

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BY BROOK VALLEY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Yatton Keynell, Chippenham

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 131656

Headteacher: Richard Selby

Reporting inspector: Stephanie Lacey  
3764

Dates of inspection: 29 January - 1 February 2001

Inspection number: 230634

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Street  
Yatton Keynell  
Chippenham  
Wiltshire

Postcode: SN14 7BA

Telephone number: 01249 783006

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Fiona Plowman

Date of previous inspection: The school has only been open for two years and so this is the report of its first inspection

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	English, art, history and English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9528	Derek Bowers	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20009	David Cann	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, geography and equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Information and communication technology and physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
23945	Anna Sims	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage, science, music, religious education and special educational needs	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

By Brook Valley CE Primary School opened in September 1998. It was formed from the amalgamation of four local village schools and moved into the new purpose-built school in November 1998. It is a small school with 148 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and eleven. In most classes there are more girls than boys. About half of the pupils live in Yatton Keynell and many travel from villages nearby. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, although all have their cultural roots in Northern Europe. Seven per cent claim free school meals this year. When they start school, children's skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging, but slightly below average overall. Thirty-two per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is above average. None of these has a statement of special educational need. Two pupils are learning English as an additional language.

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

By Brook Valley is an effective school. It provides a supportive learning environment in which pupils make steady progress as a result of sound teaching. The staff team work well together, with sensitive leadership by the headteacher. The school has worked hard to preserve a 'village school' ethos within a larger setting. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- There is a positive and caring ethos, in which individual pupils are nurtured well.
- Pupils achieve particularly good standards in music.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and their behaviour is good.
- Teachers are hardworking and reflective; they are supported well by assistants.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Work with artists and musicians enhances pupils' learning experiences.
- Governors contribute very well to the running of the school.

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

- Standards in writing.
- The challenge for higher attaining pupils in mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Planning for information and communication technology (ICT).
- The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators.
- The school's partnership with parents.

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

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

This is the school's first inspection and so no comparison can be made with the findings of a previous one. However, it is relevant to comment on the school's progress over the last two and a half years. The school has made satisfactory overall progress since it opened in September 1998 in the face of several, significant obstacles that were outside its control. Firstly, the amalgamation of the four schools that make up By Brook Valley was not a popular move. Villagers were understandably concerned by the possible impact of school closures on their communities and parents were anxious about their young children travelling to another school, where they would not have daily contact. The school worked hard to allay these concerns, but has not been completely successful. Secondly, the opening of the new building was delayed and so the school had to begin in temporary accommodation, which did not help to reassure parents about the efficacy of amalgamation, even although staff worked hard to provide a suitable learning environment. Thirdly, the staffing has been unstable, with only three of the seven full time teachers in post continually since September 1998. This year, for example, three teachers have been on maternity leave. While the school has ensured that most year groups have not been too disrupted by staff changes, the development of curricular planning and staff training has been impeded. In spite of these difficulties, staff and governors have worked hard to establish an effective school. Policies

and procedures are in place. There is a clear educational direction for the way forward, standards have risen and staff are coming together as a committed team.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	n/a	D	B	B
mathematics	n/a	E	C	C
science	n/a	E	A	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

*Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.*

It is too early to identify trends in results because the school has only been open for two and a half years. However, this table shows that standards in Year 6 national tests rose considerably in 2000. Pupils' attainment was well above the national average in science, above average in English and average in mathematics. This was also true of their performance in relation to their peers in similar schools. In Year 2 national tests in 2000, pupils' attainment was average in writing and mathematics and below average in reading. It was below those of their peers in similar schools in all three areas. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Care needs to be taken of crude analysis of statistical information when small numbers are involved. The inspection found that standards are not as high in Year 6 this year, and are below average in writing and mathematics and average in science. This is because there is a high proportion of pupils in this year group with special educational needs. The school is unlikely to meet the very challenging targets set this year for the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 in English and mathematics. This is partly because this is a small year group and so the performance of one or two pupils can have a big impact on percentage changes. In Year 2, pupils are not doing so well in writing this year, with overall standards below average. Standards in reading and mathematics are broadly average. In other classes pupils achieve average standards in most subjects. Children in the reception year are set to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year in all areas of learning. In all classes pupils are making satisfactory progress and in some lessons seen they achieved well because of the good quality of the teaching. Throughout the school pupils do particularly well in music because of good teaching. Some pupils also achieve high standards in art. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not do very well in ICT, because they do not use the computers on a regular basis. Pupils reach average standards in ICT in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the sensitive and appropriate support they are given.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most try hard and are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave well in lessons and at playtimes and very well in assemblies. Occasionally a few older pupils are disruptive and silly in lessons. There have been one or two incidents of bullying recently, which the school is dealing with sensitively.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils get on well with their teachers and each other. They take on more responsibility as they become older.
Attendance	Very good and well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.*

Overall, sound teaching through the school ensures that pupils make steady progress. In the forty lessons seen, 13 per cent of the teaching was very good, 40 per cent was good and 45 per cent was satisfactory, with just three per cent of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching was stronger in lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, where a significant amount of the teaching was good or very good. Staff have worked hard to implement both the national literacy and numeracy strategies and plan these lessons carefully. Overall, the teaching of English is sound and sets a firm basis for pupils' steady progress. Phonic skills are taught well and pupils are developing a good understanding of how language is structured. Writing skills are not taught so effectively, with insufficient emphasis on helping pupils to write for a real purpose. Handwriting standards are not good enough because teaching of this skill is inconsistent through the school. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Generally, lessons move at a good pace and pupils are involved well in learning tasks. In the best lessons all pupils are challenged effectively, but overall there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2. Music is taught well throughout the school and pupils make good progress. Science is also taught well in Years 3 to 6. In these classes there is a good emphasis on investigative and experimental work. Planning is well structured and teachers' questions are challenging. This all helps pupils to learn quickly. The teaching of ICT is a weakness. Teachers' planning shows that there is insufficient emphasis on systematic development of this subject, especially in Years 1 and 2. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution and work especially well with pupils who have special educational needs. This helps these pupils make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has worked hard to put sound planning for all subjects in place, with more work needed on planning for the children in the reception year (the new foundation stage) and for ICT. Interesting trips and special events enhance the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are quickly identified and tasks are well prepared. Teaching assistants give very effective support in lessons and when they work with pupils in small groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Staff are sensitive to these pupils' needs and plan appropriate work for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a strong area with good overall provision. The school is committed to nurturing pupils' personal development and manages this well. Parish assemblies, visits from artists and musicians are examples of the many interesting features of work in this area.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff look after pupils well. There are sensible procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe, including good child protection arrangements. The school is working hard to establish a good partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED



Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sensitive leadership by the headteacher ensures a clear educational direction for the school. The senior teacher, with responsibility for Years 3 to 6, makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. She is complemented by the newly returned co-ordinator of the Year 1 and 2 classes. Subject co-ordinator roles, except science, music and art, are currently under-developed, and do not include sufficient monitoring or evaluation of standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very effective and use their individual talents well to support the school. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good strategies in place to evaluate the impact of its provision on pupils' learning. It uses these evaluations well to set targets for school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is very good and careful budgeting ensures that six classes can be maintained for some time. Principles of best value are applied well. The school is adequately staffed and resourced, except in geography and the early years. The accommodation and grounds are very good and used well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are happy at school (97%).</li> <li>• The school is approachable (90%).</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become responsible (83%).</li> <li>• Behaviour is good (78%)</li> <li>• Their children make good progress (76%).</li> <li>• The teaching is good (71%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's links with parents (47%).</li> <li>• Information about their children's progress (42%).</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school (31%).</li> <li>• Activities outside lessons (28%).</li> <li>• Homework arrangements (24%).</li> <li>• Their children's progress (22%).</li> <li>• The quality of teaching (22%).</li> <li>• School's expectations of pupils (20%).</li> </ul>

*Forty-one parents attended the meeting held for them before the inspection and 71 of the 148 questionnaires sent to parents seeking their views were returned.*

The statements in the boxes above relate to the responses from the parents' questionnaire. It is evident that, while the majority of parents are satisfied with the school's provision, there are a significant minority who have concerns about various aspects of the school's work. The inspection looked very carefully into the concerns listed above. Inspectors found that overall they are not justified and that in all these areas the school's arrangements are satisfactory or better, with some minor areas for development. These include the challenge for higher attaining pupils in mathematics and the organisation of parent-teacher consultation evenings. However, the high level of concern expressed through the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting shows that the school's partnership with parents needs urgent improvement, so that all parents can work with the school in the best interests of the children.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

##### *1 The foundation stage*

When children start school in the reception class, their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging, but slightly below average overall. This year, baseline assessment shows that most pupils who started in September were articulate, but that some found it difficult to manipulate small tools, such as pencils and scissors. Some also found it hard to work in a group and to take turns. Children have made steady progress in the reception class and by the end of the year most are set to reach the early learning goals for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

##### *2 National tests*

As By Brook Valley only opened in September 1998, information about the pupils' performance in national tests is only available for 1999 and 2000. This is obviously too soon to draw sensible conclusions about overall trends, but there are some clear indications of standards in different subjects.

##### *3 National tests and standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2*

The 1999 national tests at the end of Year 2 showed that pupils' attainment in reading was broadly average, well below average in writing and below average in mathematics. There was good improvement in writing and mathematics in 2000 when both writing and mathematics rose to average. Reading slipped to below average. Pupils did not do as well at By Brook Valley in 2000 as their peers in similar schools. Overall pupils had made satisfactory progress since they started school, although higher attaining pupils did not do well.

4 The inspection found that standards are similar this year in mathematics and remain average, although higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Standards in reading are also broadly average, but standards in writing are below average, with few pupils reaching higher levels. Again most pupils have made sound progress since they started at By Brook. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The school has worked hard to provide stability in Years 1 and 2, which have been disrupted by staff absence. The success of the measures taken is evident in the satisfactory progress made by pupils. However, the disruption has had an impact on the development of a coherent staff team in the three youngest classes. Consequently, some areas, such as the challenge for higher attaining pupils and the teaching of writing, have not been tackled systematically. As a result, pupils in Year 2 especially have not moved on as fast as they might have done.

##### *5 National tests and standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6*

Standards rose between 1999 and 2000 in Year 6 national tests from below average to above average in English, from well below average to average in mathematics and from well below average to well above average in science. In comparison with their peers in similar schools, pupils at By Brook Valley reached similar standards in mathematics, did better in English and very much better in science. The school recognised the need after the 2000 tests to challenge higher attaining pupils in mathematics.

6 The inspection found that standards are not so high this year, in spite of sound and

sometimes good teaching in Year 6. Standards this year are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. The main reason for this is the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs within a small year group. The school has set challenging targets for the percentage of pupils to reach expected levels in English and mathematics, which it is unlikely to meet this year. This is partly because the targets were very challenging and also because new pupils, who are a little behind their peers, have joined the school since the targets were set. Overall, pupils have made satisfactory progress since they started at By Brook Valley in Year 4.

#### *7 Standards in English through the school*

In English, pupils make steady progress through the school. Most are confident speakers and listen well to their teachers and each other. The national literacy strategy has been implemented effectively. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to use phonic and other strategies well to help them read. They are developing a love of books and story. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use their reading skills effectively in other subjects, as well as widening their appreciation of different authors. Throughout the school pupils do not do so well in writing as they do in reading. This is a national trend, but the difference is wider than average at By Brook Valley. Pupils make sound progress overall in learning to write. They sometimes write in a lively and imaginative way, but their work is often spoilt by untidy presentation. Pupils are not developing a neat and legible handwriting style as fast as they should. Pupils, especially talented and gifted pupils, are not always sufficiently challenged by purposeful writing tasks.

#### *8 Standards in mathematics through the school*

Pupils make sound progress in all classes in the development of numerical and mathematical skills. This is because the national numeracy strategy is being used well by teachers to plan work. However, generally tasks set in numeracy lessons do not give pupils enough opportunities to explore and investigate problems. Higher attaining pupils are not systematically challenged, although these pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 do have the opportunity to work as a group for two days a week.

#### *9 Standards and progress in other subjects*

Pupils make sound progress in science in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. Progress is also good in music because of the consistently good quality of the teaching and pupils achieve high standards. Pupils do not reach the levels expected for their age in ICT in Years 1 and 2 because they are not taught skills systematically. Older pupils achieve satisfactory standards. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In religious education they meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus for Years 2 and 6. They work steadily in art, with some pupils completing work of high quality.

10 Pupils learning English as an additional language have made good progress since they arrived in school in September. They now understand simple instructions. They listen carefully to their teachers and work on similar activities to their peers. They are becoming more confident in using spoken English, especially in conversation with their friends.

11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive. They often work in small groups with teaching assistants who explain the activities in detail so that they have a clear understanding of the tasks involved. Teachers plan work well for them and provide appropriate support.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

### *12 Attitudes*

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and they contribute to the positive learning environment and the quality of life in the school. Children settle quickly into the reception class and most are happy and confident in their new surroundings. They appreciate the difference between right and wrong. Pupils appreciate the attractive environment of their new building and treat it with respect. The school has made a conscious effort to maintain the caring small school ethos. This is an important factor in determining pupils' attitudes. Pupils are keen and eager as they arrive promptly at the start of the school day and parents are almost unanimously in agreement that their children enjoy attending school. Many arrive early and busy themselves around the classroom, get on with tasks or simply socialise before settling quickly and purposefully to the day's work. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to the contributions of other pupils, showing respect for their differing views. Most are interested in their work and concentrate well in order to complete their tasks. In an art lesson, for example, pupils in Year 3 showed great perseverance while experimenting with stencilling and printing techniques and as a result, achieved good results.

### *13 Behaviour*

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. It is reinforced consistently by staff and this contributes effectively to pupils' learning. Most of them understand and adhere to the school and class rules and are clearly aware of what is expected of them. This is evident on formal occasions such as assembly, where pupils arrive and conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner, helping to create a sense of occasion and reverence. Older pupils were particularly attentive in a genuinely uplifting assembly taken by the rector. On the playground pupils are lively and many of them, especially the older boys, are boisterous as they make the most of their breaks from lessons. At lunchtimes pupils behave well. In the dining hall they are well mannered and enjoy eating and talking with their friends. Minor lapses in classroom behaviour such as calling out, fussiness or attention seeking are generally handled effectively by teachers with firmness and tact. Occasionally however, the unsatisfactory response of a minority of pupils does affect the learning of others, as in a Year 5/6 games lesson where the uncooperative attitude of a small number of older boys had a negative impact on the pace of the session. However, the same pupils were observed with the same teacher in other lessons behaving well and in religious education, for example, contributing interesting ideas about what constitutes beauty. Isolated incidents of bullying have occurred, to which the school responds promptly. There have been no exclusions for bad behaviour. One pupil is included on the school's register of special educational need because of emotional and behavioural difficulties and is coping well with these because of the sensitive support given.

### *14 Relationships*

Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Effective working relationships are demonstrated clearly when small groups co-operate by sharing resources and supporting each other's learning. Good examples of this were seen in all areas of the curriculum. Often pupils work in pairs on computers, for example, taking turns and helping each other sensibly. In circle times and in assemblies pupils learn to reflect on their own behaviour and to think about the impact of their actions on others. The school promotes a strong sense of inclusion and pupils of all ages integrate well at all times. Pupils are secure and relaxed in their relationships with adults and this gives them the confidence to ask for help when required. They like and respect their teachers, saying that they are friendly and take good care of them.

### 15 *Personal development*

When given opportunities to exercise responsibility and independence, pupils respond well by willingly undertaking helpful duties such as returning registers to the office and clearing up after lessons. Older pupils conscientiously accept other responsibilities such as coaching younger pupils in football skills and taking part in regular paired reading activities with pupils in reception and Year 1. Others take on the role of reporters for the recently founded '*News from the Valley*' and clearly these and other initiatives have the potential for further development.

### 16 *Attendance*

Pupils' attendance is very good and well above the national average. There is a very small percentage of unauthorised absence, which is well below average. Many pupils travel by bus and these usually arrive in good time for the start of school. Pupils who live in Yatton Keynell are usually punctual.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

17 Overall, sound teaching through the school ensures that pupils make steady progress. In the forty lessons seen, 13 per cent of the teaching was very good, 40 per cent was good and 45 per cent was satisfactory, with only one unsatisfactory lesson seen. The teaching was stronger in Years 3 to 6, where a significant amount of the teaching was good or very good.

### 18 *Foundation stage and Years 1 and 2*

At the beginning of the year, the teachers in the three youngest pupils' classes were on maternity leave and their posts were filled by temporary staff. This term, one of the permanent teachers has returned and had only had her new class for a few weeks at the time of the inspection. Parents have been understandably concerned that the changes of staff might have had a detrimental effect on the provision for their children. The inspection found that the quality of teaching in these three classes is sound, with some good features and that pupils made sound and sometimes good progress in the lessons seen.

19 The teaching in the reception class (the new foundation stage) is satisfactory overall. Planning is sound and based on the new guidance for work in the early years. The teacher has selected a topic, to capture children's interest and imagination, and used this as a basis to plan work related to the six areas of learning. This has been a successful strategy and this term's topic on bears has helped to make tasks relevant for children. A good example of this was in a numeracy session when children counted backwards and forwards using twelve bears pegged onto a washing line. The teaching assistant provides good support and takes every opportunity to extend children's understanding by purposeful questioning. Areas for development include increasing the challenge for higher attaining children and maintaining children's interest in whole class sessions.

20 Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is also sound, with some good features in Year 1. Again planning sets a firm basis for the work in lessons and teachers plan interesting tasks for pupils, which helps them to engage in their learning tasks with enthusiasm. A particularly good example of this was the work related to the 'Fire of London' topic in Year 1. Weaknesses in these classes are related to the pace of lessons, where sometimes a long session on the carpet or a long activity session, with little teacher intervention, means that pupils do not move ahead as fast as they could. Planning for activities to challenge higher attaining pupils, especially in mathematics, is also underdeveloped.

### 21 *Years 3 to 6*

Teaching is stronger in the three older junior classes, with a high proportion of good and very good teaching seen during the inspection. Planning is generally good. Sessions are well

prepared, with resources carefully chosen and easily accessible. In the best lessons pupils are challenged effectively and achieve well. Weaknesses include the management of older pupils in physical education lessons and teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work.

## *22 Teaching of English*

Overall, the teaching of English is sound and sets a firm basis for pupils' steady progress. Some good lessons were seen during the inspection week and these were characterised by detailed planning and a good pace to the session, so that much was achieved. Staff have worked hard to implement the national literacy strategy and this now forms a firm basis for the teaching of phonic skills and work related to grammar and spelling. Good emphasis is given to encouraging pupils to read a wide variety of good quality literature, especially in the older classes. However, group and guided reading sessions are not always as focussed as they could be. The teaching of writing skills is sound. Teachers explain sentence structure well and encourage pupils to write in a lively way. Sometimes pupils are asked to write for a real purpose, for the '*News from the Valley*' magazine, for example. At other times, the writing task set has little real point and does not encourage pupils to work as writers. The teaching of handwriting is unsatisfactory. There is an agreed style, but it is not taught in a systematic way and as a result pupils' handwriting and the general presentation of their work is not as good as it should be.

## *23 Teaching of mathematics*

The teaching of mathematics is also satisfactory through the school. Again, staff have worked hard to implement the numeracy strategy since its introduction in 1999. Planning shows a clear focus for lessons and almost all sessions move at a good pace so that the work set is covered. In the very good lessons the teacher's questioning made pupils think in order to explain their methods and identify and correct errors. However, generally there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils throughout the school. This is not the case in the two lessons a week in Years 4, 5 and 6 where pupils are set according to ability. Generally tasks planned for numeracy lessons do not give pupils enough opportunities to explore and investigate problems. Another area for development is the use of ICT to help pupils to develop mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. In both English and mathematics teachers agree improvement targets with individuals and with the class and use these well to help pupils focus on how to improve their work.

## *24 Teaching in other subjects*

Music is taught well throughout the school. A specialist teacher works with the pupils. Her good subject knowledge and clear planning provide a firm foundation for well-organised lessons in which pupils achieve well. Science is also taught well in Years 3 to 6. In these classes there is a good emphasis on investigative and experimental work. Planning is well structured and teachers' questioning is challenging. These all help pupils to learn quickly. There was very little teaching of ICT seen during the inspection. Teachers' planning shows that there is insufficient emphasis on the teaching of skills, especially in Years 1 and 2.

## *25 Contribution of teaching assistants*

Teaching assistants make a significant contribution. They work very well with individuals and small groups. Their tasks are largely planned by the class teachers, but they are often responsible for the preparation of materials and undertake this well. Their strength lies in the very good relationships formed with the pupils, which helps them to work successfully with individuals and small groups on learning tasks. They use their initiative well and make good contributions to class lessons. In a session when reception children were making bread, for example, the assistant used questioning very well to extend children's language and understanding.

### *26 Teaching of pupils with special educational needs*

Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Appropriate tasks are planned for them in literacy and numeracy, where they need most help. Frequently they are supported effectively in these lessons by teaching assistants and this helps them to make good progress. Sometimes the assistants work with these pupils outside the classroom on tasks prepared by the teacher. Again pupils make good progress because of the gentle encouragement of the assistants.

### *27 Teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language*

Pupils learning English as an additional language are supported sensitively by class teachers and assistants. They do not currently receive any additional support, but teachers are sensitive to their language needs and take care to ensure that they understand the purpose of the lesson. This is helping them to make good progress.

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

28 Staff have worked hard to develop effective planning for all subjects since the school opened and there is now a sound basis for the work in classrooms. The school has taken care to provide interesting opportunities for pupils to broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding by inviting visitors into the school and planning a range of educational visits.

### *29 Curricular Planning*

The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and planning is based on the recommended national strategies. While the school has understandably focused on developing literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school, it has maintained a broad range of learning activities for pupils, which prepares them well for their next stage of education. Staff are aware that there is more work to do on planning in some areas. At the foundation stage, the curriculum currently offered to children prepares them to meet the 'early learning goals' in all areas of development. However, as a result of staff changes, the school has not yet planned the foundation curriculum for the whole academic year or agreed a policy. The curriculum for pupils aged six to eleven is well balanced across all subjects and is based effectively on national and local guidelines. The school has drawn up a two-year rolling programme to avoid duplication in the mixed age classes. This does not yet address the problems of the split Year 5, who are not covering the same areas of study in history and geography. Planning for ICT is a weakness and there are no school guidelines to help teachers plan. As a result, in Years 1 and 2, where teachers are less confident in this subject, there are insufficient opportunities planned for pupils to develop their skills. There are some other areas where there is insufficient guidance for teachers. These are for the development of skills in speaking and listening, drama, and physical education. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills in science are not planned into the curriculum.

### *30 Planning for pupils' individual needs*

The school provides well for pupils' individual needs. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The school is aware of the need to include all pupils in all aspects of the school and analyses its effectiveness in helping both boys and girls to learn. It meets the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language and is successfully integrating them into school life and learning. The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good. Planning takes account of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) and pupils are given extra support, especially in reading and writing. The planning of group work is usually good and includes pupils with special educational needs in all class activities. Pupils are grouped in a variety of ways, which stimulates their progress successfully. In literacy and numeracy lessons pupils work with others of similar ability and

in numeracy lessons in Years 4 – 6, they work in ability sets twice a week. In other subjects, such as geography, pupils work in mixed ability groups which enables skills and ideas to be shared effectively.

### *31 Personal, social and health education*

The school provides a good level of personal, health and social education (PHSE) through a planned programme, which is taught in all classes and includes teaching on health, sex and drug awareness. The school has drawn up a suitable scheme for PHSE education, which it is implementing successfully. All teachers hold weekly discussion sessions (called 'circle time') with their pupils. This is having a positive effect both on pupils' awareness of their own feelings, the impact of what they say and do on others and their capacity to express themselves and listen to other views. Pupils spoke sensitively, for example, about how they could help those in the recent Indian earthquake and the meaning of Christmas to those in need.

### *32 Extra-curricular provision*

The school provides a satisfactory level of experiences for pupils outside of lessons. It offers a limited range of after-school activities, since most pupils rely on bus transport to and from school each day. To offset the effect of this and to increase the social interaction between year groups, the school runs an effective weekly activity session in class time. Pupils choose from a variety of sporting, cultural and artistic options and take full advantage of the opportunities to learn new skills and interests. The regular lunchtime football coaching club is very successful in enabling pupils to work with and support one another. Older pupils are good at thinking about and encouraging younger ones to develop their skills. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors, which have promoted pupils' awareness of the arts and cultures beyond their own immediate experience. Teachers organise visits for each class on a termly basis and ensure that these extend pupils' understanding of curriculum areas such as history, geography, English or science. A residential journey for older pupils also helps pupils to gain confidence and learn about other areas away from the security of home.

### *33 Links with the community*

There are satisfactory links with the community and other schools. The local rector takes assembly regularly and pupils are welcomed into the local church to learn about its history and worship. The school sings carols and performs to local adult groups and joins with other schools for musical activities. The school is actively extending its links with the community to organise more educational visits. It already makes good use of artists and writers, who visit the school and work with pupils to complete banners in the hall, create and perform plays and write poems together. Staff visit from the local secondary school and there is effective liaison between primary schools for teachers support.

### *34 Spiritual development*

The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Teachers link assembly themes into their teaching of religious education and refer to them where appropriate in PHSE lessons. They teach pupils about Christian beliefs as well as Jewish, Hindu and Muslim festivals and worship. All classes in the school have studied the Christmas hymn '*Candle in the Window*' and related it to their own experience of Christmas in very thoughtful writing and pictures. Teachers encourage pupils to appreciate the importance of prayer and reflection and give them time to think both in assemblies and in class discussions. Pupils are encouraged to identify and talk about principles and forces, which influence people's lives. They recognise the need to care for others in their daily lives and discuss the force of Nature in looking at plant growth.

35 Pupils' ideas are valued and their achievements recognised during lessons, when staff



are keen to demonstrate examples of good work and helpful behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the work of others. Some opportunities are provided to examine the effects of events on people, especially when pupils are reading relevant stories.

### *36 Moral and social development*

The arrangements for pupils' moral and social development are good. School rules are well understood by all pupils. In many classes, teachers focus on a different aspect each week such as listening to others, which effectively heightens pupils' awareness. Teachers make good use of collaborative activities in class to develop pupils' tolerance and thoughtfulness and this is further enhanced by school residential trips. Pupils' achievements in work, helpfulness, sport and the arts are celebrated in class and assemblies. This raises their self-esteem and places a value on what pupils do in school and outside. Relationships are good and staff provide very good role models in developing the mutual respect which is evident throughout the school.

### *37 Cultural development*

Teaching places a good emphasis on developing pupils' cultural awareness. In addition to visits from writers and artists the school has invited story-tellers from different countries, an Indian musicians' workshop and dance group. Pupils have participated in Indian and South American festivals with other schools. They are given opportunities to listen to and sing a wide range of music, including jazz and African chants. They study a number of different painters from Europe and further afield and reflect these influences in their own work. In mathematics, pupils look at different methods of counting and the patterns used in a variety of cultures. They are introduced to an impressive variety of stories from a broad selection of sources, which ranges from Eskimo folk tales to Shakespeare.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38 The staff's good care for pupils is a strength of the school. Warm relationships help to encourage the pupils to talk to adults about their school work and other interests or problems. Good policies are in place, which promote good behaviour and discipline. Staff are alert in lessons and at playtimes to any potential problems and share any concerns with each other. The procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are effective. Any absences are checked very promptly each day and the education welfare officer gives good support.

### *39 Pupils' welfare, health and safety*

The school has introduced good policies and procedures for health and safety. Health and safety issues are included in the teachers' curriculum planning. All staff are involved in regular risk assessments and their findings are recorded and reported fully. There are good arrangements to handle illness, accidents and essential medication. Clear child protection policy and procedures are in place and the designated teacher shares information from training courses with all other staff. The lack of a chaperone on a school bus concerns some parents but the management and funding of this service are not the responsibility of the school.

### *40 Monitoring pupils' personal development*

Class teachers actively monitor the pupils' personal development. During the current year they are testing the usefulness of additional formal records of personal development. The well-established and comprehensive personal, social and health education programmes make good contributions to pupil development. The common timetabling of 'activities' on a Tuesday afternoon provides good opportunities for personal development and for the older pupils to take responsibility for the younger ones. They also help to serve the school's aim of fostering self-control, tolerance and respect for self and others.

#### *41 Monitoring pupils' academic progress*

The school has effective procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The younger children are assessed on entry into the reception class and their curriculum is planned to include the stepping stones, which mark their progress to the early learning goals. The recently introduced 'Star' charts show pupils' levels of attainment in writing, mathematics and science, and these are also used in the reception year, where appropriate. This information is not only used by teachers to organise pupils into appropriate ability groups for some lessons, but is also shared with pupils to become a target for their improvement.

42 It has been very difficult to amalgamate the records of pupils from four different schools. Although guidelines for organising folders into a similar format were given to the four feeder schools before By Brook Valley opened, no school followed exactly the same procedures. Consequently the school developed new individual pupil record folders. These provide a clear picture of individual pupils' progress. In addition a new record keeping system has been implemented from the beginning of this academic year to track the progress made by different year groups.

43 A clear action plan and policy give guidance on implementing a system of continual assessments, which will provide data for analysis on individual pupil progress. Statutory tests take place towards the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 record progress in English and mathematics. Results of tests in spelling, reading and mathematics add to the picture of pupils' achievements. The school is in the process of converting this data analysis and assessment on to a computerised system. Teachers have started to track pupils from Year 1, and have implemented individual target setting in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Target cards, identifying a particular focus, are placed in pupils' workbooks to provide an immediate reminder, and are reviewed regularly.

44 Pupils have personal targets, for attainment or behaviour, and teachers make use of marking to confirm, wherever possible, that learning targets have been achieved and whether new ones need to be set. Particular targets for the week are displayed on the classroom wall; for example, pupils in one class had a set time to change from one activity to the next. The class teachers share the objectives for each lesson with their pupils, so that all are very clear on the learning taking place.

45 The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs. Any concerns are identified immediately, for example, where teachers feel a pupil is not making sufficient progress, and pupils are placed on the register. Individual education plans are written, setting clear objectives for learning, and these are shared with pupils and their parents. Where pupils' problems are more serious, the school makes effective use of professionals from outside the school.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

#### *46 Parents' and carers' views of the school*

In spite of the good efforts of the staff and governors to build an effective partnership with parents, there are significant levels of dissatisfaction about some aspects of school life. Most parents feel that their children enjoy coming to school and that behaviour is good. A majority of parents (90%) feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or suggestions but this contrasts with the views of 47 per cent who are dissatisfied with the working relationships between the school and parents. Significant minorities of parents are also dissatisfied with information on how well the children are getting on (42%), school management (31%), extra-curricular activities (28%), homework arrangements (24%), their children's progress (22%), the quality of teaching (22%) and the school's expectations of

pupils (20%). They are concerned about the effect of maternity leave on consistency of teaching provision and at the meeting expressed very mixed views on standards and provision in literacy and numeracy.

#### *47 Reasons for parent's and carers' views*

The school has attempted to allay parents' worries. This year, for example, satisfactory arrangements were made to ensure that pupils were not too disrupted by staff changes. Early difficulties with the setting up and building of the new school and some resentment at the loss of four small village schools initially undermined the links with parents. These difficulties have been exacerbated by staff instability. Two teachers have moved on to other posts since the school opened and a further three have been on maternity leave this year. All of these factors have been outside the school's control, but understandably have given cause for concern.

#### *47 Information given to parents about children's progress and other matters*

Overall the school provides satisfactory information about pupils' progress. Staff are very welcoming and many parents regularly discuss matters with them informally before and after the school day or arrange longer meetings with them. The school arranges twice yearly consultation evenings to discuss progress and makes it clear that parents can make additional appointments if necessary during the year. At recent consultation evenings, the length and timetabling of the interviews meant that some parents had to wait for a lengthy period to see their child's teacher. This did not provide a relaxed atmosphere for the discussions. The good annual reports for pupils cover all subjects, attendance and personal development in good detail and are accompanied by separate reports on curriculum coverage. They include suggestions of areas for development and improvement. Many parents and pupils take the opportunity to write further comments on the reports.

48 The prospectus and governors' annual report are detailed and of good quality. The school sends home regular, friendly and informative letters, which include information on the curriculum for the term. Written briefings on the curriculum have been supplemented by information evenings on numeracy and literacy.

#### *49 Homework*

The school has improved arrangements for homework recently and this area is satisfactory. The recently introduced home diaries are used very actively by some parents as an effective form of communication between home and school. These should help to clarify the homework requirements for the 24% of parents who expressed dissatisfaction with the arrangements.

#### *50 Other parental concerns*

The inspection found that the school is led and managed well and that there is a clear focus on improving standards. However the headteacher, staff and governors have not yet gained the support of all parents in spite of sensible procedures and practice in communicating with them. They are aware that this needs addressing. There is also satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities, in view of the transport arrangements at the end of the day. The school tries to provide a range of events outside lessons, including the activities afternoon and visits from artists and musicians. The inspection also found that overall parents' worries about teaching and learning were not substantiated, although higher attaining pupils were not consistently challenged.

#### *51 Parental support*

Parents give sound support to their children at home and approximately twenty help at different times in lessons and with after-school activities. The active Friends' Association organises social and fund-raising events and provides substantial additional income for the

benefit of the school.

#### *52 The next step*

Sound progress has been made in building stronger links with the majority of parents. However, in spite of the openness and good standard of information provided by the school, it is a priority for the staff and governors to continue to address the significant levels of dissatisfaction in the parents' perceptions of some aspects of school life.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

#### *53 Initial difficulties*

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard over the last two and a half years to establish the school on a firm footing. This has been a notable achievement in the face of some difficulties. The amalgamation of four village schools to form By Brook Valley was not a popular move. Villagers were understandably concerned about the impact of school closure on their communities and parents were anxious about the travel arrangements for their children. The building work was delayed and so the school opened in temporary accommodation. While staff worked hard to provide a satisfactory learning environment, the delayed move to the new building did little to allay parental concerns. Since September 1998 there has also been some staff instability, with only two of the class teachers permanently at school since that time. Continuity has been provided by the headteacher, part-time teacher and teaching assistants. Staff have moved on for a number of reasons and last term there were three teachers on maternity leave. This instability has had an impact on continuity for some groups of pupils, although sensible measures have been taken to minimise the disruption. It has been more difficult to push forward curriculum development in the face of staff change and the role of subject co-ordinators is under developed, with the exception of science, music and art. This is particularly in relation to the monitoring of standards through the school.

#### *54 Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff*

In spite of these difficulties the school has much to celebrate. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school, with a commitment to providing a broad education within a village school ethos. He provides a sensitive lead, providing encouragement and support for colleagues, consequently the staff team is working well together. He is very well supported by the senior teacher with responsibility for the older pupils, who makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. She also manages the work with pupils who have special educational needs. She liaises very effectively with teaching assistants who work with these pupils and has a clear grip on provision for these pupils and the progress they are making. This term the other senior teacher, who had considerable input into the implementation of the literacy hour, has returned from maternity leave and the school is now in a good position to move forward.

#### *55 The governors' contribution*

The governors use their talents and expertise very well to support the school. A very effective management framework was completed early on, setting down procedures and policies. Governors are fully involved in planning for the school's future and base measures for improvement on the aims of the school. Now that the school is established there is a drive to improve standards. Individual governors use their particular talents to benefit the school. The ex-chair, for example, has considerable management expertise, the local rector is a frequent visitor to assemblies, the special needs governor has a wealth of experience in this area and the chair of the finance sub-committee is very well qualified for his role. A new chair has been appointed recently and is developing her role well. All statutory requirements associated with the governance of the school are met.

#### *56 Monitoring and evaluating progress*

Sensible strategies are in place to enable the school to measure how well it is doing. Progress towards the targets on the school's improvement plan is discussed at governors meetings and there is a systematic programme in place to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. The local authority has contributed well to this aspect and the school has also bought in specialist help from an early years' consultant. This emphasis on improving teaching through evaluation and discussion has worked well because staff reflect thoughtfully on their own practice and are always striving to improve. The school is also beginning to use assessment data more systematically in order to build up a picture of pupils' progress.

#### *57 Budgeting and financial planning*

Annual budgeting and long-term financial planning are very good. The staff, with very active governor support, have planned a steady adjustment to falling pupil numbers and to ensure a smooth transition to lower levels of funding while retaining good staffing levels. The priorities in the budget are closely matched to those in the school improvement plan. Through skilful financial management the school has built a substantial reserve without sacrificing good levels of expenditure on annual staffing and resources. The school will be able to maintain provision at the current levels while it adjusts to a steady pupil roll in two years time. At the end of this period the reserves will be close the recommended level of five per cent of annual income.

58 Financial controls and records are good and this was confirmed by the recent auditors' report. The minor suggestions for additional procedures have been agreed by the school. The administration is efficient and gives good support to staff, pupils and governors. Very effective use is made of new technology by staff and governors to assist planning and management. The income from specific grants, including special educational needs and staff development, is used for the purposes intended and recorded clearly in the accounts. The headteacher and governors actively and regularly monitor expenditure and all decisions are recorded fully in the minutes of their meetings. The staff and governors make good use of the principles of best value with good levels of competition, comparison and consultation. In light of the budget available, the school's provision and pupils' achievements, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

#### *59 Staffing*

The school is staffed with a sufficient number of experienced and qualified teaching and non-teaching staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and to meet the needs of pupils. They form a committed and hard-working team and provide each other with strong support. However, as mentioned earlier, during the past year there has been considerable, but unavoidable, instability in staffing in Key Stage 1 classes, as a result of three members of staff taking maternity leave. Quite clearly this has impacted not only upon the continuity of teaching and learning but also on other aspects of the life of the school. For example, the decision was taken quite correctly to delay essential training for teachers in information technology until the next academic year so that all permanent members of staff derive maximum benefit from this government funded initiative. The school has appropriate systems in place to support performance management procedures.

60 Teaching assistants are well trained and are effectively deployed to provide pupils and teachers with good quality support. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good and school priorities for training are clearly identified. The positive impact of training on the quality of teaching and learning is clearly evident in the efficient induction of newly qualified teachers.

#### *61 Accommodation*

The school's accommodation, a little more than two years old, is very good. It provides a stimulating learning environment both inside and outside and effectively supports teaching and learning. It is much appreciated and well cared for by governors, staff and pupils. It is clean and well maintained. In addition to bright and roomy classrooms there are shared areas that are used regularly and efficiently by teaching assistants, parent helpers and pupils. The building is situated on a large and attractive site that is being carefully developed as a resource for learning with the financial support and practical assistance of parents, friends of the school and governors. Outside, there are hard and grass playing surfaces that are used well for teaching and recreation, and more innovative facilities such as the Trim Trail and the Mathematics Garden. In addition, there are developing natural areas where pupils can extend their learning, for example about life processes and living things in science. However, outside facilities designed specifically for children under five are limited. There is no designated enclosed play area for them, for example.

#### *62 Learning resources*

Overall, the quantity, quality and range of learning resources, including those for children under five, are satisfactory. However, in English, mathematics and science, the subjects identified by the school as priorities, resources have been improved and are now good. Resources for music and religious education are also good. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books, many of which are attractively displayed in the library area, and these are supplemented effectively by the school's good use of the county library service. Geography resources, especially maps, are limited. Learning resources are readily accessible and used well throughout the school to support learning.

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

63 In order to build on the sound foundation established at By Brook Valley, the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

1. Improve standards of writing by:
  - a) providing more opportunities for pupils to write for different audiences and purposes,
  - b) teaching handwriting in a systematic way,
  - c) setting higher expectations for the presentation of work;
2. Improve the challenge for higher attainers in mathematics by developing investigative approaches to problem solving;
3. Improve standards in information and communication technology by:
  - a) implementing staff training in this area,
  - b) planning more systematically for work in all classes;
4. Develop the roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators;
5. Improve the school's partnership with parents.

The headteacher, staff and governors should also consider the following minor points for inclusion in its improvement plan:

- Improving the outdoor provision for children in the foundation stage;
- Improve planning for the new foundation stage (the reception year) by developing planning based on the new national guidance for the foundation stage;
- Allocating more time to parent-teacher interviews to make them less rushed;
- Reviewing the topic planning to ensure that all pupils cover the same work as they move through the school in history and geography;
- Developing guidance for teachers in planning drama and speaking and listening skills;
- Developing guidance for teachers in the development of skills in physical education;
- Using opportunities in science to develop pupils' numeracy skills;
- Improving resources for geography, especially maps.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	13%	40%	45%	3%	0%	0%

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Percentages may not total exactly 100 because of rounding up or down.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	148
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10
<i>FTE means full-time equivalent</i>	
Special educational needs	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	48
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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



### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	16	11	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	22	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (85)	85 (45)	93 (80)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	23	25	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (80)	93 (80)	85 (80)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	11	17	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	24	21	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (50)	75 (38)	93 (63)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	23	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (44)	86 (56)	93 (69)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	148
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: Y R – Y 6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	310045
Total expenditure	287124
Expenditure per pupil	1818
Balance brought forward from previous year	43911
Balance carried forward to next year	66832

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	148
Number of questionnaires returned	71

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	39	14	8	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	39	10	4	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	49	13	11	0
The teaching is good.	31	42	18	4	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	37	24	18	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	42	8	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	34	13	7	7
The school works closely with parents.	27	27	34	13	0
The school is well led and managed.	31	35	20	11	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	38	11	6	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	35	24	4	13

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

64 Children start school in the September before their fifth birthday. They attend full-time if their birthday falls between September and March, and on a part-time basis until January, if their birthday falls later in the year. At the time of the inspection, all twelve children were attending full-time. Nearly all the children have had previous experience of a nursery or playgroup. This year the children are in a very small reception class. In previous years reception children were taught alongside Year1 pupils. Classroom arrangements vary from year to year, depending on pupil numbers. Currently a temporary teacher is teaching the children, while the permanent teacher is on maternity leave. The permanent teacher has responsibility for the induction of the new intake. These arrangements are good and included pre-school visits and an evening session. The teacher has also devised a booklet to be given to new parents before their child started school.

65 When they started school, baseline assessment indicated that the majority of children were articulate, but had less well developed manipulative and social skills. They have made satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and are set to achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1 in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. This satisfactory progress is underpinned by sound teaching.

#### **Personal and social and emotional development**

66 The class teacher makes the most of opportunities for developing children's personal and social skills as they arise. Teaching in this area is good overall. Children are encouraged to take turns. In the 'bear's cave', for example, they worked together to match together plates, knives and forks. They are learning to sit quietly and listen to a story, without calling out and to take it in turns to respond to the teacher's focused questions. In one session the story of *'Lost and Found'* focused on caring and thinking about others. The children discussed how important it was to be kind to their friends at school and how they were kind to their family at home. Children now change independently for physical activities and are encouraged to fold their clothes neatly. They select and use equipment and are beginning to tidy away afterwards. Appropriate targets are displayed each day to remind children how to behave in the classroom.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

67 Most children speak confidently to adults and each other. Staff take care to extend their language skills by effective questioning. In one session, for example, a group of children worked with the teaching assistant to create the journey of *'We're going on a bear hunt'*, using trays of sand and water. She used questions well to help children describe what they were making. This story was also used as a stimulus for vocabulary development and children were encouraged to think of similar words to describe adjectives such as the *sticky* mud, thus building up their vocabulary.

68 Children enjoy books and reading and are beginning to identify initial sounds and use picture cues. Those at the earliest stages of reading retell the story from the pictures in their books. There is good parental support for reading. Books, reading diaries and key words charts go home regularly. The writing corner provides opportunities for the children to practise their writing. There are examples of a letter and envelope, a shopping list and a

diary, to show children different purposes for writing. There is a range of picture books and topic books on Bears, which have been borrowed from the schools' library service.

69 Teaching is sound overall and ensures children's steady progress. In one lesson seen, the story was well chosen to link with the topic, but the pace was rather slow. Planning was appropriate and the teaching assistant worked very effectively with one group to develop children's reading skills, sequencing and manipulative skills. Her questioning helped to extend the pupils' imaginative ideas on a bear hunt and she encouraged them to discuss what they had done with the rest of the class. Other groups finished their activities very quickly and worked in the bears' cave and with the building blocks. These children did not spend enough time on extending their skills in reading and writing.

### **Mathematical development**

70 Children make sound progress in developing numeracy skills because of satisfactory teaching overall. In one session seen they did particularly well. Children had learnt '*Twelve little teddy bears hanging on the line*', and sang backwards from twelve to zero, while they took turns at unpinning the teddies. In their work this term the 'Bears' topic has provided an interesting stimulus for learning. Pupils have compared the size of the teddy bears they had brought from home and ordered them by height. They have also made chairs and bowls for their bears and matched them accurately. Consequently, they have developed their numerical skills. They recognise numbers to twenty and count backward from a range of numbers. They recognise one more or one less when they are counting.

71 There is a particular focus on the development of mathematical vocabulary and the experience of solving problems. One task, for example, was to make beds for teddies using cubes. Children used the correct terms, 'longer' or 'shorter', when they compared the different lengths of beds. There are various resources to promote the development of mathematical skills. Children use puzzles, matching games; shapes, sand and water play to gain an understanding of size, shape and capacity.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

72 This term's topic on bears has also provided a good focus for work related to finding out about the world. Overall the teaching in this area is satisfactory and this ensures that pupils are making satisfactory progress in finding out about the world around them. Activities are well planned and the class teacher has created a very encouraging atmosphere for children's discussion. In cooking, for example, children made rolls for a teddy bears' picnic. They considered the ingredients and made appropriate suggestions of what they might be cooking. They investigated changes in materials when they mix ingredients in cooking and were excited by the change in the raw dough after it had stood for an hour. The teacher did not capitalise fully on the children's enthusiasm in this session and lost some opportunities to move the learning on more quickly.

73 The teacher provided good opportunities for all pupils to work on the computer and taught the techniques required for dressing the teddy and printing out work well. Children have made effective use of this program and used the print-out to decorate the cover of their topic books. They are learning to use the keyboard to type their names.

### **Physical development**

74 Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development as a consequence of sound teaching overall. They are developing their manual dexterity well. They use scissors and glue competently. In one session, for example, they made trees in the forest, for models

of the bear hunt, cutting paper and card independently. They play with jigsaw puzzles and build with construction kits.

75 In physical activities, they experiment with different ways of travelling and move with confidence. In the lesson seen, opportunities for initial warm-up activities were limited and pace was slow. There was a good focus on safety aspects as children were helped to lift the benches and put them in position. However, insufficient thought was given to the use of the benches, and children moved along either end, meeting in the middle. They travelled along benches and balanced well. They showed particular care for the other children in the class when they moved freely about the hall. There is no designated outside play area for the youngest children and this limits the possibilities for work outside the classroom.

### **Creative development**

76 Children make good progress in musical activities due to the good teaching they receive. The majority of children can sing tunefully and clap hands in time to the music. They listen well to each other so that they play their instruments in the correct place. In the lesson seen, they listened to the teacher well and controlled their instruments while they learnt to march and sing. They understood that instruments can be played quietly and loudly and were quick to respond to the teacher's instructions. They thoroughly enjoyed the repetitive choruses of the songs they were learning and remembered the words to *'All around the kitchen'* and made up their own verses.

77 Clear demonstration and appropriate use of resources supports the good teaching in the art activities. The teacher provides effective opportunities for the exploration of media and materials. Children use a variety of materials and tools to express their ideas and observations visually. They are learning to use sketching pencils. In the lesson seen, they all drew recognisable bears. They then used a good range of colour mixes to paint their bears, and were well supported by the teaching assistant. Other paintings reflect the stories they have heard. They have also painted examples of their favourite activities for a display in the corridor.

### **78 Planning and assessment**

An early years policy and scheme of work are still to be completed. Current assessment arrangements are sound. A very clear assessment record notes children's personal achievements as well as their development towards achieving the early learning goals. Stages are highlighted and dated. 'Star' records in writing and science, used throughout the school, show progress towards the introduction of National Curriculum work, where appropriate. Also included is the baseline assessment, an entry profile and a self-drawing. This gives a very informative picture of the children's progress during their reception year.

## **ENGLISH**

79 There has been considerable improvement in pupils' attainment in national tests since the school opened. At the end of Year 2, pupils did much better in writing in 2000 and standards rose from well below average to average. In Year 6, standards in English rose from below average in 1999 to above average in 2000. Within this positive picture there are some weaknesses. Reading standards at the end of Year 2 slipped back a little in 2000 and less than average reached higher levels. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

80 The school has not been open long enough to identify significant trends and in schools of this size standards can fluctuate from year to year because of the impact that the performance of one or two pupils can make on statistical information. The inspection found

that standards have fallen a little from last year in writing and risen in reading. Overall pupils in Year 2 this year are average in reading and below average in writing. This fall in writing is because this particular year group has a number of pupils with special educational needs. There are also few pupils who are reaching high standards. This is partly linked to the make up of this particular year group, but is also because teachers do not expect enough of the higher attaining pupils. Standards are lower in Year 6 this year because of a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. While these pupils make sound progress, their attainment remains below levels expected for their age. However, some pupils continue to reach higher levels. Throughout the school pupils do not do so well in writing as they do in reading.

81 Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because of the support that teachers and assistants give them. Many of these pupils have identified problems in reading and writing. Sessions are well organised, with care taken to prepare materials beforehand. Pupils learning English as an additional language are also making good progress because of the sensitive support that they receive.

82 Most pupils speak confidently and enjoy taking part in class discussions. In the majority of sessions pupils listen carefully to their teachers. Sometimes pupils are asked to discuss their work in pairs or small groups and manage this sensibly. Generally pupils express themselves well. This was evident in discussions with inspectors, when pupils talked in a lively way about their work and shared their opinions about school life. At the moment, there is not a whole school plan for developing speaking and listening skills to ensure that pupils cover the full range of activities identified in the revised National Curriculum. There are few regular opportunities for pupils to participate in drama work.

83 Reading is taught effectively and most pupils make sound progress because of systematic teaching and good support from parents at home. There is a good balance between work on reading strategies and helping pupils to develop a love of reading and books. Within the literacy hours teachers focus effectively on the teaching of basic skills. In one Year 2 session, for example, the teacher concentrated on teaching the 'wh', 'ph' and 'ch' sounds. She captured the pupils' interest well by basing the work on '*Sneezles*', a poem by A A Milne. Older pupils use their reading skills to draw the meaning from their reading. In two sessions seen they were working on explanatory texts in order to tease out the main features of this kind of writing, for example. In another lesson a group of pupils worked on a book together during the activity part of the session. Generally there is not enough emphasis on guided or group reading in order to move pupils forward. (This is where the teacher works closely for part of a session with a small group of pupils).

84 Alongside work in the literacy hour pupils also spend time enjoying stories and reading for information. Throughout the school pupils are developing their own personal preferences and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and books. In the oldest class, pupils have a 'reading wall' pasted into their homework books and this provides good suggestions for future reading. Staff are discussing the authors and books that they feel all pupils should read during their primary school years, but have not yet incorporated these into the whole school planning for reading. Pupils take books home to share with their parents and carers on a regular basis and this term a newly introduced home school diary provides a useful link between the teacher and parent or carer about children's reading. Classrooms have a good collection of books to capture pupils' interest. The library is at the heart of the school, in the central corridor. It has a good collection of non-fiction books.

85 Pupils' writing skills are developed within the literacy hour and to some extent in science and the humanities. Generally pupils do not do so well in writing as they do in reading. Although this is a national trend, the gap is wider at By Brook Valley. There are several

factors that have affected pupils' attainment in writing. One is the emphasis that staff have placed on teaching the mechanics of spelling and sentence structure; sometimes to the detriment of writing for a real purpose. However, there are some examples of interesting work displayed. These include the metaphor poems in Years 5 and 6, writing about 'my home' in Years 4 and 5 and work on the willow pattern plate in Year 2. In many lessons, however, the emphasis is on the skill to be learnt, rather than the purpose for writing. This has not helped pupils to develop as writers. Secondly, handwriting is not well taught and pupils are not developing a legible, joined style as they become older. There are no clear guidelines for the presentation of work and generally teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' everyday work in books is too low.

86 The overall quality of the teaching is sound. Teachers have worked hard to implement the national literacy strategy and the teaching of phonics and grammar is thorough. In one lesson, for example, pupils used small white boards to write the shortened form of words using an apostrophe. This helped the teacher to check quickly on those who had understood the work and those who had difficulties. In the better lessons, teachers are very clear in their explanations and vary their presentation so that pupils are fully involved in the whole class work. Pupils are given clear feedback on how they are doing and in the older pupils' classes, individual targets give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. There is not always sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in the activity part of the session.

87 The co-ordinator has returned to the post this term, after a two-term gap. She is beginning to take up the reins again, but does not have a clear view, at the moment, of standards and provision through the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88 Standards in national tests rose between 1999 and 2000, when pupils' attainment reached average in both Year 2 and Year 6. The improvement was more marked in Year 6. In 2000, pupils at By Brook Valley did as well as their peers in similar schools in Year 6, but not in Year 2. There are no significant variations in the attainment of boys and girls.

89 The inspection found that pupils' attainment is average in Year 2, with few pupils achieving higher standards. Overall, this year group has made satisfactory progress since they started school. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is below average, with less than average set to reach the expected level 4 and few doing better. Given that there are a significant number of pupils in the year group with special educational needs, pupils' progress is sound. Nonetheless, teaching does not always challenge higher ability pupils throughout the school, who could do better. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress

90 In Years 1 and 2, pupils attain the expected levels in number work and have a sound command of shape, space and measurement. The quality of teaching is sound. In Year 1 pupils develop their command of mathematical language in solving problems. They associate gaining and losing numbers with addition and subtraction and respond to the challenge of creating their own problems. In Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the properties of both two- and three-dimensional shapes. In discussion they have a good recall of the names of many shapes, their faces and edges. Most pupils distinguish between cubes and cuboids and know the properties of different polygons. However, the tasks set for pupils in the lesson reinforced rather than extended their learning. This was appropriate for lower attaining pupils who were well supported by a classroom assistant. Higher ability pupils quickly completed an exercise to identify the nets for different shapes. Some experimented with pegboards to create shapes but were not given a specific goal to reach. Teaching is good at extending pupils' knowledge and use of mathematical language but does not provide



opportunities for pupils to find patterns in number and in the shapes they study. Pupils carry out simple calculations with money and some work effectively with four-digit numbers but the work covered this year indicates a lack of challenge for pupils of above average ability.

91 Pupils achieve satisfactory levels as they progress across Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching is sound with some good lessons observed. The standard and range of the work covered indicate that pupils are acquiring appropriate skills in number, shape and data handling. Pupils use and apply their mathematical skills in design and technology, geography and science. However, tasks set in numeracy lessons do not give pupils enough opportunities to explore and investigate problems. While ICT is used well in some lessons to aid learning and is particularly well used for data handling, there was little evidence of widespread use of computers to help pupils in their number skills.

92 Pupils in Year 3 responded enthusiastically to working out the processes required to solve complicated problems. The lesson was well structured to build on previous work in which pupils had identified the meaning of expressions like 'how much'. The teacher challenged higher attainers with probing questions on how they would check their answers. A classroom assistant provided good support for pupils with special educational needs and all pupils progressed well. Teachers require pupils to use correct terminology, which helps them to explain their processes. In Year 4, lower attaining pupils correctly defined numerator and denominator and were able to compare fractions using these terms. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Teachers adapt tasks to meet the individual needs of these pupils and liaise very well with classroom assistants to provide appropriate help.

93 Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are taught in ability sets twice per week and in these lessons, teaching normally challenges and supports pupils effectively. Lower ability pupils are given well structured sessions to consolidate skills and they progress well. In class, they receive a good level of support and work is adapted appropriately to develop their confidence and understanding. However, the expectations of higher attainers in 'set' lessons are not always matched by the work set in class lessons. Higher attaining pupils in their set were introduced to equivalent fractions but were not given the opportunity to extend this in the class lesson. As a result they did not progress as fast as they could. Pupils show they have the capacity for logical thinking but are not always set tasks that extend their skills, particularly in exploring and investigating mathematics.

94 Teachers are familiar with the national numeracy strategy and implement it effectively. They generally identify precise targets in their plans and share these with pupils. In mental arithmetic sessions, teachers make good use of number cards and whiteboards to involve all pupils in the activities. However, they often pitch questions at the average pupils and do not always challenge others as well as they might. Where teaching was good (and very good), searching questioning made pupils think and explain their methods and identify and correct errors. In nearly all lessons, teachers maintained a good pace and timed activities well. Plenary sessions were used effectively to reinforce learning and pupils were asked to evaluate what they had learnt and whether they had met the learning goal set for them. Teachers mark work well but do not place enough emphasis on good presentation. They agree improvement targets with individuals and with the class and use these well to focus pupils on how to improve their work. Teachers organise and use the good range of resources effectively and pupils respond to these with interest.

## **SCIENCE**

95 There was considerable improvement in standards in Year 6 national tests between 1999 and 2000. Standards rose from well below average to well above average, with pupils at By

Brook Valley doing much better than their peers in similar schools. Standards in Year 2 teacher assessments in 2000 were broadly average. There is no difference in attainment between boys and girls. Overall, standards have improved since the implementation of a very effective action plan, a topic planning cycle and a range of investigative assessments for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive.

96 The inspection found that standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6. This apparent drop in Year 6 is related to the high proportion of pupils in the current year with special educational needs. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress through the school, doing particularly well in Years 3, 4 and 5 because of strong teaching.

97 In Years 1 and 2, pupils have been learning about materials this term. The focus has been on how the shape of materials change when squashed, stretched or twisted. In Year 2, pupils also compared materials when cold and when heated. The younger pupils described which of three types of dough had stretched the longest. They discussed texture and predicted what would happen to the salt dough after baking. The lower attaining pupils recorded their results pictorially, while the other pupils listed their predictions and results. The older pupils described their task and predicted the outcomes correctly. They found it more difficult to record their work neatly and write a sentence in conclusion. There was insufficient extension work for those pupils who had completed their observations. In the plenary session, all pupils responded well with their conclusions and some were able to record their results effectively on the computer,

98 Materials were also the focus of work in Years 3 to 6. Pupils explored the changes that take place in materials when they are heated or cooled. In Year 3, for example, pupils learned that an egg changes from a liquid to a solid when heated. They knew that the changes that took place related to the amount of time the egg was heated. The eggs had been boiled for different amounts of time and pupils had to sort the eggs according to their observations and how long they had been boiled. Three key skills learned were predicting, observing and recording and pupils had to complete a well-devised worksheet, set out under these headings. Examples of scientific words they might need in their writing ensured that pupils' work had few spelling mistakes. Pupils were also given an excellent opportunity to access the Internet and find recipes for boiled eggs.

99 Older pupils have made good progress in their understanding of changes in materials because of the very carefully focused investigative work and the clear learning objectives for each lesson, which are shared with pupils. In the lesson seen, they considered the formation of new materials as a result of heating. They discussed results from a previous investigation when oil, butter and chocolate were heated. They understood the concept of some material changes being reversible, although possibly returning to a different shape, as in chocolate. The higher attaining pupils knew that some non-reversible changes resulted in the formation of new materials, for example, when a match was burnt. The teacher made good reference to the work pupils had done on the Water Cycle, when she focused on water and its changes when heated, from solid to liquid and then to gas.

100 The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6 it is good with some very good features, this helps pupils to make good progress. The teaching is good in these classes because teachers have very good subject knowledge, high expectations, plan well-matched work for the differing needs of pupils and promote a scientific approach. Well-structured lessons, a brisk pace and the use of very good questioning to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding promote pupils' learning very effectively. Weaknesses are low expectations of pupils' presentation of work and insufficient mathematical element planned into investigative work, for example, standard measurement for the younger pupils, and the

interpretation of line graphs for the older pupils, to enable them to reach the higher levels.

101 The co-ordinator has reviewed the science curriculum. She has formulated a clear action plan, which includes planning particular topics using the local authority's scheme of work, and which shows appropriate progression through the school. The Star sheet for science investigations is another initiative that helps to assess pupils' attainment effectively by levelled observations. These objectives are shared with pupils to enable both the teacher and the pupils to identify the progress made. Assessments are also made at the end of each topic and these are added to the pupils' profiles to give a complete overview of their progress.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102 The school fosters the development of pupils' artistic skills well and throughout the school there are examples of work of good quality. Standards are average overall, with some pupils doing better than this, especially in Years 3 and 4.

103 There is reasonable coverage of the different strands of drawing, painting, printing, fabric work, three-dimensional work and collage. Pupils' sketch books in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, for example, show attention paid to the use of pencil for shade and tone as well as some observational work. The quality of work in the Year 4 and 5 sketchbooks is particularly good. In several classes, there was evidence of the development of painting skills. In Year 1, for example, there are some lively paintings about 'Little Red Riding Hood' and in Year 3, pupils have used blue, white and black paint to depict winter scenes effectively. Printing and pattern making were a focus for work in Years 3, 4 and 5 during the inspection. In Year 3, pupils made their own pattern using a template and a stencilling technique. They based their individual templates on sketches of leaves and worked carefully and sensibly to produce pleasing results. In Years 4 and 5, pupils printed with designs etched into polystyrene tiles to produce a repeating pattern. Pupils in Year 2 had worked earlier in the term on a paper collage in the style of Matisse to produce a vibrant blue and white panel. There was less evidence of work in Year 5 and 6, where pupils have been concentrating more on design and technology this term.

104 Work in lessons is enhanced by the activity sessions on Tuesday afternoons. This term pupils engaged in art-related tasks can choose from clay or painting. In a session seen, pupils from all ages were working with clay to make patterns on a rolled surface. They used the tools effectively to create designs, with older pupils learning how to roll the clay to the required thickness. The support of a governor with special skills in clay work contributed well to pupils' good achievements. Pupils engaged in painting tasks enjoyed the freedom to choose their own stimulus. The quality of the teaching ranged from good to very good and this ensured that pupils achieved well. A common strength in the teaching was good subject knowledge, with an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of skills. Staff display pupils' work well and often the work becomes a visual focus. In the hall, for example, two collages to illustrate a Christmas carol provide a visual resting point during collective worship.

105 Another good feature of the art work at By Brook Valley is the involvement of local artists. This helps pupils to appreciate the work of professional artists and to have the experience of working alongside them. Last year, for example, some Year 6 pupils completed a millennium banner in the hall under the direction of Fred Wolfe. It involved working on fabric to apply a batik design. The local community is involved well in this work and the Parish Magazine has helped to fund the costs of the 'artists in residence'. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for future developments. These include a project funded by Southern Arts to make banners for the school hall. A planning framework is in place to help teachers prepare work. This does not yet encompass the development of skills in all areas of art. Resources are generally adequate and the school is fortunate in having its own kiln.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

106 Standards in work seen were average. Only one lesson took place and was observed during the inspection so no overall judgement can be made about teaching, although the lesson seen was satisfactory. Judgements on pupils' achievements are based on discussion with pupils, a scrutiny of their work and teachers' planning. Throughout the school, teachers introduce pupils to a well-balanced experience of designing and making articles. This helps them to develop skills in the subject, as well as extend their language and numeracy skills well.

107 By the age of seven, pupils prepare drawings with a clear indication of what they want to achieve. Drawings show the features pupils want to make in designing a playground and identify the materials that they will use. Pupils discuss the tools they are likely to need and know the care that is needed in using tools. Pupils are able to make suggestions of how to combine ingredients for salads and delicious desserts. They know the importance of hygiene in food preparation and how to present food attractively.

108 By the age of eleven, pupils approach design activities with confidence and know the stages of construction and the materials they want to employ. They understand that some strong materials can be difficult to shape and appreciate the problems to be overcome in joining them. Pupils disassemble items to find out how to design and make their own. Pupils in Year 3 looked at picture frames and discussed the effectiveness of different methods of making them stand up. Pupils in Year 4 and 5 have examined packaging and met a precise design brief to create containers for sweets. They are good at evaluating their designs to take account of initial failures in making and suggest improvements that they would make. In Year 6, pupils look at aspects of safety and hygiene in cooking and combine skills in mathematics in designing artefacts. Pupils speak well about their work and develop both oral and written skills through evaluating their achievements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109 Standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work and teachers' planning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, as was the lesson observed.

109 In Years 1 and 2 pupils are developing mapwork skills. They describe the directions taken in simple journeys, for example, such as travelling to school. They have a satisfactory knowledge of how to read plans and simple maps and find locations on a map of the world. Higher attainers understand the time taken to travel from one place to another and have a sound appreciation of distance. They find out about places and understand, for example, the differences between living in Scotland and Wiltshire both in terms of climate and facilities.

110 In Years 3 to 6, pupils tackle more detailed projects and develop an appreciation of environmental problems, which they discuss with insight. In a topic about water, for example, they understood the main features of the water cycle and its effects on landscape and people. They carried out an interesting study of water usage, using ICT and mathematical skills to record and display their findings. They related this study to conditions in other countries where water is scarce and appreciated the impact this has on people's lives.

111 Pupils have undertaken some studies based on their own interests and this helps them to become very involved in the work. In Year 3, for example, they have studied places that they have visited on holiday but, without appropriate maps to help them, they have a very

inaccurate notion of locality. Older pupils, in Years 5 and 6, have also studied places and have a satisfactory knowledge of locations in the United Kingdom and beyond. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe climate in hot and cold regions and, in Year 4/5, observe climate through use of the Internet. A field study trip also helped to make learning relevant and pupils investigated the currents and speed in a local river, giving them first hand experience of carrying out and recording their observations.

112 The curriculum for the subject meets all National Curriculum requirements. However, currently the Year 5 pupils in the two oldest classes do not follow the same programme of study. Although the school makes good use of the local library service, resources such as maps are limited.

## **HISTORY**

113 Standards are broadly average in Years 1 and 2, with pupils building up a bank of stories about famous people from the past. History was not the focus for work in the humanities in the older pupils' classes. Discussions with Year 6 pupils about what they have learnt indicates that their knowledge, skills and understanding are more limited than one would expect for their age and that standards are below average. However the work of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 presents a more positive picture and clearly shows that pupils are developing understanding through a questioning approach.

114 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy finding out about the past. The work on the Great Fire of London has gripped the imaginations of pupils in Year 1, who have a very good understanding of the sequence of events. They appreciated that we know about what happened because of the record of the fire in the diary of Samuel Pepys. Two lessons were seen in this class and in one particularly good one the pupils achieved very well because of the purposeful activities planned. In this lesson, for example, pupils took on the role of characters in the story, writing about what happened from that person's perspective. One child read out her piece to the class and then competently answered questions from her friends. In Year 2, pupils were learning about the life of Elizabeth 1. They used information from a worksheet to find the answers to a range of questions about her appearance and role. Again pupils found this work interesting.

115 Work in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 shows that the areas for study outlined for this age group are being covered. The school has planned the work in the humanities on a two-year cycle, but this does not take into account the split Year 5, who have studied different topics this year. Both the work in Year 3 about the Vikings and the work in Years 4 and 5 about the Anglo-Saxons show a broad coverage of work. There are good links made with literacy and good attention is given to the lives of everyday people. In Year 6, pupils have been studying Ancient Greece. Their recorded work is limited and poorly presented and in discussion it appeared that pupils are unsure about how historians find out about the past. However their interest has been maintained by interesting activities such as dressing up in Greek costumes and making Greek cakes.

116 Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching in these ranged from satisfactory to good. The strengths in the good lesson were related particularly to the good subject knowledge of the teacher and the challenging tasks set for pupils, which they managed well. Generally teachers' planning is satisfactory, with the work lifted by a programme of trips and visits to bring the subject alive. In the last few months, for example, pupils have visited Bradford on Avon to see a Saxon Church, Chippenham Museum to see Saxon artefacts and the Holbourne Museum, in connection with the work on Ancient Greece. Historical work is also planned into the annual residential visits. The temporary co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117 In Key Stage 1, standards in ICT are below expected levels. Teachers do not provide pupils with a balanced range of experiences either within the subject itself or in order to support their learning in other subjects. As a result they do not have sufficient opportunities to acquire and practise ICT skills at an appropriate level. In Years 3 to 6, as a result of sound teaching, standards in work seen are broadly average. The recent acquisition of better quality computers and other equipment such as digital cameras has had a significant effect on improving standards in Years 3 to 6. The school recognises that resources, although just adequate, need to be further improved to ensure more frequent access by pupils throughout the school.

118 In Year 1, small groups of pupils used an appropriate word processing package to type in predictions for a science activity that they had previously written up on paper. In Year 2, the computer is used for a similar purpose when pupils record the results of their science investigation. They wanted to print their work but were unable to access the current page command. The limited amount of direct teacher input meant that pupils made little progress in the acquisition of new skills. In the Tuesday afternoon activity sessions considerable numbers of pupils of all ages choose to take part in the computer activities led by one of the junior teachers. As a result of her good teaching, younger pupils made good progress in this session using a range of colours and shapes to create pictures for a magazine. Pupils co-operated well. Older and more confident pupils were happy to support other members of the group and this makes an important contribution to their personal and social development.

119 In Year 3, the teacher provides pupils with a good range of well-structured and carefully planned activities that enable them to make good and rapid gains to attain expected levels in the basic skills of ICT. They have used the digital camera to take self portrait shots and added text to make evaluative comments showing how they might improve their results next time. They centred the text, changed fonts and used spellchecker. They have downloaded and printed a passage on the Vikings from the Internet by using Favourites. In discussion they are clearly excited by the enormous potential of the school's website, recently designed by two of the more confident teachers. For example, one pupil was thrilled at the prospect of his father, while travelling abroad with his job, being able to keep up to date with what was happening at school. Pupils in Year 4 and 5 are familiar with search engines and confidently use 'Yahoo!' to extend their learning in geography by accessing the Meteorological Office to investigate the weather in Australia. They discuss the amount of cloud cover shown on the infra-red camera images and make predictions before selecting the latest weather icon. Older pupils' learning in geography is also effectively supported through ICT when they use a spreadsheet and graphs to show data collected for a week on the use of water.

120 Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. Teachers lack the specific knowledge of the subject that is necessary to ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop satisfactorily. While the work they plan often supports pupils' learning in other subjects such as English, mathematics and science, it does not cover the full range of activities necessary for the systematic development of ICT skills. Teaching is better in Years 3 to 6. Overall, it is satisfactory although some good features were observed during the inspection. The main strength is teachers' subject knowledge. Where it is weaker there is clear evidence of the positive impact of training on the quality of teaching and learning as the teacher rapidly gains new knowledge and skills. This good subject knowledge is demonstrated effectively by their use of the precise vocabulary of ICT as a model for pupils. In one successful lesson the teacher introduced the activity with a quick review of their earlier work before involving pupils in demonstrating while giving a clear commentary on each step

of the process of accessing a website and retrieving information. As a result all pupils were actively involved in collaborative learning.

121 Apart from the need to improve some teachers' confidence and expertise, the main weaknesses arise from the lack of specific guidance for teachers on exactly what is to be taught in each year in order to ensure that pupils' skills are developed progressively from one year to the next. A further weakness is that there is at present no established co-ordinator for the subject. However, the school is very well aware of these shortcomings and has identified ICT as an area for improvement.

## MUSIC

122 Music is a strength of the school and pupils make good progress. Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. An experienced teacher takes music throughout the school, and all the pupils benefit from her expertise.

123 Younger pupils copy rhythmic notation and identify and sing high and low pitched notes. They sing tunefully and with expression, paying attention to dynamics. They accompany their singing with a variety of percussion instruments and maintain the beat. In the lesson seen, pupils listened well to the taped music, *'Pictures at an Exhibition'*, and remembered the title from the previous week. They suggested ideas of what the music meant to them.

124 Older pupils are developing rhythmic awareness. They sing part songs with increasing accuracy and confidence, and identify rhythmic ostinati in music for listening. Pupils remember the notes of the pentatonic scale and perform together in harmony. In the lesson seen, the pupils worked in three groups, using bongo drum, slit drum and tambourine to maintain the rhythm, while the other pupils clapped the accompaniment. Each group used simple phrases, to represent quavers and crotchets, as a helpful reminder. They maintained the rhythm in their separate groups but found it more difficult when all three groups were combined. With effective practice, they succeeded for the final performance.

125 The older pupils also have the opportunity to learn the violin or piano with a teacher from the schools' music service. There are two recorder groups taken by the music teacher at the school. The more experienced pupils listen well to each other as they perform music written for different parts.

126 The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. The teacher's good subject knowledge, good planning, which includes opportunities for listening, composing and performing, and an appropriate choice of songs, enable pupils of all ages to enjoy music and perform well. They gain knowledge of musical theory, and they learn an excellent subject vocabulary. For example, in a lesson in Year 3, pupils were learning a song, *Journey to Morocco* and were able to understand the term *sustain*. In all singing activities, including assemblies, pupils are encouraged to focus on their posture, their breathing, dynamics and the clarity of their words. This has a very positive effect on their performance.

127 Resources are plentiful because songbooks and instruments were collected from all four village schools. These are well used, particularly in the performance of *'Metal Man'*, where pupils were asked to choose instruments with a metallic sound to enhance the accompaniment.

128 The co-ordinator taught in three of the village schools prior to their closure, and knows many of the pupils. She only works in school for two days a week and lack of time prevents more input, including the formation of a third recorder group for beginners. She has an excellent overview of the music provision and a very good knowledge of progression from

reception to Year 6. She has started to maintain a curriculum file, which shows evidence of pupils' written work, including graphic notation, and taped recordings of previous performances. She is building up a collection of CDs and hopes to catalogue these shortly. She attended two courses recently, one on singing and one on assessment, and is starting to assess pupils' progress. She has organised carol concerts at the local churches, and a concert for the senior citizens in Yatton Keynell.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129 During the inspection, pupils were observed taking part in dance and games. In each of the lessons and activities seen the standards attained by most pupils were at the levels expected for their ages. Standards in swimming are better than this as a result of the regular opportunities for pupils throughout the school to practise their skills in structured teaching sessions. By the time they leave the school almost all pupils reach expected levels and many achieve more advanced awards. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and most make good progress to attain standards that are in line with other pupils.

130 Pupils experience a well-balanced range of physical activities in both key stages, and commendably, although it is not a statutory requirement, the school makes provision for pupils throughout the school to take part in swimming for one term each year. In a Year 1 games lesson, pupils demonstrated sound basic ball skills of throwing, catching, rolling and bouncing. With firm control by the teacher they worked hard to improve and, as a result, almost all of them bounce and catch the ball with increasing control by the end of the lesson. In Year 2, they extend these ball skills and begin to acquire a basic understanding of simple tactics and rules. They begin to develop good sporting behaviour, as the majority understand the need to accept being 'tagged' in order to take part successfully in the game.

131 In Years 2 and 3, most pupils trapped the ball successfully before passing with reasonable accuracy to a partner. Although they found dribbling the ball around a series of obstacles challenging, they persevered well despite the cold weather and were keen to improve their skills. Older pupils are introduced to netball and competently demonstrated a variety of passes including chest, bounce and over-arm. However, many of them did not take the activity seriously and therefore did not practise in order to refine their performance. As a result they did not achieve as well as they might. Pupils from each of the junior classes, taking part in another of the activity sessions, worked well together to produce a cow girl dance with a good range of movement and mime patterns. Older pupils provided patient and helpful support for younger members of the group, making a significant contribution to their personal development.

132 In lessons seen, the quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to good. Overall it is satisfactory. In the best example the teacher was fully involved in a shared and enjoyable experience with the pupils. She had high expectations of a good quality response, monitored and assessed pupils' performance throughout the lesson and gave helpful and encouraging feedback. This made a considerable contribution to the good learning that occurred, as they responded by listening attentively and following instructions carefully to create and perform their own dances. Another successful lesson was carefully structured to include a variety of challenging tasks to interest and motivate pupils and a review at the end of the lesson to encourage them to assess their progress. In a less effective lesson the teacher's strategies for managing behaviour were not imposed firmly enough and, as a result, significant numbers of pupils did not make sufficient progress. They did not concentrate and did not apply themselves willingly to practise in order to improve their skills. Teachers generally do not give sufficient attention to the essential cycle of pupils planning, performing and evaluating their actions.



133 The facilities for physical education are good, resources are adequate and pupils enjoy a good range of experiences. The potential for raising pupils' standards of attainment is good. However, there is insufficient guidance for teachers to ensure that they develop pupils' skills year on year by building on their earlier experiences. Tuesday afternoon activity sessions and a limited range of extra-curricular activities enhance the skills of those who take part, contributing also to the good development of personal and social skills.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134 Pupils make sound progress and their attainment meets the requirements of the local agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6. Three lessons were seen during the inspection, one with the younger pupils, one with pupils from Year 3 and one with the oldest pupils. Judgements are also based on an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator. Very good planning throughout the school has a positive impact on the progress made and standards achieved.

135 The main focus for pupils in Year 1 is the theme, '*Caring for others*'. In a lesson seen, pupils listened attentively to the story of *The Two Sons*'. They discussed how they helped at home and thought about the times when they had forgotten to help. They gave interesting examples of how they helped at school, and were able to illustrate their ideas well.

136 Pupils in Year 3 visited St Margaret's Church as part of their work, '*Belonging to a Community: the Christian Church*'. They learned about four special symbols that were found in a church, the font, pulpit, lectern and altar. As an effective introduction, pupils' homework activities had been to find out whether or not they had been christened. Pupils showed great interest in all aspects of the visit and posed a wide range of questions. They were well motivated and stimulated by the class teacher's effective input and the rector's response. The practical experience of visiting the church enabled them to make realistic sketches for discussion on their return and gave them first hand knowledge of some of the symbols used in the Christian church.

137 The story '*I am David*' was the theme for the lesson in Year 6. Pupils identified with David's experience of beauty and shared their own ideas. They were deeply affected by the photographs of concentration camps, which gave them a clearer understanding of David's background. They discussed the attributes of beauty, good looks or a spiritual mind for example, and were quick to realise that people had different concepts of what constituted beauty. The teacher's perceptive questions enabled them to reflect on this issue and appreciate David's feelings.

138 Teaching was good in the lessons seen. Teachers plan well. They have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Their sensitive use of questioning, the good provision of resources and good time management all contribute to the good standards achieved. The visit to the church provided a positive experience, which brought the subject to life for the pupils.

139 The co-ordinator is new to the role. She has reviewed the curriculum file, which has some examples of pupils' work and a helpful list of resources. The policy and scheme of work are in place and all teachers use the planning guidelines very effectively. Resources are well ordered and easily accessible. There are boxes of artefacts of the faiths studied and a selection of accompanying reference books. A focus for future development is the monitoring of teaching and learning, and adding further examples of work to the subject file.