

INSPECTION REPORT

BISLEY BLUE COAT C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bisley, Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115612

Headteacher: Mrs Vanessa Jenns

Lead inspector: Geoff Burgess

Dates of inspection: 25th to 27th November 2003

Inspection number: 260321

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
Number on roll: 79

School address: School Lane
Bisley
Stroud
Gloucs

Postcode: GL6 7BE

Telephone number: 01452 770251

Fax number: 01452 770251

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Vera Clouston

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a three class Voluntary Controlled Church of England primary school in a mix of impressive 150 year old and less attractive temporary buildings situated next to the church in the middle of the Cotswold village of Bisley. The number on roll has been between 70 and 80 for several years with just over half the children coming from the village and parish and the rest, by choice, from the surrounding villages and the estates to the east of Stroud. Very few pupils have ethnic backgrounds other than British and the percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals is low. The number of pupils on the special needs register is low although currently two have statements of special need. Most children who attend the school start at the pre-school group housed in the old buildings. With low numbers starting each year, overall attainment on entry is much affected by the presence of any lower attaining children. However, in most years attainment on entry is better than in most schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23708	Geoff Burgess	Lead inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, Mathematics, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Physical Education, Special educational needs, Personal, social and health education.
13911	Julie Gallichan	Lay inspector	
24760	Susan Barton	Team inspector	English, Science, Information and communication technology, Geography, History, Religious Education.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school, very popular in the community, and it has many strengths. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good provision in the foundation year ensures that young boys and girls do very well in their first year in school.
- Good provision ensures that pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and most attain high standards as eleven year olds.
- Other subjects collectively have a lower priority which means pupils have more limited learning opportunities and less chance to learn about, and celebrate, the arts and other cultures.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in class music have not kept up with the advances seen in other schools.
- Staff make good provision for developing pupils' social skills, attitudes and moral awareness. Pupils get on very well together, behave well and enjoy taking responsibility.
- The school works very well with parents and the local community in the best interests of the children and staff. Parents and visiting teachers provide a good range of extra learning opportunities, including instrumental music and sports.
- The head's hard work, smiling determination and very good leadership are at the centre of all things.

Since its last inspection the school has made good improvement to the quality of the education it provides. High standards achieved by eleven year olds have been sustained and matched by seven year olds. Provision for young children is now a strength of the school with much improved facilities and teaching.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	A	A	A*
Mathematics	D	A	A	A*
Science	C	C	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Overall achievement is good. Children in their foundation year are achieving very well and most will reach the goals children are expected to reach well before the end of reception. Overall standards in Year 2 are above average with pupils achieving well in Years 1 and 2. Attainment in reading is well above average throughout the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving well in literacy, mathematics and science, and standards in Year 6 are above average. Progress in other subjects is less positive and standards in music and in several aspects of ICT are lower than is now expected. In the table above, A* indicates that these results were in the top 5% of similar schools. **Boys and girls have developed good attitudes, values and behaviour** with the youngest children responding very well. Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils are ever ready to use their initiative and take any responsibility offered. To this end, the school makes good provision for most aspects of pupils' personal development but their cultural awareness is less well promoted.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Bisley Blue Coat School provides a good quality of education. Teaching overall is good with strengths in the Foundation Stage and in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science. It should be noted that during the inspection a temporary teacher was covering for maternity leave in the oldest class out of three. Good use is made of extra teachers and support staff to achieve this and to support pupils who find learning difficult. The curriculum in the reception class is very well suited to children's needs. Provision for English, mathematics and science is good but less time and resources are devoted to humanities and the arts than usual. Problems with the accommodation inhibit provision for ICT and PE but the school does its best to make up for the lack of facilities. Several subjects are enriched by extra opportunities to learn and take part. Good provision is made for promoting pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship development and staff do all they can to ensure pupils are safe and happy despite the problems associated with the accommodation and site. The school takes good care of pupils and has a very good partnership with parents and holds a very special place in the local community with which it shares a mutually supportive relationship.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and efficiently managed with the head providing very good leadership despite her heavy workload as a teaching head. She keeps a close watch on the standards being achieved and the quality of provision, providing data and evidence for staff and governors to use in identifying trends and setting priorities. The small staff play their part by managing several subjects each, and together with support staff and the school secretary, work together very well as a team to ensure the smooth day to day running of the school. Governors are keen to support the school and have well developed procedures to get to know its strengths and weaknesses and contribute to its management. Individually and collectively, governors make a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school. **The governance of the school is good.**

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school, especially the high standards achieved in the basics and the accessibility of all staff. Pupils are very happy with their school, particularly enjoying their relationships with all adults, but would like to have more say in decisions about things which directly affect them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn and practise ICT skills with specific teaching in all aspects of the subject at expected levels.
- Devote more time and resources to subjects other than English, mathematics and science to balance the curriculum and improve pupils' cultural awareness.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is good. Most boys and girls are expected to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage in very good time. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) are above average with reading standards well above average.
- Achievement in these subjects is good throughout the school.
- Children in their first year in school are making very good progress towards each of the early learning goals.
- Achievement in most other subjects is slower, with lower standards overall, but especially in information and communication technology (ICT) and music where they are well below what is expected.

Commentary

1. The school achieved its best ever set of national test results this year with all subjects at least well above average in Years 2 and 6. In addition in English and mathematics, Year 6 pupils achieved results in the top 5% of all schools who had similar results in Year 2. Targets for Year 6 in 2004 are just as high in English and even higher in maths. However, with such low numbers in each year group, care has to be taken in interpreting these figures. Probably a better indicator is the fact that results in Year 6 have been well above average in English and mathematics in four out of the last five years.

2. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed throughout the school, which has a significant impact on achievement across the curriculum. Children in their first year in school are achieving very well in all areas of learning and will cover all the stepping stones to the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. Good achievement in English, mathematics and science continues in the other two classes so that pupils in Years 2 and 6 are currently working at levels above average in writing, mathematics and science and well above in reading. Pupils who find learning difficult are making good progress towards their targets. Standards in most aspects of ICT are as expected in Year 1, but below expectations in Years 2 and 3, and well below in Years 4, 5 and 6. Achievement in ICT is well below that now seen in most schools.

3. Good evidence in pupils' books, on display, in recollections of past work and in limited opportunities to see subjects in action, indicates sound progress being made in history. However, all such evidence available in art, design and technology, geography, religious education and music suggests much less activity, slower progress and lower standards. No judgement on standards or achievement was possible in physical education (PE) since none was observed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Good provision ensures that pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and avoidable absences are few.

- Very good provision for pupils' moral development ensures that the basis for good behaviour is consistently promoted through all aspects of the school.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning help them to make good progress and to make a positive contribution in class.
- Very good relationships between all members of the school community contribute to the happy, caring ethos.
- Arrangements for pupils to study and appreciate the arts and celebrate the cultural diversity of others are not well developed, as was the case in the last report.

Commentary

4. Pupils enjoy coming to this happy school and are involved in a good range of activities. They are friendly and polite to visitors and very confident when expressing their own views and opinions. High expectations of behaviour have been set and pupils respond positively to the incentives used including house points, verbal praise and names in the special achievement book which is shared in the celebration assembly each week. Pupils are active learners, participating well in lessons by working with concentration and sharing ideas. Older pupils are encouraged to be calm at the start of lessons by participating in a series of 'brain gym' exercises. This has positive effects on their attitudes and learning. The responsibilities pupils are given are taken seriously and efficiently carried out. Older pupils act as good role models for younger pupils. They help them on the playground ensuring that they are happy and cared for with friends to play with. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are trained in peer mediation and take extra responsibility on the playground for helping to sort disagreements between pupils.

5. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss and debate moral issues of local and national interest. Pupils contribute to the school rules and regularly discuss class rules which they share with others in assembly. They initiate and organise support for charities by raising money and giving gifts for the shoebox appeal. Provision for social development has been heightened since the last report with increased opportunities for pupils to show initiative within class and around the school and in the fulfilment of open-ended learning tasks at home and school. Until recently good links had been forged with schools in Norway, Italy and Lithuania, and the school hopes to be able to establish new relationships in the near future.

6. Pupils learn to appreciate their local culture through history and such events as the well dressing and visits to museums. However, the present arrangements for teaching subjects such as art, music and drama allow insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience the arts of this and other countries and other ages. Pupils are provided with few opportunities to appreciate or consider a wide range of cultures or other traditions with little evidence to show how they are taught in any depth about the many different cultures and faiths which exist across our own multicultural society. Arrangements for developing pupils' awareness of spiritual and reflective attitudes are barely satisfactory. Children acquire some knowledge and insight into Christian values and beliefs in religious education but little evidence was seen of other subject areas contributing to the spiritual development of pupils.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.0
National data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.9
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

7. Overall attendance figures are above average thanks to the efforts of parents and the school. The apparently higher levels of unauthorised absence are mainly due to the school's very strict interpretation of the criteria, and actually only involve small numbers of pupils.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
63	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons, some very good teaching in each class, notably in the Foundation Stage, and mainly good teaching in the rest.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching team in Class 1 make very good provision for pupils in their first year and Year 1.
- Learning support workers (LSWs) make a good contribution to pupils' learning in the other classes.
- 'Extra' teachers make it possible for lessons to be focused on narrower bands of attainment in literacy and numeracy in Years 2, 3 and 4, and in science in Years 2 to 6, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning in these subjects.
- Subject expertise and expectations are not sufficient in ICT and music for pupils to make adequate progress, and teaching in other subjects lacks the focus given to the core subjects.
- Very good use is made of assessment procedures in English and mathematics to focus the use of resources and teaching priorities, and to set and monitor individual and school targets.
- Pupils make a good contribution to their own learning through their good behaviour and work habits and ability to work well together or on their own when needed.

Commentary

8. It is significant to note that, at the time of the inspection, a temporary teacher was taking the oldest of the three classes in the school, covering a maternity leave.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	12	4	0	0	0

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

9. At the time of the last inspection teaching was described as good although only satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Teaching is now good overall with the Foundation Stage very good. This represents a good improvement. Over the past three years, a great deal of effort has gone into developing provision in the Foundation Stage to very good effect. High quality planning and assessment and the development of a very good learning environment have matched improvements to facilities, the adoption of the national scheme of work, and the much enhanced role of the learning support worker. Focused teaching has been matched by the development of structured and purposeful activities for children to try out and extend their own learning. It is to the great credit of the staff that the quality of teaching for Year 1 pupils in the same class is just as good. Well matched

and challenging activities, and support and encouragement provided at the right level for pupils to learn helps them to achieve very well.

10. The quality of teaching in the other two classes is a much more mixed picture. English, mathematics and science lessons are generally good and sometimes very good, but the lessons observed and the standards achieved in most other subjects suggest that teaching is at best satisfactory. With standards in the core subjects a major priority with the head and governors, a key factor in ensuring the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science has been the investment in extra teachers to reduce the spread of attainment which teachers have to plan for as noted above. The smaller numbers involved and the good use of LSWs helps to ensure that the quality of learning in these sessions for all pupils, including those with special needs, is good.

The curriculum

The school provides an overall satisfactory taught curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very young children are provided with a full range of rich and appropriate learning opportunities in their foundation year.
- A good deal of time and resources have been allocated to English, mathematics and science and they have a high priority in the school.
- The lower priority given to other subjects including art, design and technology, geography, music and religious education means the curriculum for older pupils is not balanced.
- A good range of extracurricular clubs include opportunities to take part in sports and music, and visits promote understanding of pupils' local area and heritage in particular.
- The accommodation poses problems for the teaching of PE and ICT but the school does its best to overcome the difficulties this causes.

Commentary

11. The curriculum provided for boys and girls in reception and Year 1 is very good. With work in the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage integrated into work across the full National Curriculum for Year 1, children are provided with a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities very well suited to their needs.

12. Work in the core subjects is heavily emphasised in the older classes with most of each morning devoted to activities in English and mathematics. Pupils who find learning difficult, some with very special needs, are well supported and catered for in these sessions which makes it possible for them to join in and achieve some success. Work in science takes up the whole of one afternoon, PE another, and whole school assemblies take up the last half hour of the other three afternoons. This means that art, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music and religious education have to be fitted into the three roughly 90 minute sessions left. The quality of work observed and older pupils' knowledge and understanding of history indicate that this is well covered but the lack of this evidence in the other subjects shows that pupils do not spend enough good quality time involved in work in them. This negatively affects standards in these subjects, the enthusiasm pupils have for them and the contribution they make to their cultural development.

13. Pupils are given the opportunity to extend their learning through joining a variety of clubs, some of which are available to children from Year 2 onwards. At various times of the year these include recorders, art, science, French, sports clubs and country dancing. Further opportunities are created by the school's active participation in projects and events like the Primary Challenge and the area country dancing day. Full advantage is taken of the beautiful village of Bisley as a resource for learning: for example pupils have carried out traffic surveys, visited the post office and drawn and learnt about the history of village buildings.

14. The school continues to work hard to ensure the restrictions of the accommodation do not inhibit pupils' learning. Most PE takes place at a local leisure centre to enable the school to meet requirements. However, this is not ideal as pupils only experience PE once a week and the equipment is not really suited to young children. Improvements to the accommodation continue and a pleasant outdoor play and work area for the Foundation Stage has been created.

Care, guidance and support

Provision in this area is good. The school provides as safe and secure a learning environment as is possible in which pupils can learn and develop.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Routines related to pupils' care and welfare are effective and well organised.
- Pupils know that they can go to any member of staff for help or support.
- The school monitors how well pupils are doing in the core subjects very effectively and keeps parents regularly informed of their children's progress in them.
- Pupils' personal development is monitored informally but all staff know pupils well and their personal needs are well met.

Commentary

15. Good attention is given to ensuring pupils' health and safety whilst at school. Regular checks are made of the school premises to identify potential hazards, and fire drills are carried out each term. Staff and governors are very aware of potential and actual difficulties associated with the site. All staff have undertaken first aid training and are aware of any pupils' specific medical needs, such as asthma. Child protection procedures meet requirements and the designated teacher responsible has received appropriate training to support her role.

16. The presence of the village playgroup on the school site means children have many opportunities to become familiar with school routines as they prepare to join Class 1. Induction procedures are good. Parents recognise that the school encourages their children to become mature and independent as they move through the school, which means pupils are well prepared and confident to move to their next stage of learning.

17. In this small school staff know pupils well and although much of the care is informal, it is nonetheless effective. Good procedures to monitor progress in English, mathematics and science help the school to track pupils' progress in these areas carefully. Pupils are given targets each term which they work to and they are encouraged to take responsibility for monitoring their own progress. This is notably the case for pupils who need extra help in these areas. Progress in other subjects is not well monitored and pupils are generally unaware of how good they are at, for instance, art, or what they need to do to improve. Personal development is monitored through stickers, house points and names written in the special achievement book and shared in assembly.

18. During interviews pupils expressed many very positive views about their school, making their views known clearly and providing good reasons for anything they thought was less successful. In discussion older pupils say that they appreciate being asked to help sort out problems but would like to be more involved in initiating and making decisions about developing aspects of the school which directly affect them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a very good partnership with parents and the local community. The links made with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' support and their involvement in the life of the school make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school is an integral part of village life.
- Parents are provided with very good quality information.
- They have very positive views about the work of the school.

Commentary

19. Many parents offer their help and support to the school in a variety of ways. A good number of parents regularly help in classrooms, particularly in Class 1. Together with governors, parents are involved in organising and running extracurricular clubs, and others take responsibility for keeping the school's attractive website up to date.

20. The particularly strong and active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is well supported by parents and the community alike. Many school events are in fact whole community events. For example, the annual bonfire celebration for the whole village is organised by the PTA. The whole village gathers at the school to prepare for, and then join in, the ceremony of 'well dressing' on Ascension Day. The older generation of villagers work with the pupils to prepare the garlands passing on their expertise and experience. Businesses in the village such as the two pubs and the post office give their support by raising funds for the school.

21. Parents are provided with very good information about school procedures, events and activities. The prospectus is clearly written and attractively presented. Regular newsletters are provided with advance notice of important dates and news of the school's activities. Parents are satisfied with the quality of the information they receive. Formal consultations are offered each term and together with the annual reports, parents feel well informed about their child's progress. However, although reports contain plenty of information about what a child can do and progress made during the year it is not made clear how well a child is achieving. Curriculum information provided helps parents to be involved in their child's learning at home. Clear homework expectations mean that most parents support homework. Reading logs are used to aid the home/school partnership as pupils learn to enjoy books and read. A governor has recently canvassed the views of parents on the topic of homework.

22. Parents' satisfaction with the work of the school is clearly illustrated by their positive response to the Ofsted questionnaire and at the parents' meeting, and their willingness to volunteer their time and efforts to support school events and activities. The work of the school is enhanced by the links it makes with other schools. Through the small schools cluster pupils have the opportunity to work with others of a similar age, and teachers can draw on colleagues' experience and expertise at professional meetings. Good use has been made of the school website to link with schools in Europe. Appropriate links with local secondary schools ensure pupils make a smooth transition to the next stage of their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Good leadership and management are helping the school to maintain high standards and its special place in the community. Very good leadership is provided by the head, good management by the staff team and the governing body makes a good contribution to each.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head manages her many roles well and provides very good leadership for the school community.
- English, mathematics, science and the Foundation Stage are very well led and effectively managed with very good use made of information from monitoring to inform planning.
- Many other subjects have not had the same level of attention and so, by default, have not had the necessary priority in planning for improvement.
- Relationships and communications within the school, and with governors, the local community and parents are very good.

Commentary

23. Very good leadership by the head over several years has been a key factor in the present popularity of the school in the community, the good quality of education it provides and the standards it achieves. Central to this is the way in which everyone who works in the school community is part of a team committed to all that is best for its children. Relationships and communication are very good and it is obvious that everyone's contribution is valued. The head delegates real responsibility, not just tasks, and teachers are encouraged to develop their management roles which they have done to good effect in the Foundation Stage and the core subjects by leading improvements in their areas of responsibility. Despite the very good results achieved in testing, the school is still looking for further gains and nobody is resting on their laurels. However, in the process several other subjects have not been given the same sort of attention and limited development and provision in these has, over time, led to lower standards.

24. The head was complimented for 'very effectively monitoring and evaluating the work of all staff' and for 'thorough and rigorous strategies for monitoring academic standards' at the time of the last inspection. These have been built on and refined in the core subjects with ever increasing use being made of information provided to monitor provision, check on progress, identify trends in standards and create the agenda for improvement planning. In addition, in such a small school, a good deal of informal but very perceptive monitoring goes on all the time in and out of classrooms with instant feedback in the staffroom. However, provision and standards in other subjects would greatly benefit from some of the same care and attention in order that they could take their rightful place in improvement planning.

25. Governors have always been very supportive and committed but, prompted and supported by the head, they have recently become more involved in actively monitoring the work of the school and using this information, along with that provided by the head, to agree strategic and management plans. The fully constituted committee structure now includes a 'Standards Committee' and arrangements for reporting back, reviewing policies and decisions and minuting meetings are comprehensive. Governors are quick to point out how welcome they feel in the school and the very valuable contribution made by the school secretary whom they describe as a 'mine of information' for the whole school community. The governing body's own contribution to the leadership and management of the school is good. The governance of the school is good.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	216215
Total expenditure	222063
Expenditure per pupil	2961

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	29869
Balance carried forward to the next	24021

26. Budgeting and other financial arrangements are well developed and the head and governors are prudent in seeking out quality and value for money. Major 'spends' are fully costed and agreed within the school community but class and staff budgets allow for some spending decisions to be made quickly to best meet the needs of the children. With the possibility of a major modification of the accommodation being talked about, the school is sensibly holding back on some capital and revenue spending to build up a reserve.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality of education in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. Boys and girls are achieving very well in all areas of learning and, this year, most should achieve the learning goals in each expected area before the end of reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys and girls are provided with a rich range of well planned, relevant activities across all areas of learning.
- Teaching is always good and often very good in each area of learning with the learning support worker making a very good contribution.
- The Foundation Stage is well accommodated, resourced and organised both inside and out.
- Good arrangements for introducing children to the school make starting school a positive experience for each new intake.
- Personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted.

Commentary

27. The ten boys and girls in the Foundation Stage who started school in September, initially part time, share their class with Year 1 pupils who were in the same class the previous year. Aspects of provision for the under fives were a key issue at the time of the last inspection. With the arrival of a new early years teacher, a lot of time, effort and resources have been put into improving provision for young children, since then to good effect. Comprehensive school records using national criteria indicate that this has had a positive impact on standards achieved by children at the end of their reception year. The well resourced indoor and recently improved outdoor facilities are now a feature of the school and, with the adoption of national planning arrangements for all areas of learning, boys and girls in their first year are very well provided for.

28. The attainment of the current intake is broadly average but, with low numbers in each year group, this is not always the case with some intakes, such as Year 1, much better. Staff say the variation in social skills is particularly noticeable. Very good arrangements for settling children into school when they first start are greatly enhanced by the fact that most attend the pre-school group that shares the 'old' building with the school. Good teaching ensures that all children achieve well and the appropriately planned curriculum provides a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, well matched to their needs. The teacher and the learning support worker, along with several well deployed volunteers, work very well as a cohesive team, promoting and carefully monitoring all children's progress.

29. Arrangements for promoting children's **personal, social and emotional development** are very good and children are all making the progress necessary to achieve what is expected well before they move into Year 1. This is a great improvement since this area was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Staff and older classmates set very good role models for behaviour, relationships and working together, and classroom routines such as snacktime are very well used as a means of helping children to gain confidence and learn how to live and work in a community.

30. Speaking and listening skills as part of **communication, language and literacy** are already well developed with some children using complex language and vocabulary more usual in Year 1. Others are less mature but are still confident and 'chatty'. Some are in the early stages of acquiring literacy skills but most can write their own names and recognise, sound out and copy some letters. Boys and girls gain a great deal from working alongside their Year 1 classmates who provide very good role models of writing and then reading their own work. This was well demonstrated when one reception pupil was able to write down sounds with Year 1. In a very well planned activity, the teacher worked with young children helping them to 'write' their own story, scribing for some and

encouraging others to have a go at their own writing. Reading is encouraged by the easy availability of attractive books and the freedom for children to go and use them. Shared reading and the use of writing around the classroom encourage children to notice and learn words that interest them or they can use. Children's carefully annotated 'writing' books show a very systematic approach to assessing and developing literacy skills with very good progress being made.

31. **Mathematical development** is very well promoted through specific teaching and through exposure to activities that encourage mathematical thinking. Most children are already well on their way across the stepping stones to the early learning goals, counting to 10 and more, recognising and writing all the numerals and beginning to add by counting. In the lesson observed, children 'measured' the teddy bears brought from home by cutting strips of paper and comparing, very well supported by the learning support worker. Meanwhile a 'play' activity supported by a well briefed parent involved using a balance to compare the weights of lumps of modelling materials.

32. Provision for children's **creative development** and for providing children with an appropriate **knowledge and understanding** of the world was described as unsatisfactory when the school was last inspected. Both these areas are now well developed and boys and girls have plenty of opportunity to be active learners. As part of the teddy bear activity noted above, one group showed how well they could draw their bears to scale while in another group, others experimented with colour in the painting area. In another session, the presence of extra adults made it possible for young children to make very presentable painted self-portraits, responding to suggestions for improving their work. Role play is an important element of daily work with groups role playing the teddy bears picnic that Year 1 are writing about, and the learning support worker skilfully drawing out language and actions as Goldilocks made porridge in the play house. Children have daily access to taped stories and computers and regular help to access programs and use the mouse and keyboard. Much work in knowledge and understanding runs parallel with Year 1 work with children involved in a traffic survey outside school, tallying cars, buses and lorries, and a visit to the church to watch a baptism.

33. The development of a secure outside area next to the Foundation Stage/Year 1 classroom has considerably enhanced the opportunities to promote children's **physical development**. Children have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and scissors, and frequently work with construction materials and other tabletop equipment. More formal PE lessons are more difficult because of the accommodation although one outdoor session took place during the inspection. However, the class will be going to the leisure centre to use the facilities next term.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in literacy work and standards observed were above average.
- Reading has a high priority and is of a high standard throughout the school.
- Time spent on writing across the curriculum and on extended writing is more limited.
- Teaching is good overall much helped by the splitting of the Years 2, 3 and 4 class and the good contribution of learning support workers.
- Pupils speak confidently within class and to a wider audience displaying a good knowledge of the English language.

Commentary

34. Overall, standards for pupils in Years 2 and 6 are above average. Individual literacy targets are set for pupils in Years 5 and 6 each term and pupils are encouraged to work towards them and are involved in self assessment. Tracking procedures indicate good progress year on year. Good listening skills throughout the school enhance teaching and learning. Pupils are eager to contribute to the lesson, sharing ideas, answering questions and reading aloud. They explain themselves well using a good vocabulary and speak clearly. A Year 6 oral presentation displayed pupils' considerable confidence and good research skills and the ability to sustain others interest. Opportunities for role play and drama further add to pupils' speaking and listening development.

35. The profile of reading throughout the school is high. The guided reading focus and time spent on this area of learning has proved to be very successful but it is to the detriment of writing in which standards are not as high. The new reading resources have added to pupils' cultural development. Pupils take home a range of books to read including their school reader and books chosen from the class library. Younger pupils are heard to read regularly in school with the aid of a very able learning support worker. Careful records are maintained and pupils work conscientiously in reading sessions.

36. Pupils write independently from an early age, using sentences, forming letters correctly and making good use of wordbooks. They clearly understand what a sentence is and become engaged in story writing, sounding out regular words. Older pupils' presentation of work is satisfactory with much of their work in English books being better than in other subjects. Handwriting is not sufficiently consistently joined and legible, although most pupils in Year 6 are well able to write clearly using a pen. This is a priority on the school's current improvement plan.

37. Teaching is good overall with planning for the mixed age classes being well managed. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented throughout the school and standards are monitored regularly by focus areas being assessed, results analysed and tracked. These are good improvements since the last report. There are many new reading books for use in literacy which along with the library project boxes, non fiction topic boxes and the visiting school library van make reading resources good. Pupils have access to the Internet for research. However, the lack of an accessible library prevents pupils from learning good library habits and skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

38. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory, notably in speaking and listening and reading. However, written work in other subjects is often brief, does not make use of what is being learnt currently in literacy lessons and lacks the quality of presentation seen in literacy.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in numeracy and are working at above average levels in each class.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good in Year 1 and in the two half class groups formed from Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Good attitudes to mathematics ensure that pupils are fully engaged during lessons.

Commentary

39. In the last inspection report, provision for mathematics was good with average outcomes in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. It is significant that Year 2 achieved well above average results when they reached Year 6 in 2002.

40. Provision in mathematics remains good with pupils achieving well and attaining above average standards in each class. Very good provision and an able year group means that all pupils in Year 1 are achieving above average standards in mathematics for their ages. This was well demonstrated

in the summing up after a lesson on measuring using non standard units when several pupils knew not only that more or less cubes were involved but how many, and related this to shorter and longer.

41. A major reason for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 achieving well in Class 2 is the arrangement involving an extra teacher taking half the class for literacy which means the maths teacher is able to work with half the class at a time. Smaller numbers and a much reduced span of attainment means that teaching can be much more focused. This is shown in the oral maths sessions where the teacher is able to focus questions on individuals, and monitor and take into account all pupils' responses. In this and in the main activity, the emphasis is on mathematical understanding and developing pupils' own strategies for working. The smaller numbers make it possible for the teacher to mark each child's work positively with comments and encouragement, and work with individuals to help with any problems in understanding.

42. The analysis of Year 5 and 6 pupils' work in books shows that pupils are working at above average levels although this is sometimes hidden by poorer quality presentation, and work is less well marked. All pupils have relevant targets. Work for the two year groups and the range of abilities is well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching is satisfactory but there is less focus on the mathematics and strategies and more on completing tasks set. In a problem solving session overseen by a learning support worker, some bright Year 6 pupils showed that they have a very good understanding of number.

43. Although the numeracy co-ordinator was not in school during the inspection, much work has gone into developing the subject and building up standards and provision to very good effect which shows good management. Very good use is made of information from assessments to modify planning and focus provision, and very good use has been made of numeracy strategy materials and strategies to promote and manage the subject. Resources are in good supply.

Mathematics across the curriculum

44. Pupils in Year 1 have many opportunities to use their mathematics such as in measuring body parts and in tallying and graphing vehicles which pass the school. However, other than in science and ICT, older pupils have many fewer opportunities thanks partly to the lack of time spent on other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are above average in Year 6.
- Pupils participate in practical activities with interest and predict outcomes well.
- The rolling programme based on the national scheme of work provides teachers with clear learning objectives, activities and outcomes.
- Science is well resourced from within the school and links with other institutes.
- Where there is an overemphasis on the scientific theory being learnt before the practical work, pupils struggle to understand concepts involved.

Commentary

45. The national scheme of work has been well adapted to the needs of the school with a strong focus on investigations, enquiry and the use of scientific method and language. This was observed in lessons and in pupils' books. The recording of work has high priority with the use of a common format, increasing in complexity, throughout the school which means that pupils are able to describe the sequence of actions which an investigation usually entails including prediction and evaluation. Pupils know about the concept of fairness in testing and they can say how to achieve this. Pupils accurately use scientific language when predicting and drawing conclusions from their results. The

good teaching throughout the school along with the specialist teacher for the oldest pupils and good learning support workers with the younger pupils ensures that all pupils make good progress and achieve well.

46. The co-ordinator supports staff well and offers guidance when required. Formal assessment results are analysed and the new national guidance for assessment has been recently started this term. The Primary Challenge Club held at lunchtimes each week is well attended by most of the pupils in Year 6 who work with enthusiasm and extend their scientific knowledge and expertise. Practical resources are good. Additional specialist resources are borrowed from a local secondary school as well as visitors being invited to enhance pupils' learning. The youngest and oldest pupils benefited from the visit of a barn owl. The oldest pupils extended their learning about how animals and plants have adapted to their living conditions through first hand observations and questioning of an expert.

47. Good use is made of links with other curriculum areas to support or communicate work in science. Younger pupils accurately applied their mathematical knowledge in using a standard centimetre ruler to compare the strength of different magnets. A Newton metre was read accurately by pupils in Years 4 and 5 when measuring friction. Graphs were drawn to show the comparison between the friction of different surfaces. ICT is used to record graphs of results from dissolving sugar. Links with personal, social and health education are made through such learning as the youngest pupils studying electricity in the home, and the oldest looking at microbes in food.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Other than in Year 1, pupils are working at levels below those seen in most other schools and are not catching up.
- Pupils enjoy using the computers and work very well together when doing so.
- The number of computers per pupil is higher than in many other schools.
- Pupils do not spend enough time specifically learning about ICT and not enough is expected of them when they are working with computers and other equipment.

Commentary

48. The school acknowledges that standards are too low in ICT and its current school improvement plan gives as a target pupils achieving expected levels 'within three years'. Lack of space and the geography of the school means that the school does not have a computer suite but, in fact, it has rather more equipment available per pupil than many other schools. In addition, the school has bought in the services of an ICT technician to support the school with its hardware and software needs. The main problem at the moment is that, other than in Year 1, pupils do not spend enough time on specifically learning the understanding and techniques of ICT, having to share the limited time available on three afternoons a week.

49. Some work in ICT was observed during the inspection with pupils using commercial programs to develop their reading and numeracy skills, others using a graphics program to create a repetitive design and loading and modifying a digital image. On several occasions, the computer was used as an extension activity when pupils had finished other work, as in maths where some used a practice program and others made patterns with two lines of symmetry. However, a great many pupils did not use ICT, and in discussion, pupils noted that it was not unusual for them not to use the computers for some time.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

50. The lack of basic skills and knowledge noted above limits the use that pupils are able to make of ICT in other subjects. Evidence was seen of use being made of the Internet to access information on various topics, clipart being used in history, and word processing techniques being used to present pupils' writing in imaginative ways. However, this is all low key and much less than seen in other schools. In discussion, pupils did not spontaneously suggest ICT as a means of working or finding information.

HUMANITIES

51. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only one history lesson and no geography lessons seen. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work and discussions with pupils that standards are broadly as expected in history, but not as good in geography. Both history and geography include studying the local area. Participation in the village heritage and celebrations of 'well dressing' enhances pupils' enthusiasm and knowledge for local history. When visits take place they are valued and are a positive aid to pupils' historical, geographic and cultural learning.

52. In discussion about **history**, pupils show enthusiasm for the activities in which they participate. Younger pupils use their historical skills to research into life in the times of the Ancient Greeks. They show interest and are able to refer to stories heard of Greek gods and their temples as well as beginning to compare the original Olympic Games with the modern day games. Year 5 visited Swindon Museum as part of their study about the Second World War. The visit and related activities enabled pupils to demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding of some of the events and people involved. Year 6 pupils talked knowledgeably about Bisley in the Victorian era. They enjoyed the historical enquiry into their village to find out about different aspects of the times such as the number of people who lived in the various houses.

53. Analysis of **geography** work and discussion with pupils indicate that the coverage of the programmes of study is inadequate with insufficient time being provided. Younger pupils are familiar with their local environment and have observed features within Bisley. Limited map work has been covered but skills are not sufficiently well developed through the school to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress. Older pupils begin to look at and study physical features of land and its formation. They study how a valley is made related to the rain cycle and have a satisfactory understanding. In discussion with the oldest pupils it is evident that work in geography does not make sufficient impact on their knowledge and learning. Pupils are unaware of any study of a contrasting country.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

Provision in RE is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links to personal and social development are strong providing good moral teaching.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith is limited.
- Knowledge of other world faiths is sketchy and confused.
- RE has too low a profile throughout the school.

Commentary

54. Only one satisfactory lesson in Years 5 and 6 about the Ten Commandments was observed during the inspection while pupils in Year 1 were observed making a class advent calendar. This was pitched at the right level and young pupils showed they understood about symbols and festivals. Otherwise, in the analysis of pupils' work and in discussion with pupils it was very evident that RE

does not have the same high priority as some other subjects and much of pupils' learning is sketchy and confused. This is especially the case with their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and similarities and differences with Christianity. Many pupils would appear to hold little enthusiasm or interest for this area of learning and therefore it makes little impact on their spiritual development. However, the youngest pupils enjoyed a visit to the church to baptise a doll and have some idea of the sequence undertaken in this Christian symbolic event.

55. The co-ordinator has developed a progressive scheme of work from the locally agreed syllabus with formal assessment recording to be completed at the end of linked units of work but it is hard to see the impact this is having on the quality of provision. Festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter are celebrated each year and pupils can explain in considerable detail the secular meaning to these festivals but are much less knowledgeable about the faith background.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

56. In this small school, few lessons were observed in art, design and technology, music and physical education. However, from the evidence gathered it can be said that provision for the arts does not have a high priority in the school and that the limited amount and quality of work in art, design and technology and music observed indicated this.

Commentary

57. During the inspection, the relatively little **art** work on display in classrooms and around the school was limited in scope and not of the quality expected of the ages of pupils who produced it. There was little evidence of developing techniques or the use of a widening range of media. In the two lessons observed pupils tried very hard, showed good powers of concentration and good ability to work together. Older pupils were enthusiastic and worked well together but lacked the experience or technique to work at the levels expected for constructing a hanging, and younger pupils work lacked the detail and quality usually seen in representing trees and leaves. In conversation older pupils knew very little about the work of established artists and could not remember doing any work in the style of, say, Van Gogh, Monet or LS Lowry.

58. The school's planning arrangements meant that **design and technology** (DT) did not feature on the timetable during the inspection. This was the case during the last inspection. Pupils' work and oral descriptions of what pupils have done suggest that the subject has too low a profile in the school with less time devoted to it than usual. Examples of finished 'Greek' plates and photographs of models of musical instruments were observed, but in neither case could the pupils who made them describe the design and evaluation process that should have accompanied them.

59. Apart from the pupils involved in violin or clarinet tuition and recorder clubs, pupils have few opportunities to learn about, or perform, **music** at expected levels. Resources for the subject such as tuned percussion are in short supply and not easily accessible. Older pupils said they had not used them 'for ages'. During the inspection one class did not have music timetabled and the other had a short singing session that was more about using technology than learning about or performing music. There was no evidence of a progressive programme of music being covered. The quality of singing in assemblies observed was very ordinary and pupils comment that they 'never learn new songs' to sing during worship.

60. Provision for **physical education** is severely inhibited especially in the winter months by the lack of a hall adequate for vigorous activity, or a grassed area for games and athletic activities. The school does its best to counter this by transporting pupils to use the facilities of the leisure centre in Stroud but this is costly and time consuming. Older pupils are critical of the facilities at the leisure centre and the short time they actually spend on the activities provided. Years 1 to 4 have swimming lessons in the spring term. The school makes use of the village 'Pleasure Ground' for games and athletics activities in the summer months. A very welcome current extra is the well attended football sessions organised by Cheltenham Town Football Club at the 'Pleasure Ground'. Planning shows

that pupils cover all the necessary aspects of physical education but since none of this took place during the inspection, no judgement about standards is possible.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

61. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work and good progress has been made since the last report to help pupils develop respect for each other and themselves. The new agreed policy and framework which includes the use of a commercial programme for personal, social and health education features work on health, drugs, sex education, and personal safety. It is supplemented across the curriculum and in circle time to provide the opportunity to focus specifically on aspects of pupils' personal development appropriate to their current needs. This helps pupils to develop a safe and healthy lifestyle, gain confidence and share feelings and concerns with others. Pupils are encouraged to talk and listen to others as well as suggest ways to help things to be better. It is well supported by assembly topics. No formal monitoring or tracking of pupils' development takes place.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

