

INSPECTION REPORT

HARTFORD COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110696

Headteacher: Ms M. Edge

Lead inspector: Mrs A.J. Pangbourne

Dates of inspection: 7th - 9th June 2004

Inspection number: 256348

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	228
School address:	Mayfield Crescent Huntingdon Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE29 1UL
Telephone number:	01480 454695
Fax number:	01480 375029
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ron Carter

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hartford Community Junior School draws most of its pupils from the local area. Their socio-economic circumstances are mainly below average. Pupils' attainments on entry are below average. At the time of the inspection, there were 228 pupils on roll. There were 36 pupils from ethnic minority heritages and ten speak English as an additional language, although none are at an early stage of language acquisition. There were 44 pupils with special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to autism. Twelve pupils had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is an above average proportion. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is average. The school has received a NAACE (National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education) mark for information and communication technology (ICT) in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23818	Alison Pangbourne	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology
13481	Douglas Binfield	Lay inspector	
15477	John Messer	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education History Geography
18360	Cecelia Davies	Team inspector	English Religious education Music

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's **effectiveness** is **good** and it gives good value for money. Most pupils enter the school with below average standards, but they rise to average overall by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement for all pupils. The quality of teaching is good. The school is well led and the headteacher has a clear view for further improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in speaking and listening, science, ICT, religious education (RE) and art and design by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils achieve very well in science because the quality of teaching is very good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and, as a result, they show very good attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- The curriculum is very well enriched by a wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently well developed to enable teachers to easily identify specific areas for improvement or to pinpoint pupils' individual needs.
- In some lessons, there is insufficient time for pupils to be actively involved in their own learning because teachers spend too long introducing what they have to do.
- There are good procedures to ensure that pupils are well cared for and the way in which their views are sought and acted upon is very good.

Overall, the school's improvement since the previous inspection is good. It is more effective now. Standards have risen in speaking and listening, science, ICT, RE and art and design and there has been an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. There is much more good and very good teaching and all the key issues have been successfully addressed. Standards and the curriculum for ICT, which were criticised in the previous inspection, are now a strength.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Achievement is **good** overall. It is very good in science. Standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. They are above average in speaking and

listening, science, ICT, RE and art and design. Standards in science are not as high this year because the current Year 6 includes a higher proportion of pupils with SEN than last year. Very good provision for these pupils, particularly in English and mathematics, means that average standards have been maintained in these subjects this year. Higher attaining pupils and those who speak English as an additional language also achieve well. Last year, pupils did well in comparison with similar schools in English and science and mathematics has been a focus for improvement this year.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good** overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **very good** overall. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. They are very good in science. In the best lessons, very high expectations, interesting teaching methods and the very good use of teaching assistants encourages pupils to work hard and to work very well in pairs and small groups. They learn well. Teachers manage their pupils very well. In some lessons, teachers talk too much and this means that there is insufficient time for pupils to complete their tasks. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place and tasks are generally appropriately matched to pupils' needs but the data collected is not used sufficiently rigorously to identify areas for improvement or to set individual targets for pupils. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in *sets* according to their level of attainment in some subjects to ensure that tasks are well matched to their needs.

The curriculum is good and literacy and ICT skills are developed well in other subjects. A wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum very well. The school provides well for pupils' pastoral needs and links with parents and the community are good. There are very good links with the adjacent infant school and with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good.

The headteacher provides good leadership and has successfully introduced several new initiatives to raise standards since her appointment nearly two years ago. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff, who provide good leadership. The co-ordinator for SEN provides very good leadership. The way in which they are enabled to monitor standards and teaching contributes to the good quality of teaching seen during the inspection. Subject leaders have a thorough understanding of strengths and areas for development in their subjects. Many of the governors have been appointed recently and they fulfil their role satisfactorily. The budget is well managed to allow for improvements to the building and resources. Statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the work of the school. They particularly like the way that their children are expected to work hard and to be mature and responsible. They think that the teaching is

good and that there are good arrangements for homework. The inspection team agrees with them.

Pupils like everything about their school. They enjoy being there and that they find out new things in lessons. They like the way they are trusted to do things on their own and that teachers listen to their ideas. The inspection team agrees with them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue the planned developments to improve assessment procedures and their use.
- Improve the balance between teacher talk and pupil activity in lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Achievement is good overall. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls. Standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in speaking and listening, science, ICT, RE and art and design by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils achieve very well in science because there is a strong emphasis on pupils finding out for themselves.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well.

Commentary

1. Most pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment and all pupils, including those with SEN, those for whom English is an additional language and higher attaining pupils achieve well because of the good teaching which challenges them to do their best. There is an above average proportion of pupils who have statements of SEN, particularly in Years 3, 5 and 6. The characteristics of each year group vary considerably from year to year but there is a high proportion of pupils with SEN in several year groups. In Year 6, for example, over a fifth of pupils have been identified as having SEN and in Year 3 the proportion is over third. The school's overall performance in national tests is often constrained by the relatively high proportion of pupils with SEN.

The tables in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point below the national, their pupils are, typically, a term behind.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (27.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.6 (26.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.5 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The 2003 results were average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Standards are slowly rising, particularly for higher attaining pupils, but this year standards are broadly similar to last year in English and mathematics because of the higher proportion of pupils with SEN than last year. This affects the average points scores. In science, standards are above average. Very good provision for pupils with SEN contributes to the way that average standards have been maintained this year in

English and mathematics. Many of these pupils attain standards that are on a par with those attained by most of the other pupils. This is because their individual education plans are clearly written and include good targets for learning.

3. There are several reasons why pupils do well in relation to similar schools in English and science. The quality of teaching is good in English and very good in science. In English, there has been a strong focus on writing and the older pupils are taught in *sets* according to their level of attainment. In science, the emphasis on first hand investigations and the enthusiasm that teachers have for the subject contributes positively to the standards attained. Pupils also have plenty of opportunities to become familiar with what is expected of them in their statutory tests. There has been a drive to improve standards in mathematics this year and pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in *sets* to ensure that tasks are matched to their levels of attainment.
4. Pupils do well in ICT because there has been a significant improvement in resources. Most classrooms are equipped with an interactive *whiteboard* (A large, touch-sensitive board linked to a computer and projector that can use video, animation, graphics and sound) and these are used effectively to support learning. The computer suite provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, which are taught steadily and systematically. Similarly, in art and design, pupils reach above average standards because they build on the skills that they have already learned and teachers have high expectations and encourage them to improve their work. In RE, pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus because teachers are confident to teach the subject and there is an interesting range of resources. In speaking and listening, pupils have many opportunities to discuss their work in pairs and small groups and this contributes positively to the standards attained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards of behaviour are a consistent feature of the school day.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and work very hard.
- Relationships throughout the school community are very good.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is helped by the wide range of activities provided.

Commentary

5. During lessons, pupils show an enthusiastic and responsible attitude to learning. They listen attentively, contribute well when answering questions and joining in discussions. A strong feature is the high degree of co-operation shown when working together in pairs or small groups. A good example was seen in a Year 3 English lesson when pupils worked collaboratively with a partner to identify and write down adjectives to describe pictures shown on a *whiteboard*. Written and practical tasks are undertaken in a conscientious manner and pupils try hard to produce good quality work. Pupils get on well together and there are very good relationships with the staff who set a very good example. In several

lessons, excellent attitudes and behaviour were seen. These are described in the science section.

6. There is a quiet, friendly and purposeful atmosphere in the school that reflects well on the consistently high standards of behaviour. This is seen during lessons and around the school including at lunch and play times. Very few incidents of misbehaviour, including bullying, arise. There are clear sanctions and procedures for dealing with such matters should they occur. Any serious incidents are thoroughly investigated and discussed in the *Red Room* between a member of staff and the pupil(s) involved. This helps to ensure a fair outcome and to prevent any recurrence. There is a high degree of racial harmony in the school and there were no exclusions last year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.6
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- Attendance levels are close to the national average. Problems with unauthorised absence arise with a small number of pupils. Some pupils miss valuable learning opportunities because of family holidays being taken during term time. Staff work closely with the education welfare officer on cases where individual concerns arise. Punctuality is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the efficient monitoring arrangements that are now in place.
- A very strong emphasis is placed on pupils' social and moral development. Pupils are encouraged to be polite, show respect and to recognise the importance of good behaviour and being helpful to others. Assemblies and lessons are used well to reinforce such considerations and to celebrate achievements. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities and to assist with the smooth running of the school. Examples include acting as *Redcaps* to help others in the playground and monitoring duties in the library, dining areas, classrooms and when using specialist equipment. Personal and social development is enriched as pupils are keen to take part in school clubs, whilst those in Years 4 and 6 benefit from residential visits.
- A full programme of activities helps to enrich pupils' spiritual and cultural education. Pupils visit local churches and mosques. Visitors from different faiths give talks and pupils recognise the importance of special religious events, such as Ramadan. Several pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including some who speak more than one language, are given opportunities to describe their earlier experiences. Good support is provided to charities, for example pupils chose to support a project in the Philippines and for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Pupils are able to develop a sense of wonder arising from their work in some lessons. Examples that were seen during the inspection included discovering how to create dye from a plant and recognising the different internal makeup of plants that helps to create beautiful flowers. Educational visits in the locality and to museums and galleries promote interest in the arts.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Good teaching enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning. The good curriculum is enriched very well by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Pupils are cared for well and links with parents are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good in all subjects where judgements could be made, with the exception of science where they are very good. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high expectations and interesting teaching methods mean that pupils make good gains in their learning.
- Teachers manage their pupils very well and, as a result, pupils work very well independently and collaboratively.
- Whilst satisfactory, assessment procedures are insufficiently well developed to enable teachers to easily identify specific areas for improvement or to set targets for individuals.
- In some lessons, teachers spend too long talking to the class, leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete their tasks.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the standards attained.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (30%)	17 (51%)	6 (18%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

10. Numerous examples were seen during the inspection where teachers made sure that pupils were ready to learn. For example, several lessons began with short *brain gym* exercises, sometimes led by a pupil. These exercises, to stimulate all areas of the brain, ensured that pupils focused on their *brain buttons* and were calm and ready to concentrate on their lessons. As a result, behaviour and attitudes to learning were rarely less than very good.
11. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss their work with a partner. This is particularly helpful to encourage those with SEN or those for whom English is not their first language, who may be reluctant to speak in front of the class. It also contributes positively to their above average speaking and listening skills by the end of Year 6. For example, pupils in Year 3 shared what they noticed about counting in odd and even numbers with a partner before sharing them with their teacher. In science lessons, pupils often discuss what they know with their partner, giving good opportunities to learn from each other. This emphasis on paired discussion also contributes positively to pupils' very good attitudes, because they need to pay attention in case they are required to discuss their work with their partner.
12. Other teaching methods that capture the pupils' interest and motivate them to learn include the use of the *whiteboards*. These are used to give visual demonstrations in many lessons and to add an extra dimension. For example, pupils in Year 5 were able to closely examine prints by Seurat. Pupils in Year 3 were motivated to write about the sea after seeing pictures on the screen and hearing the sound of the sea played through the computer.
13. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and do their best and they strive to do well. They work very well together. For example, in science, pupils in Year 3 organised themselves within their group, delegating tasks to each other and taking turns to use

sieves to separate soil particles. In a history lesson in Year 6, the pupils worked well together to sort sources of evidence according to whether it helped them to form an opinion about the *Blitz Spirit* during World War 2. All pupils, but particularly those with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language, are well supported by talented teaching assistants. They make a strong contribution to the teaching for these pupils in particular. They are well informed, experienced and have received good training in how best to meet pupils' specific learning needs. A good balance is achieved between supporting pupils in the classroom and withdrawing small groups, or individuals, for appropriate support.

14. In some classes, there is insufficient time for pupils to be actively involved in their own learning. For example, in an English lesson, for pupils in Year 6, the teacher gave high quality information to the class and gave time for pupils to discuss their work but there was barely time for them to start the planned written task. Similarly, in an ICT lesson for pupils in Year 3, the introduction was overlong, leaving little time for the practical task. This impacts negatively on the progress pupils are able to make.
15. Satisfactory assessment procedures are used to match work appropriately to the needs of all pupils, including higher attainers. Much data is collected both from teachers' assessments and from on-going tests to show which National Curriculum levels pupils have reached and are expected to reach, but it is difficult to identify areas for development or to track the progress of individuals effectively because it has been introduced relatively recently. As a result, individuals are not always making as much progress as they could be. The school has already recognised this as an area for development. A good start has been made in setting group targets, particularly for writing, and the school has already identified the need to develop an effective system of individual target setting, based on individual needs, to make clear to pupils how they can improve their work. In some lessons, pupils indicate their understanding using the *thumbs up/thumbs down* method which gives them a better understanding of their own learning.

The curriculum

The school ensures that all pupils have a good quality and range of learning experiences. It provides them with very good opportunities to widen their experiences through extra-curricular activities and taking responsibilities. The accommodation and resources provided for pupils are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many good opportunities including visits, visitors to the school and a very wide range of extra-curricular clubs contribute very effectively to pupils' enjoyment and to the very good level of curricular enrichment.
- There is very good provision for pupils with SEN.
- Well trained teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of the curriculum.

Commentary

16. The interesting curriculum with good links between subjects is a key factor in pupils' very positive attitudes and good achievement. For example, pupils see a purpose in writing when using their skills to evaluate designs for Pharaoh's slippers in design and

technology. In art and design, the making of Egyptian masks has deepened pupils' understanding of life in ancient Egypt. Newspaper reports giving accounts of the Jarrow Crusades provide an interesting way of practicing writing skills.

17. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities including sport, reading, homework and gardening clubs. The *lightning* club for gifted mathematicians, run at lunchtime by a talented teaching assistant, is an example of the extra activities available to stimulate higher attaining pupils. Recently, pupils have won an award for their contributions to a newspaper written by pupils for pupils in the Cambridgeshire area. The wide range of visits includes an annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils and visits to local places of interest, such as places of worship. Members of the local community share their expertise with pupils to enrich their learning. For example, during the inspection two members of the Christian community led an assembly and answered questions about commitment posed by older pupils in a RE lesson. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. For example, there are class monitors and every pupil in Year 5 and Year 6 is given a school-wide responsibility. These include organising music for assembly, helping pupils at play time and in running the school book shop.
18. Individual education plans for pupils with SEN are clearly written and include very good targets for learning. The co-ordinator monitors provision closely and keeps meticulous records that demonstrate whether or not pupils are making enough progress. If they appear to be failing to meet their targets the reasons are investigated rigorously and plans adjusted to meet their learning needs more closely. Observations around the school showed that the teaching assistants work in close liaison with teachers and very good relationships are maintained between staff and pupils. Teaching assistants run special after school clubs for pupils who have been identified as needing extra help with their physical co-ordination or who need to develop greater enthusiasm for reading and children's literature. Several have attended specialist courses to extend their knowledge and understanding of how best to cater for pupils' specific needs. Their work is often unobtrusive but makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. They respond well to guidance from teachers and bring their own expertise and enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Good provision is made for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for monitoring academic achievements are satisfactory. Very good arrangements are in place for seeking and considering pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong emphasis is placed on pastoral support and pupils' well-being.
- Good arrangements are made for the induction of new pupils.
- The School Council undertakes its role very effectively.

Commentary

19. Parents indicate that their children are happy at school. This reflects the good pastoral care provided by teachers and support staff. Pupils with SEN are very well supported. Teaching assistants have been on training courses to help support pupils with dyslexia and severe behavioural difficulties. A group of pupils in Years 5 and 6, known as *Redcaps* undertake an impressive role in helping others at play times. They look out for and ably

assist pupils who seem lonely or are involved in a minor dispute. A strong emphasis is placed on each pupil's well-being and this contributes to the effective learning environment that prevails.

20. The arrangements made for the transfer of pupils from the infant school are good. This reflects the close working arrangements between the two schools so that there is a shared approach to academic work. Year 2 pupils undertake a prior visit and meet the Year 3 teachers. Parents indicate that they feel well informed and are pleased with the induction arrangements. Pupils joining during the school year are made welcome and receive individual support to help them settle into the new environment. All these arrangements contribute positively to the standards attained as pupils build on what they have already learned.
21. The school welcomes and values pupils' views about the school, including those expressed during whole class discussions. Each class elects a boy and girl to serve on the School Council and can put forward suggestions for consideration. The School Council meets regularly and contributes very well to the decision making process. Governors involved Council members as part of the process leading to the appointment of the headteacher. Suggestions from the Council have led to improvements to the toilet accommodation and to the provision of drinking fountains. The Council also responds to issues raised by the school management. They have put forward constructive suggestions for the possible development of nearby land at Oxmoor. More recently they have submitted cogent reasons for not changing the timing of the mid-morning break.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The good partnership with parents has a positive impact on pupils' learning and development. Relationships with other schools are very good and there are good links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are well informed about their child's progress and school activities.
- The Friends of Hartford School provide invaluable support.
- Links with other schools have improved considerably in recent years.
- Good relationships with community organisations help to enrich learning.

Commentary

22. Good information is given to parents in the school prospectus and termly newsletters. At the start of each term a separate *Lively Leaflet* is sent to parents outlining the main areas their child will be studying, together with a note about homework expectations and outlining key dates and times for the year group activities. Parents are well advised about their child's academic progress at consultation meetings with teachers. The annual written reports provide a clear view about standards attained and personal development.
23. Most parents give good support by ensuring that homework is undertaken. Several parents help with work in classrooms whilst others are involved in helping with educational visits and sports activities. The Friends organisation organises a very full programme of fund raising and other events, including a summer fete. Proceeds are used to provide improved equipment and facilities for the pupils. The most recent donation of over £4,000

is to provide *whiteboards* to enhance learning opportunities in the two classes that currently do not enjoy this important facility.

24. The school enjoys very good relationships with the adjacent infant school. Activities and events are carefully planned so as to avoid inconvenience for parents with children in both schools. The school works closely with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer to ensure the smooth transfer of Year 6 pupils. This includes comprehensive advice to parents and the Year 6 pupils have the opportunity of visiting their new school during the summer term. Membership of the *Huntsnet Consortium* enables senior staff to work with colleagues from other schools in the Huntingdon area to share best practice and to help raise standards of attainment. Some of the higher attaining Year 6 pupils attend *Master Classes* at nearby secondary schools to ensure that their needs are met.
25. Representatives of the *Huntingdon Churches Together* are regular contributors at school assemblies. Harvest gifts are distributed to the local elderly and funds are raised to support local and overseas charities. The school was closely involved in the *Huntingdon Community Drug project* and has won awards in the *Huntingdon in Bloom* competition. A recent initiative has involved working with the *Huntingdon Environment Agency* in the development of the school grounds. Visitors from the *Amber Centre* (a support unit for senior school pupils) undertake gardening and other work on the school premises as part of a remedial programme. Opportunities are provided for some secondary pupils to visit the school as part of a work experience programme.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership. Management is good. Governance is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is leading the staff forward successfully and all share a commitment to improvement.
- The subject leaders have a good understanding of standards and teaching in their subjects.
- The co-ordinator for SEN provides very good leadership.
- Governors use their own expertise effectively for the benefit of the school.
- Finances are well managed and the school evaluates its spending carefully.

Commentary

26. The headteacher provides good and caring leadership, supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. All staff share a commitment to the inclusion of all pupils, regardless of background or level of attainment. Since her appointment almost two years ago, the headteacher has introduced several initiatives to raise standards. For example, she has developed the role of the subject leader and set up a formal system of monitoring standards and teaching. As a result, much of the teaching is good or very good and the subject leaders have a good understanding of areas for development in their subjects. They are aware of the need to develop assessment procedures and to set targets for

individual pupils. The headteacher has also successfully further developed the use of ICT across the curriculum.

27. Provision for pupils with SEN is exceptionally well managed by the co-ordinator responsible for organising procedures to meet their needs. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and make a strong contribution to provision. The co-ordinator places great emphasis on supporting teaching assistants with their professional development. A good programme of training has been devised and the needs of support staff are identified clearly and met successfully. This includes sessions for all staff led by the co-ordinator on, for example, how to set appropriate targets for pupils and how best to write individual education plans that address pupils' needs effectively. Challenging annual performance targets are set for teaching assistants who work hard to develop their expertise. The co-ordinator provides informative written reports for the governing body. The governor with responsibility for overseeing the provision has a very good understanding of pupils' needs and supports the school well in maintaining very good provision.
28. Most of the governors are recently appointed and there is some difficulty in filling vacancies. However, they are committed to improvement and are beginning to work as members of the school team. An example of their commitment is the self-evaluation committee set up recently by a newly appointed governor, who uses his own experience of planning processes and self-evaluation to ensure all aspects of the school are covered in the annual planning cycle.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	534054
Total expenditure	529817
Expenditure per pupil	2364

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7105
Balance carried forward to the next	11342

29. The headteacher and governors manage the budget carefully for the benefit of all pupils. For example, recent additions have been made to the building to provide facilities for disabled pupils and resources have been improved.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in speaking and listening by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well.
- Marking gives pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve, but the use of assessment to set individual targets is underdeveloped.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their lessons and work very hard.
- Literacy skills are well developed in other subjects.
- The subject is well led and the subject leader is committed to further improvement.

Commentary

30. By the end of Year 6, standards are average overall in English. They are average in reading and writing. In speaking and listening standards are above average because teachers plan good opportunities in lessons for pupils to practise these skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 share their ideas for persuasive writing with a partner before sharing them with the class. There are a significant number of pupils with SEN, particularly in the current Year 6 and the school is doing well to maintain average standards overall this year. Older pupils are taught in *sets* according to their level of attainment, ensuring that work is well matched to their needs.
31. Good features of the best lessons seen were the brisk pace and high expectations. For example, pupils in Year 5 were encouraged to write an account of an incident in a story as seen from the other character's points of view. The teacher reminded pupils that more writing was expected and skilful questioning encouraged them to extend their answers. Throughout the school, very good opportunities are planned for pupils to work collaboratively and learn from each other. For example, in Year 6, pupils worked in pairs to formulate questions that they would like to ask the author of the class book. In some lessons, too much time is given to talking to the class leaving insufficient time to complete the written tasks. Pupils achieve well because teachers use their good knowledge of the subject in order to plan interesting, well-structured lessons. In Year 3, the use of ICT to show images and sounds of the sea encouraged pupils to write an atmospheric description. Teachers deploy their teaching assistants very effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and achieve well because teaching assistants are clear about what is expected and support pupils proficiently. Teachers always mark work and make helpful comments that motivate pupils to do better next time but although a good start has been made in the setting of group targets for writing, this has not yet been developed to include individual targets. It is difficult to identify specific areas for

improvement for groups of pupils because the use of the assessment data is not fully established.

32. Pupils of all levels of attainment have very positive attitudes towards their work. In the main, pupils chose and read books that are well matched to their capabilities. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to see themselves as readers. Attractive author displays and good resources help stimulate interest. Pupils in Year 6 keep reading logs and enthusiastically discuss books by their favourite authors. Parental involvement in the school's scheme known as *CAPER* (Children and Parents enjoy Reading), plays an important part in encouraging an enjoyment of reading.
33. The enthusiastic subject leader has played an important role in the good improvements since the last inspection. Under her leadership, effective strategies have been put in place to improve the quality of pupils' writing across the school. A detailed action plan identifies further strategies for raising standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

34. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. They are confident when speaking to their class, giving opinions and answering questions. They write confidently to record their work in other subjects; for example, when evaluating their designs of slippers for a Pharaoh and recording scientific investigations. Using ICT, pupils are encouraged to write for different audiences and prepare articles for *The Paper*. Writing skills are well developed through history; for example, when writing newspaper reports on the Jarrow Crusades and accounts of Egyptian gods and goddesses.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enthusiasm for their work helps them to learn effectively.
- Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their skills in realistic, purposeful situations and work is not sufficiently linked to their everyday experiences.
- Tasks are not always well matched to the learning needs of all groups.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good and have contributed to a rising trend in standards.

Commentary

35. Pupils attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Standards on entry to Year 3 are often below average. Pupils' achievement is good and they do well to attain average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils are keen to learn and their enthusiasm for the subject helps them to make good progress. Even when lessons are not particularly inspirational pupils enjoy completing the tasks they are set.
36. Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace and tasks are matched well to pupils' varying stages of development. On occasions, too

long is spent talking to the class at the expense of pupils completing their work. Those teachers who have computerised *whiteboards* in their classrooms use them well to demonstrate processes, illustrate patterns in sequences of numbers or to create clear graphs and diagrams. Teachers prepare such presentations well on their laptop computers. They place strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to explain the processes that they have used to solve problems. Teachers stress that there is no one correct method and this gives the pupils confidence to experiment and find the methods that they understand best. This confidence is enhanced by the good relationships between pupils and teachers. The relaxed relationships help pupils to feel secure in investigating and in asking for assistance when they are stuck. Teachers require pupils to write the title of the lesson in terms of questions, such as, 'Can I measure capacity in millilitres?' They refer to the question when marking and assessing pupils' work and often mark work with the answer, 'Yes, you can'. This helps pupils to know that they are progressing well and achieving success. It further adds to their enthusiasm and confidence.

37. In each year group, pupils are organised into ability classes or *sets*. This system is designed to promote a close match between pupils' varying stages of development and the teaching of appropriate skills to take them on to the next stage. For the most part this system works well, especially for the more advanced learners in the upper *sets*. The range of levels of attainment within *sets*, particularly the lower *sets*, tends to be particularly wide and teachers group pupils by level of attainment within each *set*. However, there are occasions when teachers' expectations of the work that the pupils in the lower *sets* are expected to tackle are inappropriate. Sometimes the teachers' objectives are too modest and tasks are insufficiently demanding whilst at other times the tasks are too difficult. The teachers teach the subject according to a good planning framework that promotes the systematic coverage of the National Curriculum. The lessons are grouped into units of work. The teachers cover each unit sequentially throughout the year. However, in order to complete all units there is a tendency to move from one unit to the next before all pupils have thoroughly mastered the operations taught. This was particularly apparent in the work produced by pupils in the lower *sets*. Satisfactory assessment systems help to identify which pupils have learned effectively and which groups need further consolidation. Assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to set targets for individual pupils so that they know precisely what they have to do to move from one stage in their learning to the next.
38. Pupils develop a good range of skills and techniques. In one lesson for pupils in Year 4, for example, they learned how to multiply large numbers by five through the process of multiplying by ten and then dividing by two. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6 they investigated how to make varying amounts of money by using a limited number of coins. They successfully complete many such investigations and exercises that have helped them to develop good reasoning skills. Although there are some opportunities in other subjects for pupils to apply their skills, there are too few opportunities in lessons for pupils to use their skills purposefully in realistic situations, such as conducting surveys and collecting data for purposes that are related to pupils' own experiences.
39. The subject leader has accurately identified areas for improvement and has created a good action plan designed to raise standards. She has been successful in steadily improving the standards that pupils attain. This is reflected in the national test results in recent years. Last year's results were better than the previous year and the teacher assessments indicate that standards are likely to rise again this year. Over the past two years the school has concentrated particularly hard on improving provision and raising

standards. It has been particularly successful in ensuring that pupils have a secure command of basic number skills. The subject leader has identified the need to further develop the other strands of the subject and to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills. Useful extra classes are organised, some after school, to help lower attaining pupils to boost their achievement. A teaching assistant runs a good lunch time club for those pupils who are advanced learners and are particularly interested in solving mathematical problems. This provides extra learning opportunities and further develops pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

40. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily in different subjects across the curriculum. In Year 3, for example, they study climatic conditions in various countries across the world. This involves identifying temperature, rainfall measured in millimetres and hours of sunshine. However, opportunities for them to collect their own weather data on a daily basis are rare and there is a lack of meaningful first-hand experience. Pupils used their skills of measuring accurately when designing and making Tudor houses in history. In history, they also calculate how long ago events happened and practise sums involving pounds, shillings and pence as part of their project on Britain since 1930. They also use spreadsheets in ICT in exercises that show them how to create formulae to calculate costs related to profit.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve very well because the quality of teaching is very good. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Excellent attitudes and behaviour contribute positively to the standards attained.
- There is a strong emphasis on practical and investigative activities and pupils develop their skills well.
- The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher who is managing the subject until the appointment of a new subject leader next term.
- The ICT *whiteboard* is used well to support the subject.

Commentary

41. Pupils have many opportunities to investigate and find out for themselves and this is a key factor leading to the above average standards. This emphasis on learning through first hand experience was evident in all the lessons seen during the inspection. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6, they were amazed to discover what happened when they added sugar to yeast during an investigation about raising agents in bread. The teacher used the *whiteboard* effectively to illustrate a definition of yeast.
42. In a very good lesson for pupils in Year 5, again the *whiteboard* was used to good effect to show pupils the internal parts of flowering plants. Very challenging questions ensured that pupils made very good gains in their learning and they were expected to remember a

wide range of terms and their functions. The pupils moved on to gently take a flower apart, marvelling as they identified what they had already seen on the *whiteboard*, before labelling them. At the end of another very good lesson, also in Year 5, pupils completed a very challenging quiz, using the *whiteboard*, related to flowering plants. This interesting way of reinforcing what the pupils had learned in the lesson motivated them to take part and contributed positively to the standards attained. One pupil commented 'I didn't know that there were male and female parts of a flower until today!'

43. Another reason for the above average standards is the excellent way in which pupils approach their work.

Example of outstanding practice

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in Year 3 were outstanding because they knew what their teachers expected of them and the task was interesting.

It was a very hot day and the pupils returned from play time red faced and sticky. Their teacher quickly settled them with a drink of water and *Brain gym* exercises. The teacher introduced the practical task, which was to separate and order particles of soil. The pupils listened carefully to the instructions, ignoring the heat in the classroom and immediately set to work. They were asked to put on thin rubber gloves before handling the soil and the way in which they donned these with no fuss was exemplary. They took turns to use the range of sieves provided and separated the soil into bowls, not wasting a moment of their time or spilling any soil. This excellent behaviour was also a feature of another lesson in Year 3 on the same subject. As a result, pupils achieved very well on a hot day when they might have been less motivated.

44. The subject leader has recently left and the headteacher is managing the subject temporarily. Thorough monitoring and the deliberate focus on investigative activities that allow pupils to develop their skills and understanding as they move through the school, contribute positively to the high standards reached in recent years.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good range of computer skills and attain standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good and support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' effective learning.
- Assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to identify gaps in pupils' learning and establish where improvement is needed.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

45. Pupils' achievement is good. They develop good levels of competence in using computers, use them confidently and demonstrate a wide range of skills. The subject is well-developed and represents a particular strength of the school. Pupils in Year 3 interrogate databases well to sort, classify and select specific pieces of information. They use the database they have created to answer questions such as, 'How many countries have January as the wettest month and rainfall greater than 100mm?' Year 4 pupils have drawn pictures for wrapping paper and scanned them into computers before arranging them in patterns to create imaginative designs. They produced work of exceptionally good quality.
46. Pupils in Year 4 use programmable robots and write programs that involve angles and direction. They import images made with digital cameras to illustrate their newspaper articles. Pupils in Year 5 have created multi-media presentations of their work on Ancient Egypt. In Year 6, pupils use data in spreadsheets to produce graphs. They format cells, use *SUM* functions to make calculations and write formulae. They understand that, once they have created their formulae, any alterations in one cell will alter all the others according to the formula they have set. They use graphic modelling techniques skilfully to plan classrooms, playgrounds and gardens. The more advanced learners include an analysis of the costs involved in actually creating their classroom designs. Across the school, pupils use the Internet well for research and develop a good range of word processing skills. Several pupils are following a course to develop their typing and keyboard skills.
47. Skills are taught systematically. The computer technician and teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They have good levels of expertise and work closely with teachers to form effective teams. Teachers are demanding and expect pupils to remember a complex string of operations to weave their way through programs. The pupils rise to the challenges set and respond well to teachers' high expectations. The pace of lessons is brisk and pupils maintain good levels of concentration throughout. Teachers encourage a business-like approach to learning and pupils tackle their tasks seriously. Teachers use computerised *whiteboards* well to demonstrate skills and operations. They also encourage pupils to use them and pupils have a good understanding of how they are operated.
48. The subject leader seeks to ensure that the school aims high and that pupils develop a wide range of skills. Her leadership encourages teachers and support staff to maintain high expectations of pupils' performance and this has been a key factor in raising standards. Also, staff have received good training and are increasingly confident in their own abilities and levels of competence. Assessment systems are at an early stage of development. The school makes good use of its limited resources. The computer suite is far from ideal as it is situated in a corridor and ventilation is poor, but it is used well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

49. Pupils apply the skills they have developed in ICT well in many other areas of their work. They produce a good school newspaper, called *The Hartford Hotspot* that promotes word

processing and editorial skills well. In history, pupils in Year 6 have written good newspaper articles about the Jarrow Crusade. Pupils in Year 6 use drawing tools from an object-based graphics package to create images by combining and manipulating objects. They have, for example, recreated abstract paintings, based on Matisse's *Snail*, by rotating, re-sizing, moving items and layering images to explore different effects. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet for research into Buddhism as part of their work in RE and in all year groups the Internet has proved particularly useful for conducting research into topics associated with history and geography.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected and is reported below. History and geography were sampled.

50. Good work was seen in **history**. Pupils in Year 6 have completed a very good in-depth study of Britain since 1930. One particularly good feature of this work was the letters that grandparents had written to the pupils in response to requests for first-hand experiences and personal information. The letters provided a great deal of intriguing information and are a valuable archive for further investigation. Across the school, pupils are taught how to use primary sources of evidence from which to make deductions and draw conclusions. The pupils in Year 6 have assembled a good range of artefacts that they have organised as class museums. These are informative and help to capture pupils' imagination. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy finding out about times past. Pupils in Year 5 become experts on the subject of Ancient Egypt and describe in graphic detail how bodies were prepared for mummification. Pupils in Year 4 were fascinated by the story of Cromwell's death, his expensive state funeral and the subsequent exhumation and decapitation. They discussed sensibly how attitudes towards a person could change so rapidly. They formed opinions about why attitudes changed and how respect for Cromwell ebbed and flowed. Teachers emphasise that there are often no right or wrong answers and that opinions based on the available evidence are the critical factors in being historians.
51. In **geography**, pupils learn about aspects of their own country and countries around the world. They are good at using maps and atlases. Pupils in Year 6 described how to identify places on an Ordnance Survey map by using a six figure grid reference. In Year 5, they study the physical features of land forms and have completed a good study of rivers that included a very worthwhile visit to a field studies centre. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrated good knowledge and understanding about life in India as a result of their study of the village of Chembakoli. Although insufficient teaching was seen to reach conclusions about overall provision, it is clear that the subject is well established in the school's curriculum.

Religious education

Provision in religious education (RE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Work is well presented with effective use of literacy skills.

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject leader has worked hard to implement a well-resourced scheme.

Commentary

52. Teaching is good overall and very good examples were seen in Year 6. As a result, pupils achieve well. Pupils do well because teachers have a sensitive approach which gives them the confidence to share views and ideas. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and they use this effectively to interest the pupils. In lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to discuss and reflect and this also contributes positively to their spiritual development. Older pupils showed a good understanding of what is meant by commitment after questioning members of a faith community about how being a Christian influences their daily life. They are keen to discuss their ideas and show respect for one another's views. Teachers encourage pupils to record their work in different ways. For example, pupils in Year 3 record promises and put them into a silver box with a rainbow on it, after listening to the story of *Noah's Ark*. Written work is well presented and pupils take a pride in their work.
53. Another reason for the improvement in standards is because the school is well resourced with artefacts and posters for all the main religions of the world and teachers use these effectively. The subject leader shows good leadership and has worked hard to resource the units of work published by the local education authority. The scheme and support provided by the subject leader give teachers confidence that has contributed to good improvements since the last inspection. Attractive displays in classrooms and corridors, for example work on Buddhism, raise pupils' awareness of different faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design was inspected and is reported below. Design and technology and music were sampled. No report is made on physical education.

54. No lessons in **design and technology** could be observed during the inspection, but work on display shows that pupils design and make a variety of products as they move through the school. In Year 3, pupils make pneumatic models and photo frames. In Year 4, they experiment with stitches before making money containers. In Year 5, they design and make slippers fit for a Pharaoh, evaluating them afterwards. These slippers were of good quality. In Year 6, pupils design and make Tudor houses, first testing art straw joints to see how much weight they will support. They also investigate how axles and chassis work before designing, making and evaluating vehicles.
55. **Music** lessons are timetabled each week but it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. A small group of pupils played recorders well in one assembly. Pupils did not sing in assembly and although music was played for pupils to enter and leave the hall, this was not discussed. Therefore, opportunities were missed to develop pupils' enjoyment and appreciation of music.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good.
- Skills are taught progressively as pupils move through the school.
- The subject is well led and managed and it is used well to support other subjects.

Commentary

56. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and the subject has a high profile. A significant factor that leads to this improvement is the way that pupils develop their skills as they move through the school. They use their sketchbooks for reference, and this helps them to use techniques that they have already learned in their work. The subject leader has ensured that the scheme of work meets the school's needs and has encouraged staff to attend courses to improve their own skills. She has ensured that staff know what is expected for each age group and all these contribute positively to the standards attained.
57. Three-dimensional work is developed steadily. During the inspection, pupils in Year 3 used clay to make pirate masks of high quality, showing a good understanding of joining techniques and how to create features using imaginative methods. By Year 4, pupils make clay heads using the *pinch pot* method, adding realistic details. Pupils in Year 5 show the development of their skills in using modelling materials in the impressive masks of Egyptian *mummies* to support their work in history. By Year 6, pupils use their work on portraits to help them create clay busts of high quality, showing close attention to detail.
58. Another reason for the high standards is the way that pupils are encouraged to look carefully and to use other sources to help them. For example, pupils in Year 4 used photographs as a stimulus before producing attractive water colours of landscapes to support work in geography. Pastel drawings of the *Golden temple of Amritsar* support work in RE. By Year 5, pupils paint river features such as banks and locks. In Year 6, close observation is encouraged in their work on portraits based on the work of Picasso. The variety of techniques shown in the high quality displays of their work on portraiture is a good example of the way in which pupils use their skills.
59. Features of the best lessons seen during the inspection included effective support from adults, including teaching assistants and parent helpers and the effective use of resources. For example, in a very good lesson for pupils in Year 3, all adults ensured that pupils could succeed in their mask making by reminding them of joining techniques and encouraging them to experiment. Each pupil had a large piece of clay to mould into a mask and ample tools with which to create features. In a good lesson for pupils in Year 4, they experimented with *tie and dye* techniques, using a wide range of materials. The resulting patterns when the fabric had been placed in beetroot juice, onion skins or grass juice showed the different effects of the resources used. In a good lesson in Year 5, pupils experimented with the *pointillism* technique using Seurat's work as a stimulus. They used fine brushes and cotton wool sticks to experiment with *optical mixing*. All adults gave good support, enabling all pupils to succeed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

60. Regular weekly lessons take place, although it was not possible to observe any during the inspection. This area of the school's work is seen as crucially important and this is shown in displays such as the work on safety and safe life styles. The caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development well. The very good relationships within the school soon highlight if a pupil is in need of extra help or encouragement. Pupils in Year 6 are given responsibilities such as running the school bookshop and being monitors- who have a variety of jobs such as assisting in the library, looking after plants and equipment. The *Redcaps* provide support for pupils who may experience difficulties at play time. The well-established School Council chooses a charity to support. This year the children's ward at the local hospital and supporting a school in the Philippines are the chosen charities. Taking part in charitable fund raising gives good opportunities for pupils to become aware of those less fortunate than themselves and to learn that their help can make a difference.

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	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).

