment for pupils on entry to the school
 - ensuring there is consistency of assessment and recording in what pupils know, understand and can do and that this is used to track progress
 - developing a summary record of pupils' attainment that teachers can use to plan the next steps in learning
 - ensuring that all individual education plan targets are specific to pupils' individual needs, have criteria to measure success, and that progress towards them is recorded(Paragraphs: 50,51,53,84,101,107,128,134,140,156)
- (2) improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils for whom present behaviour strategies are unsuccessful by:
 - regularly reviewing and updating the behaviour policy in light of the school's changing population
 - extending the range and precision of behaviour strategies to meet pupils' specific needs so that they spend more time successfully participating in lessons
 - reviewing lunchtimes to ensure there is access to a range of structured activities, appropriate to pupils' ages and needs(Paragraphs: 14,22,47,82,105,148)
- (3) develop the role of the subject coordinators so that they confidently lead, monitor and evaluate their subject by :
 - ensuring all coordinators are clear about the extent of their role
 - providing them with training in monitoring and evaluation
 - ensuring there is time for them to carry out their role and liaise with joint coordinators
 - establishing consistent procedures and a whole school approach to subject planning(Paragraphs: 32,51,61,101,134,140,150)

The following minor areas for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan

- development of further opportunities for control mechanisms and data handling across the curriculum
(Paragraphs: 11,32,134)
- evaluation of the effect that the physical education accommodation has on learning with the aim of devising ways to supplement the short comings
(Paragraphs: 11,29,69,149)
- regular marking of registers morning and afternoon so that attendance can be accurately monitored
(Paragraph: 49)
- development of a restraint policy and training in restraint techniques for staff
(Paragraph: 48)
- ensure that as the school builds up data, effective strategic planning is developed
(Paragraphs:59,64)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	96
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	14	42	43	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	149
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	46

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.8	School data	4.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Year 2000 This year is not reported on as there were just 10 pupils.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Year 2000 24 pupils

The majority of pupils achieved level 3 and below.

In mathematics 8% achieved level 4

In science 12% achieved level 4

No pupils achieved level 4 in English

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Year 2000 24 pupils

Subject	Entries	Pass %	Merit %	Distinction %
English	23	4	52	39
Mathematics	12	50	42	8
Science	23	61	26	13
History	11	27	73	0
Religious Education	12	17	58	25

Youth Award Scheme

Number achieving award 26

Bronze awards 21

Bronze/ silver 5

National Skills Profile

17 pupils passed between 16 and 25 modules.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	144
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	15	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9.3
Average class size	12

Education support staff: Y3– Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	479

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	1048868
Total expenditure	1008449
Expenditure per pupil	6474
Balance brought forward from previous year	174846
Balance carried forward to next year	215265

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

149

Number of questionnaires returned

88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	42	6	10	2
My child is making good progress in school.	45	38	10	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	47	14	5	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	41	23	10	5
The teaching is good.	53	32	6	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	32	13	8	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	2	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	40	39	14	6	1
The school is well led and managed.	52	36	6	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	35	7	6	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	24	14	14	21

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

ENGLISH

72. In relation to their ability, pupils' achievements in English overall are satisfactory with 95% of pupils achieving success in the Certificate of Educational Achievement at the end of Key Stage 4. In over half of lessons they make good progress, particularly in speaking and listening.

73. Pupils at Key Stage 2, some of whom have complex needs, make satisfactory progress with speaking and listening, while those at Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to adults and to one another, and this skill develops as they progress through the school. Younger pupils listen attentively while teachers read stories or give instructions. They answer questions about stories and about their activities in lessons. By age eleven, higher attaining pupils use a good range of vocabulary in talking about books they are reading, but lower attaining pupils tend to use very simple vocabulary and short phrases rather than structured sentences. All participate well in drama sessions showing understanding of turn taking and listening to others.

74. By age fourteen, most pupils develop confidence in speaking in group and class situations. Drama also helps higher attaining pupils begin to speak for a greater variety of audiences. Pupils show competence in answering questions and in discussion in different subjects. By age sixteen, pupils of all abilities are developing the ability and confidence to speak in a range of situations. They prepare speeches describing themselves, and deliver these to their peers. They participate in group and class discussions in English, and in other subjects, listening well to others, and taking note of their opinions.

75. Younger pupils make satisfactory progress as they develop pre and early reading skills while looking at picture books. Most know where to start reading a book, and some know about titles and authors. They enjoy stories and often identify sounds and words which are repeated in a text. By age eleven, higher attaining pupils develop a variety of word attack skills, for example, they use pictures, the story line and phonic skills to decode new words. They are developing fluency and accuracy and talk about what they have read. Lower attaining pupils are still at an early stage of developing reading skills. They read very hesitantly, needing a lot of help. Many have not developed strategies for tackling unknown words and often lack the confidence to attempt them, particularly when books are too difficult. They have some knowledge of letter sounds, and recognise some of the most common words. The introduction of a phonics-based programme, which many enjoy, is helping to develop the use of these skills. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and poetry, and activities such as reading from flash cards.

76. Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils make progress in their reading skills. By fourteen, higher attaining pupils read fluently and with expression, showing that they understand what they are reading. They make use of different strategies when they meet an unfamiliar word. They talk about the types of book which they enjoy. Lower attaining pupils read confidently, using phonic clues. They recognise their mistakes and try to correct them. They talk about plots of the books that they are reading, and about the types of literature they enjoy. A few pupils are still at the early stages of the acquisition of reading skills, and read very hesitantly, waiting for help from adults or peers. Their limited decoding skills mean that they have difficulty in understanding what they are reading, and this affects their learning across the curriculum. The majority of pupils in this age group know how to find non fiction

books, though most do this with the help of labels, rather than by using the library classification system. They use an index to find information, and some use a table of contents.

77. By age sixteen, higher attaining pupils continue to read fluently with expression. They recognise many words, and use a range of strategies to help them with words they do not know. They offer opinions about books they are reading and about characters in the books. They read a range of materials including stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction texts. Lower attaining pupils still read hesitantly, but often recognise errors and try to correct them, although they do not always have strategies to do this.

78. Younger pupils develop pre-writing skills, such as tracking objects and following patterns. Many copy over or underneath writing, and some write words independently such as titles for pictures. At eleven, higher attaining pupils progress to writing a short story or factual passage independently, while lower attaining pupils dictate sentences to tell a story, and then copy these. Higher attaining pupils write for a variety of purposes, for example, stories, poetry, news and letters. They describe visits made to places of interest such as Bath. They use punctuation such as full stops, commas and capital letters. Lower attaining pupils produce limited written work, although they do make use of word processing facilities to write news and stories. Pupils of all abilities are developing handwriting skills. While some develop cursive writing, others are still copying under words which they have dictated, and practising handwriting patterns. Most pupils know the alphabet and how to use dictionaries and wordbooks.

79. By age fourteen, higher attaining pupils show progress towards more independence in writing. They write news, factual accounts and poems using their own sentences and paragraphs. They show understanding of basic structure and punctuation and spell phonically regular words and high frequency irregular words correctly. By the time they leave school, pupils write imaginative stories, learning how to plan, and to draft and re draft. Most pupils use a dictionary or a thesaurus to find words to make sentences more interesting and complex. They produce personal statements for their records of achievement, completing the finished statement in word-processed format. Most pupils do this independently, while others require adult support, or the use of resources such as dictionaries and sentence making materials. In producing course work for the Certificate of Educational Achievement, pupils show understanding of the plot of Romeo and Juliet, and begin to show empathy with characters. They write effective modern versions of the play. Lower attaining pupils progress in the amount of work they can produce unaided. Their handwriting and spelling skills are developing, although some still have significant difficulties with the latter.

80. Sound progress has been made in the early part of Key Stage 2 with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The format is also being used in some classes in Key Stage 3. Work in the literacy hour helps pupils to be clear about grammar and punctuation, and to develop a wide vocabulary. The development of oral and writing skills is well supported across the curriculum, and there are many examples of pupils using their skills in History, Geography and Science. In different subject areas, when teachers begin new topics, they introduce key words to pupils which are often displayed in classrooms. Additional support for literacy development has been provided at the beginning of each afternoon, through the establishment of 20 minute sessions, some of which are very effective.

81. Teaching is good overall. However, there are differences between key stages. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory while at Key Stage 3 and 4 it is good. As a result

pupils' learning is also good. The best lessons are well planned with clear objectives which are shared with the pupils, ensuring that they are aware of what they need to be learning. Good management of pupils' behaviour, linked to high expectations, means that pupils concentrate on their work and make progress. Lessons are well paced and sustain pupils' interest. Good relationships with pupils encourage them to make an effort with their work. Pupils respond well to questions which are well targeted to ensure that all pupils are involved. Pupils are given useful strategies to help them with their written work. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils were helped to draft a story by being reminded about a beginning, middle and end, and being introduced to the idea of colour coding. Praise and encouragement are used appropriately, so that pupils are motivated to try hard and to stay on task. For example, in a lesson for the youngest pupils, the teacher used encouragement effectively so that pupils had enough confidence to attempt writing words for labels. In a Year 8 lesson, the teacher, through using sensitive comments, encouraged reluctant readers to read aloud. Useful plenary sessions at the end of lessons mean that pupils are reminded of what they have learnt. In these lessons pupils make good progress.

82. Less progress is made when teachers do not provide work that is appropriate to the individual needs of pupils and, therefore, some pupils find the work too difficult and have to be given too much support to complete it. In some classes, particularly in those which include pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, teachers have a limited range of strategies for managing behaviours, and there is often some disruption to learning. In some cases, the pace of lessons is too slow while, in others, pupils are not given sufficient time to respond to questions, and they become too dependent on adults.

83. The English co-ordinator has worked hard to develop schemes of work for English, and to introduce the National Literacy Strategy. This is despite a long-term absence at the end of last year. She has devised an appropriate development plan for the subject, that will include implementing appropriate parts of the new Key Stage 3 strategy which starts next term. Monitoring of the subject is at an early stage of development, but the co-ordinator has had opportunities to review planning and has observed teaching in relation to the National Literacy Strategy.

84. At present, progress in English is difficult to track, because there is no consistency in assessment and recording. The co-ordinator is developing baseline assessment, and is beginning to use regular reading tests, to ensure clarity of teaching needs and to make progress clear. However, there is, currently, no use of diagnostic tests to identify pupils who might need specific literacy programmes to help them make progress. A positive development has been the introduction of regular written assessments so that pupils' progress can be more clearly seen. Teachers also assess pupils against the targets in Individual Education Plans. These are not always sufficiently specific to be easily measurable, and the targets are often not identified in lesson plans. This means that, occasionally, opportunities for focusing on them are missed. Some of the pupils' reading logs have useful comments which enable teachers to see the development of reading strategies. However, as books have not been levelled there is no immediate facility for tracking progress.

85. A good range of resources for English has been developed, with the introduction of reading schemes and the literacy hour. There is a good supply of "big books". Because of the lack of available space for one library, two small rooms are used to provide a fiction and a non-fiction library. There is a satisfactory range of books in the fiction library, although some need replacement. The lay out of the books in the library is not immediately attractive to pupils. There is a good range of dictionaries of different levels, available in all

classrooms, and word games and computer programs also support the development of literacy.

MATHEMATICS

86. Achievement and progress of pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 are satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 4 achieve well and their progress in mathematics is good.

87. By eleven, pupils tell the time to the nearest quarter and use coins to help give change from twenty pence. The majority of pupils add and subtract with numbers up to twenty and lower achieving pupils confidently use numbers up to ten. All pupils have a good understanding of shape, name and draw regular two-dimensional shapes and identify the differences and similarities between a circle and a cylinder. Pupils understand the concept of measurement, knowing heaviest, lightest, tallest and shortest. They use their knowledge of metric length to accurately measure short lines in centimetres. Pupils make simple surveys, for example, of favourite lessons or chocolate bars, and record this information clearly on a tally chart; the majority also show this information in a simple bar graph.

88. By the age of fourteen, pupils make satisfactory progress and build on their existing knowledge of number, shape and measurement. Pupils identify three dimensional shapes and group cuboids, cones, cylinders and prisms according to their properties. The majority of pupils calculate the perimeters of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils' knowledge of time includes converting between the analogue and twenty four-hour clocks, and using their number skills to calculate the time difference between, for example, 9.35am and 9.50am. Pupils are able to use their knowledge of the rules of number to check answers to addition and subtraction calculations involving three figure numbers. They round up and down to the nearest hundred, recognise odd and even numbers and calculate simple fractions of numbers and shapes. Younger pupils use thermometers, rulers and scales to measure classroom items and record the data accurately. Pupils are able to collect and record data such as dice throwing and present it in graphical form.

89. By the age of sixteen, pupils make good progress and their achievements are recognised through national accreditation such as the Certificate of Educational Achievement and the Youth Award Scheme. Pupils' knowledge of number develops to include calculations in decimals, fractions and percentages. Pupils record data by using pie charts and frequency tables accurately to show the results of pupil surveys such as the tuck shop investigation or pupil colour preferences. Higher attaining pupils construct triangles accurately using protractors and use formulae to calculate the area of triangles and circles. Pupils understand the significance of average, and higher attaining pupils can find mean average and mode from information presented to them. Pupils recognise acute, obtuse, reflex and right angles, estimate and then measure angles accurately. Higher attaining pupils calculate ten- percent commission of amounts such as sixty pounds. All pupils are familiar with writing cheques and reading bank statements. At the end of this key stage all pupils can select the correct equipment to measure capacity, weight and height.

90. In mathematics lessons pupils use computer programs successfully to reinforcing their learning of basic number, measurement or shape. Pupils apply their knowledge of number and measurement well in technology subjects when they measure the components for models or the ingredients for recipes. Older pupils gain confidence in the use of money when they help run the morning toast and jam bar. During numeracy lessons, pupils in Key Stage 2 are developing an appropriate range of skills.

91. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good and this is reflected in the learning. Pupils in the three key stages enjoy the subject and in all lessons the relationship between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils is good. Pupils benefit from the strong

support they receive from learning support assistants who are well prepared for lessons and work patiently as they reinforce the work of class teachers. Older pupils benefit from the regular individual attention they receive from the learning support assistant in achieving targets identified in the individual educational plans. Teachers plan carefully for their lessons and work is well matched to pupils' needs. This means that existing knowledge is regularly consolidated and developed. In Key Stage 2 the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced effectively. Very good teaching for the youngest pupils encourages them to enjoy the subject and the consistently calm approach in this class ensures a very effective working atmosphere where pupils learn well. The pupils become confident in their work on shape and are well motivated and eager to please their teacher.

92. The consistently good teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 3 includes good use of plenary sessions so the teacher can assess what pupils have learned in the lesson. Pupils enjoy their work and make good progress because teachers provide a range of interesting, challenging activities that build on pupils' previous learning. In Key Stage 4, good teaching in mathematics is well supported by the team approach to accreditation requirements for key skills, Youth Award Scheme and Certificate of Educational Achievement. This means that pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress. Good humour, reassurance and encouragement are features of the teaching in many lessons. These are used to good effect by adults when pupils find their work difficult.

93. Pupils are well behaved and work well. They take pride in the appearance of their work. Teachers clearly outline lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson so pupils know what is expected from them. Assessment and tracking procedures are detailed and pupils have specific targets that identify weaknesses in their knowledge. Teachers, assistants and pupils work hard to meet the targets. This results in pupils becoming more confident and achieving well in Key Stage 4. Older pupils make good use of opportunities given in lessons to work independently to achieve their personal targets and lesson objectives. Good use is made of the good resources available, including computer software. This contributes to the interest and motivation of pupils. Older pupils respond enthusiastically to 'Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?' a number game made for the mathematics department by one of the learning support assistants. Homework is given but this is inconsistent.

94. There are two co-ordinators, one with responsibility for Key Stage 2 and one with responsibility for Key Stages 3 and 4. Both co-ordinators have good subject knowledge and a clear perception of the future direction of the subject. Recent developments have included the production of a scheme of work that non specialist teachers can easily use and a focus on improving the teaching of mental and oral mathematics in Key Stage 2. The school development plan shows that the co-ordinators intend to extend the numeracy strategy into Key Stages 3 and 4 and to ensure there is continuity between the key stages. They also recognise that it will be beneficial to review the assessment procedures to make data more easily accessible. At the moment the role of the co-ordinators is underdeveloped as they have insufficient opportunities to observe and model teaching throughout the school and so good practice is not shared and built on.

SCIENCE

95. Achievement in science is good overall. Although in lessons seen during the inspection, the progress pupils made at Key Stage 2 was mainly good, different approaches to teaching result in the standards they achieve and the progress they make over the duration of the key stage being satisfactory. At Key Stages 3 and 4, progress

made and standards achieved are good. This is due to consistently good teaching, well planned lessons and pupils being motivated by the opportunity to take accreditation.

96. During their time at Key Stage 2, pupils begin learning about science by studying life processes, the changing state of materials, electricity and light and sound. By the end of their first year in the key stage, in light and sound they have learned that light comes from different sources, such as the sun, light bulbs, torches, fires, televisions and the moon. By the end of their second year, the highest attaining pupils are at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. In electricity, they plan and construct a circuit using a battery as the source to make a light and buzzer operate. They use appropriate words such as current and flow when describing the circuit. All pupils know that an important part of science is 'finding out' and that this involves designing a fair experiment, recording the results and recognising what they mean.

97. Pupils enjoy science at Key Stages 3 and 4. The good laboratory, the consistently good quality of teaching, a good range and quantity of resources and the focus on the conduct of experiments to gain new information, results in pupils being active in their learning. This contributes to them working hard to learn about science. By the time they are fourteen years of age, pupils have good knowledge of all of the Programme of Study and most are achieving a Level 3. For example, they know the process of inheritance and selection through the control of chromosomes and genes. They predict the colour of kittens from the colour of parent cats. They know the importance of understanding the process of inheritance, as when farmers selectively breed cattle to produce better yields of milk. They know of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust that encourages farmers to keep some older breeds of animals because of their resistance to disease. In metal reactions, they know that gold is unreactive, that copper conducts electricity very well, why silver tarnishes in air and the process of rusting. They know the procedures to prevent rusting. When they study the nine planets in the solar system, they learn about the gravitational effect of planets and the way in which moons are held to them. They can explain how a rocket enters space and what problems need to be overcome, because of the increasing density of the atmosphere, in returning the ship to Earth.

98. Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow the syllabus of the Certificate of Educational Achievement. All gain success at the pass level and a good proportion gain merits. By the time they are sixteen, they have a good knowledge of science as a subject, a wide range of technical words and of the procedures for gaining new information in a fair way.

99. Teaching and learning are good overall. At Key Stage 2, good teaching result in pupils becoming confident learners who are happy to answer questions. However, sometimes the pace of the lesson slows due to the work not challenging all pupils. This results in pupils misbehaving and limits progress. During this key stage there are differences in how science is taught. Science is sometimes taught as a discrete subject and sometimes as part of a topic. These different strategies make it difficult to track pupils' learning.

100. At Key Stages 3 and 4 where teaching is very good, the teacher has very good subject knowledge. Lesson planning is based on very good medium and long term planning documents ensuring pupils experience all aspects of the subject. The teacher and learning support assistant have very good relationships with pupils and very high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. This is reflected in the very good attitudes of pupils to the subject. These all contribute to lessons in science being purposeful and enjoyable activities where good progress is made.

101. Co-ordination is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and is very good at Key Stages 3 and 4 where resources are matched very well to curriculum demands and to the needs of pupils. Visits to local facilities, such as the Berkeley Power Station during the study of electricity are beginning to be well used to enrich pupils' classroom based learning. Science contributes well to the school's curriculum. While assessment is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 it is less so at Key Stage 2 where assessment and planning are inconsistent, vary between classes and give a limited picture of what pupils can do. At present there is insufficient time for the two coordinators to liaise or monitor the subject to ensure a smooth transition between key stages.

ART AND DESIGN

102. Standards of achievement and progress are satisfactory overall. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 create patterns using two colours and show some progress in basic colour work when they complete self-portraits. By the age of eleven, pupils work with increased confidence. Their skills develop satisfactorily as they experiment with pattern, colour, texture and line. Pupils investigate patterns from different times and cultures and explore how shape and colour can be combined to create patterns. They use papier-mâché to reproduce and decorate Greek vases as part of their history topic. Pupils examine fruit as part of a topic on food and farming and use charcoal, pastels and paint to reproduce colour, texture and shape. Although there are some examples of pupils responding to the work of established artists this aspect of the curriculum is not as well developed. Much of the work in art is tied in with other subjects, and they derive benefit from the reinforcement.

103. By fourteen, pupils work with increasing independence as they review, modify and refine work. They use a wide range of media, including chalk, oil pastels, pencils and paint. They make three-dimensional shapes in clay and print in a variety of ways. For instance in a Year 7 lesson, whilst exploring sculpture based on an architectural form, they create a building. They cut, shape, position and join clay to make a three-dimensional representation. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 examine fish and print their designs successfully using linocuts. They make observational drawings of fruit and vegetables and reproduce drawings on cotton using batik for a striking wall hanging. Year 8 pupils extend geography work by producing a three-dimensional rainforest building to enhance a wall display. Pupils begin to evaluate their work in terms of complexity and explain which tasks were most difficult to complete. Year 9 pupils look at a variety of t-shirt designs and produce some well-executed designs of their own. Although their drawing skills are immature, they select from, and experiment with, a suitable range of materials, images and ideas while extending their knowledge and experience of tools and techniques.

104. Pupils in Key Stage 4 follow the Youth Award Scheme and therefore the approach to art is modular and there are periods when art is not studied. This leads to inconsistent progress during the year. In pupils' work over time there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. However, work in folders does show that by the time they leave school, all pupils can produce work of a good standard, although this was not evident during the inspection. External accreditation in art and design is not yet an option for higher attaining pupils. Pupils in both key stages do not gather resources and materials in sketchbooks to give them ideas and record developments.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at all key stages. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities in planning activities and tasks. Relationships are good, with teachers encouraging pupils by giving careful guidance and help. Praise is used well to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Teachers' competent demonstrations of techniques and processes help pupils to learn new skills and improve

their work. Learning support assistants are used well. They ensure that pupils are clear about what they have to do. They give high levels of individual help to pupils with complex learning difficulties, helping to involve them more fully in lessons. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are less well managed. This is due to the use of a limited range of behaviour strategies by teachers and occasionally these pupils have a disruptive effect on the learning of others. Pupils enjoy art and the range of opportunities available for them to work on creative and practical activities. Learning is less effective when pupils have to wait for assistance, they are not fully involved, and the pace of lessons is slow.

106. Currently there is no overall scheme of work for art and design. At the moment there is no co-ordinator for Key Stages 3 and 4 and therefore planning is inconsistent and does not adequately provide for progression, revisiting and continuity in pupils' learning. There is insufficient space for the storage of materials, although the subject is well resourced. These factors mean that curricular opportunities are unnecessarily limited, in a subject, which could be a successful part of the school's provision.

107. Assessment and recording are underdeveloped in art. There is no uniform system for identifying and documenting what pupils learn and what they know, understand and can do. The facilities for teaching art are satisfactory, are organised well and the management of the subject is at least satisfactory. However, at present there is no clear plan for the development of the subject overall while the school awaits the appointment of a Key Stages 3 and 4 coordinator. Planning and monitoring are not extensive enough to allow identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject across the key stage

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Design and technology is taught as two separate subjects, resistant materials and food technology. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in all aspects of the subject during the time they are in the school.

109. In the resistant materials component, progress within lessons is good. By the age of eleven, pupils progress to making models, using junk materials, which they stick together successfully and cut and shape when necessary. For instance, Year 6 pupils make Greek temples during a history topic. As part of a topic on food and farming they make preparatory work in readiness for making models of farm equipment.

110. In the resistant materials component of design technology, at Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils use materials such as wood and plastic. In Key Stage 3, pupils sand and cut and know the names and uses of the tools with which they are working. Year 7 pupils learn about safety in the workshop prior to designing and making a marble maze game. In Year 8 pupils use plastic materials to make a simple moving display with fish as a theme. They are enthusiastic about decorating their finished model with a wide variety of nail varnishes to create the lustre of fish scales. By fourteen, pupils make a 'buggy' and experiment with propellers and wind-up toys. They make symmetrical shapes for the 'body' of their vehicle and use a glue gun safely.

111. In Key Stage 4, pupils continue as in Key Stage 3 and acquire a sufficient working knowledge of materials and their properties to show that practical skills are developing. In Year 10 they extend their knowledge of the design process while making a number plate. They operate clamps, recognise a chamfer and produce a chamfered edge with help. Pupils who are sixteen, work on a Youth Award Scheme Key Skills module, make a simple box consolidating their use of sash cramps. They dress ends on a sander with appropriate supervision, prior to fixing and varnishing.

112. In food technology, achievement and progress are satisfactory across the school. In Key Stage 2 much of the work is accessed through other subjects such as in topics on farming where pupils learn to make bread. In Key Stage 3, Year 7 pupils learn the importance of fruit in the diet, and they learn how to make a dessert using cooled fruit. They learn to chop fruit safely and use scrapers to peel and core apples. Pupils in Year 8 use pastry for savoury dishes and discuss healthy accompaniments such as jacket potatoes and salads. By fourteen, pupils focus on the use of milk in lasagne evaluating its nutritional value. They know how to make cheese and meat sauces.

113. Teaching and learning are good in resistant materials and satisfactory in food technology. In resistant materials lessons, there are high expectations of work and behaviour, which are reinforced by the very good use of praise. The teacher checks, and asks pupils how they might improve the work. Advice is given and techniques demonstrated. The overriding, and very good outcome, is that pupils experience success, which is a major aim of the school for all its pupils. Good management prevents an isolated incident from developing into a major issue; such as a pupil becoming frustrated with a task, which he thinks he cannot do. Pupils sometimes work in pairs, and this enables individual tuition for each pupil. This organisation is good, resulting in a partnership between the teacher and each pair of pupils, and eliminating the poor behaviour pupils sometimes demonstrate. However, pupils with specific behavioural difficulties are less well managed and at times have a disruptive effect on the learning of the majority of pupils. Learning support assistants work well with the teacher to support pupils' learning. The teacher is constantly looking for new ideas that can be modified to suit pupils' capabilities. Resources are good. The accommodation is new and the workshop is well equipped with power and hand tools. There is very good regard to health and safety, such as the wearing of goggles and masks when using tools and working with equipment. Accommodation is kept in a neat and tidy condition, and pupils are taught that they must put tools away after use.

114. In food technology, during practical activities pupils concentrate and respond well to instructions. Good relationships have a positive impact on learning and pupil/adult ratios ensure that pupils work at speeds suitable to their abilities. The teacher demonstrates techniques and gives instructions clearly. In all cases pupils benefit from clearly established routines and generally work independently. However, there are times when too much adult help interferes with pupils' learning. The design element of food technology is at present rarely emphasised.

115. Pupils' positive attitudes to work make a significant contribution to their learning and progress. Some rely on adults to help them develop skills and become anxious when required to work by themselves. Good teaching ensures many show an increasing confidence to test out ideas and suggestions themselves. They applaud each other's success and contribute to ideas. When interested in their work, older pupils make great efforts to control their behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to self-assess. For example, pupils are frequently asked whether they are satisfied with their work and how they can improve. Assessments relate to what has been done rather than what has been learned and are insufficiently based on subject-specific criteria. However, the new co-ordinator is currently developing assessment procedures, which will cover what pupils', know, understand and can do.

116. There is a newly appointed co-ordinator for resistant materials who has good skills as a teacher and manager. He is working on the development of technology in Key Stages 3 and 4 and has already begun to consult with the co-ordinator for food technology. He

has plans to introduce accreditation at Key Stage 4 and is aware that there is a need to liaise with the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator to ensure progression of skills and coverage of the National Curriculum. There has been an audit of resources within the department, which shows that there are sufficient to meet the demands of the present curriculum.

117. Currently there is no written scheme of work, although the new co-ordinator is ensuring that pupils continue to build upon their learning by the judicious use of interim planning. The school is beginning to make good use of the most recent national guidance for the subject, to help plan and resource work, but this work has yet to be consistently addressed throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Achievement and progress are satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, pupils achieve satisfactory standards while completing a short geography module within the Youth Award Scheme.

119. By the time they are eleven years of age, the higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of how maps represent their school, local village and country. For example, after a visit to the local shopping centre they re-create the location of shops through their own drawings. Their vocabulary of newly learned geographic terms increases during the key stage. Pupils use these terms well in explaining the features of a map, such as river, mountain, sea, bridge, village, town or city. Their knowledge of weather increases considerably. For example, they know how to measure the amount of rainfall, the speed of the wind and the temperature.

120. By the time they are fourteen years, pupils study plate tectonics, volcanoes and earthquakes, France, Africa and Brazil as foreign countries. They extend their knowledge of maps, the weather and the formation and characteristics of rivers. For example, good teaching ensures they know that rivers can change the landscape. They use appropriate words such as source, meander and mouth when describing rivers and know whose daily work is linked to rivers. Pupils recognise rivers on Ordnance Survey maps and understand the effects of the water cycle and the consequences of pollution of rivers.

121. Teaching and learning are good overall. Well targeted questioning of younger pupils at Key Stage 2 ensures pupils successfully recall a previous visit to the shops to collect information. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are making good progress because teachers' planning documents are good, resources such as CD-ROMs and the Internet are well used and teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. They prepare their lesson plans well with good attention to matching lesson tasks to the needs and abilities of all pupils. Learning support assistants are well deployed, work successfully with teachers and make a considerable contribution to the standards pupils achieve. Lesson plans are often ambitious and include, for example, combining the work of different classes to make a model of an African village. This makes learning more relevant to pupils and increases their understanding of the difference between their lives and those of the villagers.

122. The subject co-ordinator has been temporarily appointed, pending the appointment of a teacher with a specialist qualification. Development of the subject, including assessment and the possibility of offering accreditation in the subject at Key Stage 4, will be limited until the co-ordinator's role has been stabilised. Resources to support teaching and learning are of satisfactory range and quantity.

HISTORY

123. Achievement and progress are satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stages 3 and 4 with all eleven pupils who took the Certificate of Educational Achievement gaining either a pass or a merit.

124. During Key Stage 2, teachers work hard to ensure pupils consolidate their learning of chronology. However, pupils do have difficulty in using everyday terms to detail the passage of time and in applying their knowledge of one period of time to another, to extend their understanding. They work hard to make progress and by the age of eleven, higher attaining pupils understand the concept of 'now' and 'then' and, in discussion, can complete a time line. The lower attaining pupils know the concept of time and relate it best to their own family. Most pupils know that the Ancient Greeks developed a complex civilisation based on a number of gods; and that these gods had stories told about them which are known as myths and legends. They know that the Romans followed the Ancient Greeks and conquered and stayed in Britain for many years. They learn about changes in the local village since 1930 and about how life has changed through the development of machinery, such as milking machines, tractors and combine harvesters to help in farming

125. During Key Stage 3, pupils study medieval history, the Tudors, the Industrial Revolution and the twentieth century world. For the history of other countries, they study, the French Revolution and the fate of the American Indians. By the end of their study of recent history, they know some of the inventions that have helped make life easier and of social changes that have occurred in relatively recent times. They know when women gained the vote. They know of the reason for the start of World War I and what life was like in the trenches. They have learned about the main characters in World War II including Hitler and Mussolini. Over the period of the key stage, they increase their skills in using source materials to understand the past and they are beginning to see history as a subject in which facts are open to interpretation.

126. Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow the syllabus of the Certificate of Educational Achievement. Pupils complete the appropriate number of units, some with merit. By the time they leave school, they have acquired a good knowledge of history as the subject that interprets the past. They understand the procedures that need to be followed to gain original source materials and have a good knowledge of some topics especially those to do with the recent past, such as the changing role of women in society.

127. The quality of teaching is good overall. At Key Stage 2, the progress they make is satisfactory, even though the quality of teaching is good, because planning documents are not sufficiently detailed to support continuous learning about key elements of the subject. This is not the case at Key Stages 3 and 4. The better planning and better use of assessment realises standards and progress equivalent to the good quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy being active in their learning and teachers provide them with regular opportunities to do so. Teachers know that bringing the past alive through role-play or by looking at artefacts from the past is a powerful way of comparing past with present. For example, in one lesson on the Home Front, buckets, a hand pump, a helmet and an axe helped make the lesson relevant to pupils. Visits to places of historical interest in the local community such as the Roman Baths at Bath or the excavations at Carleon also help make the past relevant to pupils. Pupils' learning benefits from the good use teachers make of computers, through the use of CD-ROMs or by having pupils search the Internet for information of topics.

128. The co-ordinator is leading the subject until a teacher with specialist training in, or knowledge of, the subject can be appointed. Given the other co-ordinator responsibilities

of the current co-ordinator it is unlikely that the subject will develop quickly until a new co-ordinator is appointed. Resources to support teaching and learning are good, in quantity and range. Although assessment is satisfactory, the system varies between classes at Key Stage 2 and does not give a complete picture of what pupils can do or provide enough information to inform planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

129. Overall, pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to see one lesson at Key Stage 2. However, the lesson observed and the little work available show that younger pupils' experiences are generally limited to word processing, although one class was observed using a roamer in mathematics. By the age of eleven pupils explore the use of tools in a simple word processing program and develop some basic mouse and keyboard skills. They copy type work in subjects, such as English and science that they have previously written in class but require support to change the page layout and modify text.

130. By the age of fourteen, pupils successfully extend their knowledge and understanding of ICT. Some develop a number of the skills needed to work on programs independently. This progress is due to teachers and learning support assistants in Key Stage 3 having a good working knowledge of the subject. Pupils understand that ICT includes many of the machines found at home and at school. They spend time considering their uses. They know the names of the main parts of computer systems and match them to their function. In addition, pupils experience a variety of software and develop knowledge, skills and understanding required to carry out a number of operations. They enter and edit text and some change font characteristics such as size, style and colour before saving and printing their work. They carry out internet searches on topics such as rain forests and native American Indians. A few know about databases and are beginning to develop an understanding of how information can be stored and sorted.

131. Pupils in Key Stage 4 do not study ICT as a separate subject, but as a key skill that they develop and use in other subjects. By the age of sixteen, they demonstrate their achievements in modules as varied as recording and using examples of technology in everyday life, understanding control technology and using information, and the creative use of ICT.

132. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some being good in Key Stage 3. All lessons are characterised by good relationships and pupil management. When teaching is good, pupils achieve well because activities are provided that meet their needs. Good teaching enabled a group of twelve-year olds to develop and extend their mouse control and their understanding of different tools as they used a program to draw pictures. This activity built systematically on pupils' previous learning and reinforced well their understanding of basic two dimensional shapes. The teacher and learning support assistant provided effective and well-timed intervention and support so that time was used well as pupils maintained their concentration and effort.

133. Other lessons do not always have such a clear focus on challenging pupils to extend their skills and understanding. On these occasions learning opportunities are limited because activities become repetitive as expectations are not sufficiently high. This occurs because ineffective planning results in all pupils in a class following the same topic for the same number of lessons even when they have clearly mastered the skills required. This reduces pupils' motivation.

134. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall but a major weakness within this provision is the lack of liaison between the subject leader and Key Stage 2 staff. This restricts progress for younger pupils as it does not permit a co-ordinated whole school approach to planning or assessment. There is not a continuous planned programme that ensures that pupils make a smooth transition from one year to another and from Key Stage 2 to 3. In addition, the good quality of assessment and improving record keeping procedures that are evident in Key Stage 3 are not transferred for use with younger pupils where assessment is presently unsatisfactory. Not enough attention is paid to control technology and data handling programs across the curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3.

135. The accommodation and learning resources for ICT are very good, with new computers housed in a purpose-built suite. Pupils also have access to other elements ICT in different areas of the curriculum. Year 10 pupils were seen using an independent learning system in mathematics, a group of fourteen year olds searched CD-ROMs for information on air raid shelters, and a Year 8 class used a floor roamer well to reinforce knowledge about right angles and clockwise/anticlockwise.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

136. Pupils study French between the ages of eleven and sixteen. They make satisfactory progress over time, particularly in listening and understanding French with some developing the ability to answer questions confidently in simple sentences. All pupils gain insights into French life and culture and compare customs, such as typical French breakfasts, with their own experiences.

137. Pupils in Year 7 start to develop a basic French vocabulary. They join in a song about colours holding up their card with the appropriate colour on it when they hear the word in French. They answer simple questions accurately using phrases such as *j'ai* and *je m'appelle* and volunteer to read words from the board. As pupils progress through the key stage they repeat the days of the week and count in French. By the age of fourteen, higher attaining pupils write sentences such as *j'habite une maison en ville* while lower attaining pupils write in words and phrases. Most pupils have an understanding of directions and speak in simple sentences or phrases with increased confidence.

138. During Year 10 higher attaining pupils begin to translate short sentences from English into French. All pupils extend their vocabulary. For example, they use French words for food when participating in a game of bingo and label parts of the body correctly. In Year 11, speaking and listening is the priority. By the age of sixteen, pupils have developed a reasonable vocabulary based on the use of simple every day French. They use this appropriately in order to ask for food during a French breakfast

139. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned. At Key Stage 3 they contain a balance of speaking and listening, reading and writing. This mix ensures pupils a variety of experiences to which they respond by concentrating enthusiastically. At Key Stage 4 a range of practical activities keeps the interest of older pupils, some of whom do not see the point of learning a foreign language. Teachers work hard to ensure pupils feel confident when trying new vocabulary. This results in most pupils keenly practising their spoken French. However, there are times in lessons when teachers could use French more, giving pupils access to a wider vocabulary. Occasional lengthy introductions combined with lack of pace lead to fidgeting and limits pupils learning.

Frequent use of praise and appropriate questioning keeps most pupils on task and motivated.

140. Coordination of the subject is satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory, although the subject would benefit from more word games. There is a subject improvement plan with suitable priorities for developing French. There is an appropriate scheme of work that has been developed based on a commercial scheme. Until this year the coordinator was the sole teacher of French. Another teacher, to whom the coordinator gives informal advice, now teaches at Key Stage 4. However, there is no opportunity for formal monitoring and evaluation. There is no assessment at Key Stage 4 although it is being systematically developed at Key Stage 3 and includes pupil self evaluation. There is evidence of marking but it is inconsistent, giving no pointers for improvement. The subject provides satisfactory links to cultural development, despite the lack of educational visits.

MUSIC

141. Overall achievement and progress of pupils in music are good. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn to explore sounds and recognise and identify untuned percussion instruments. They play in time to a regular pulse and echo simple rhythmic patterns, using percussion instruments they have made. By the age of eleven pupils sing a range of songs with actions to help them stay in time. They perform with control and awareness of what others are playing. They compare instruments and recognise what they are.

142. In Key Stage 3, they build on skills they have learned, so that they can distinguish between pitch, timbre, rhythm and melody. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrate a range of contemporary singing games such as 'A sailor went to sea', 'Pass the Pebble' and 'We're the kids from (Culverhill)' with enthusiasm and verve. During these games they show a high level of cooperation and group awareness. They explore music of other cultures and traditions and sing an African song: 'Che Che Kooley' using 'body percussion' as an accompaniment. In Year 8 pupils read simple rhythms and play the recorder showing increasing control. They recognise and successfully follow rhythm cards. Year 9 pupils build on their skills and begin to compose on keyboards using a variety of stimuli. For instance, the 'Boogie Woogie' is used to motivate a group who have been studying World War 2. They compose their own versions and play them to the class at the end of the lesson.

143. By the age of sixteen, pupils build on their knowledge and experience and work on a variety of projects towards the Youth Award Scheme. They create a form of notation, perform before an audience in school performances and compose tunes. For instance, some Year 11 pupils composed a tune for the Chinese New Year and played it during a whole school assembly. Throughout the school pupils learn to sing and to listen to themselves, their friends, and to well-known music in a wide range of styles.

144. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was very good. Excellent subject knowledge on the part of the teacher, together with very good knowledge of the pupils' learning styles, enable achievement to be very much better than might be predicted. The knowledgeable learning support assistant is used well to motivate and assist pupils. Great care is taken in teaching, so that in lessons where it appears that everyone is doing the same task, in fact each element is finely graded to individual pupils' needs. Pupils learn well, they are confident, assured of success, and they respond very positively to the support and challenge presented in each lesson. They thoroughly enjoy their music lessons. They are often on the edge of their chairs with delight, but have sufficient control to listen carefully to instructions from the teacher, as they understand the need for a sense

of ensemble. Their generosity of spirit, coupled with very good training, means that they take the maximum benefit from each music lesson.

145. The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. Her enthusiastic and lively approach is infectious. Documentation is thorough and planning for music is developing well. Monitoring and evaluation are well managed and makes a very good contribution to both teaching and learning. Assessment is being used to ascertain what pupils know, understand and can do. A good and appropriate range of resources is available and readily accessible. There are links with other areas of the curriculum. For instance, music is used in drama and assemblies. Pupils' learning in music makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and makes a substantial contribution to the life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. A limited range of activities was seen during the course of the inspection, but there was sufficient evidence to show that pupils achieve satisfactorily during lessons and make satisfactory progress through the school. By the age of eleven pupils have developed ball skills such as throwing, catching and fielding and demonstrate these abilities in games such as rounders.

147. Pupils continue to develop these skills and by the age of fourteen they know about the importance of warming up and recovering after exercise. They have some understanding of how different exercises, such as muscle tone and movement activities, contribute to certain aspects of fitness. They recall the names of muscles, such as biceps and triceps, that are the focus of particular exercises and know the dangers of using excessive weights. By sixteen, pupils have improved their knowledge of games such as basketball and cricket and skills associated with playing them. However, the opportunity to develop them further is reduced by the timetabling arrangements which mean that all physical education lessons except one per half term are taught to single classes. Therefore, there are not always sufficient pupils to form competitive teams and they do not have the opportunity to extend their skills by observing or practising with pupils with higher abilities.

148. Teaching is satisfactory in all key stages but pupils' overall learning is variable as it depends on the pupil management skills of the teacher. Lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4 are characterised by high expectations of behaviour. Effective pupil management enabled a class of fourteen year olds to improve their cricket skills during a lesson that concentrated on batting technique as the teacher provided an appropriate activity and used praise and encouragement well to keep pupils motivated and involved. However, those pupils who began to make progress in developing this skill were not then moved on to extending it further through individual coaching and change of activity. The management of pupils with more complex needs is not always effective in Key Stage 2 and pupils' learning opportunities are reduced. For example, a lesson that began with a focused warm-up was followed by a teaching session on throwing skills. The warm-up included some good ideas and activities that involved pupils turning over cards in the centre of the floor and carrying out the activity shown in different parts of the hall. This involved a great deal of movement and therefore needed secure management by the teacher as pupils were moving in all directions. The activity was very appropriate to the pupils' needs but limited learning took place because pupils became over-excited and noisy.

149. The school's accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory and there are too few resources particularly for older pupils. This affects the range of learning

opportunities available. The indoor multi-purpose hall is much too small and its design does not even allow a proper basketball court to be marked out, or a badminton court with sufficient space around it. Outdoors, there is not enough space for grassed pitches and the hard surface area is not enclosed to allow tennis or five-a-side football to take place. The school makes good use of a local swimming pool and all pupils go swimming each week.

150. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and has begun to develop long term planning within Key Stages 3 and 4. However, at present pupils experience little dance/movement or gymnastic activities, although this situation will be addressed soon as the teacher undertakes appropriate training. Assessment procedures for older pupils are underdeveloped and do not focus on what pupils can do, know, and understand. There is little planning and assessment in Key Stage 2, limiting activities offered. Development of the subject through out the school is adversely affected by the lack of time for liaison between the subject leader and Key Stage 2 teachers. There is also insufficient training to support the subject leader in monitoring or evaluating the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. Pupils' achievements at Key Stages 3 and 4 are satisfactory overall. However in lessons seen progress was good overall and on occasions very good. It is not possible to make any judgement about progress at Key Stage 2 because very little work is recorded at this stage and, due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity of taking a Certificate of Educational Achievement examination and, in the summer of 2000, 12 pupils took this examination.

152. By age fourteen, pupils have been introduced to stories from, and information about, the world's main religions, such as Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism. They know some of the stories about the leaders of the Jewish faith, such as Abraham and Moses. Higher attaining pupils consider the meanings of stories as in the link between the story of Adam and Eve and the idea of free will. They have a sound knowledge of the life of Gautama and the start of the Buddhist religion. They begin to make connections with the way in which people live today. For example, in looking at the Noble Sights in Buddhism, they consider the ways in which people suffer, and how they might be helped. Lower attaining pupils show knowledge of some basic facts about religions, but a tendency to copy from books and from the board means that they are less able to show their knowledge in writing.

153. By age sixteen, pupils have studied aspects of Christianity and Islam for their Certificate of Educational Achievement. All pupils know something of the life of Christ, together with information about churches, the Bible, and services such as Baptism and the Eucharist. They know about the life of Mohammed, and the ways in which Muslims lead their lives. For example, they know about prayer customs and fasting. Higher attaining pupils try to explain some of the beliefs in their own words. They describe rites of passage such as birth and marriage customs in the two religions.

154. Teaching overall is good, and in 40% of lessons seen was very good. As a result, pupils make good progress. Good lessons are well planned to give pupils opportunities to learn new information and to consolidate previous lessons. Introductions make pupils aware of what they have to learn. For example, at the beginning of a lesson on rites of passage in Islam, the teacher explained the plan for the lesson with the pupils. Clear

explanations of words and lesson content are given, and teachers check that pupils have understood. Knowledge is reinforced through good questioning strategies. Very good use is made of a range of resources. For example, in a lesson on Sikhism, artefacts and pictures were used to show pupils some Sikh customs, and a video of the life of Guru Nanak held pupils' attention.

155. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss customs and beliefs, and pupils generally respond well, showing interest in the subject. Good cross-curricular links are established. For example, in music, art, and geography, as pupils identify the countries in which religions began, look at the art of the religions and listen to appropriate music. Pupils make less progress where teachers do not take the opportunity to follow up on pupils' questions and work is not targeted to meet the needs of individual pupils. This leads to a high level of copying and a low level of independent working. Artefacts are not used in all lessons where they could help pupils to understand beliefs and customs of a religion.

156. Religious Education planning is based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus and, as such, it meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator took over the role in January and has worked hard to develop a scheme of work in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This has been completed for Key Stage 3, but has yet to be developed for Key Stage 2. The scheme of work for Key Stage 4, is the Certificate of Educational Achievement syllabus. Some useful assessment tasks have been devised to check understanding and knowledge in each module at Key Stage 3, but the co-ordinator has not yet had time to plan summary assessments in line with level descriptors in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Recording of progress is inconsistent. Some teachers record progress in lessons on their planning sheets, but these are not used consistently so that teachers do not always have the necessary evidence for report writing or for planning future lessons.

157. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity of monitoring the subject by observing lessons, but it is hoped that this will be introduced shortly. Lessons provide well for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, as opportunities are given to discuss different beliefs and customs. Good lessons make a significant contribution to moral, social and cultural development, enhancing pupils' understanding of peoples' faiths, and giving opportunities to discuss moral issues. However, the limited opportunities for learning from religions, mean that there is insufficient support for spiritual development. There is a satisfactory supply of books, posters, artefacts and videos. Some of these are used in effective displays, which reinforce learning.

