

INSPECTION REPORT

COUNTY BRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bentley, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104189

Headteacher: Mr G Higgs

Lead inspector: Mrs A M Grainger

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 25th November 2004

Inspection number: 266681

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	190
School address:	Anson Road Bentley Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS2 0DH
Telephone number:	(01922) 720 718
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Clr S Coughlan
Date of previous inspection:	28 th June - 1 st July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

County Bridge Primary School is situated in a mature area of Bentley, a suburb of Walsall. Pupils are drawn from the surrounding area. Just over half the pupils live in rented accommodation and the others live in owner-occupied housing. The percentage of adults with higher education qualifications living in the area is below that found nationally, as is the percentage of high social class households. Twenty per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average.

With 97 boys and 74 girls who attend full-time, and a further 19 children in the Nursery who are part-time, the school is below average in size. The school is presently below capacity, largely because of families moving out of the area, and there are some small year groups. There are also some year groups with significantly more boys than girls.

Seventy-six per cent of pupils are of white British heritage. Others are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, the most significant of which is Asian or Asian British (Indian). Eleven per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, although almost all are fluent in English. Twenty-two per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is broadly average. The vast majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. A few have some difficulties with behaviour. Overall, children enter the Nursery with attainment well below that expected for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20782	Mrs A M Grainger	Lead inspector	English Geography History Physical education
8992	Mr J Vischer	Lay inspector	
23385	Ms S Gerred	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Science Religious education Music
26232	Mr C Grove	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

County Bridge Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are strengths within the school, but also weaknesses requiring improvement. Standards are at the level expected nationally in Year 6. Although pupils in Year 6 achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities, pupils' progress as they move up through the school is uneven. Teaching and the range of learning opportunities meet pupils' needs satisfactorily overall. Leadership, management and the value for money provided by the school are all satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good start given to children in the Nursery and Reception Year.
- The good progress made by pupils in English, mathematics and science in Years 2, 5 and 6.
- Not enough use and development of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the subjects.
- Unsatisfactory provision in the humanities subjects (religious education, geography and history).
- Not enough use of the good practice in the school to develop the quality of teaching.
- Underdeveloped subject co-ordinator roles in some subjects.
- The good partnership with parents.
- The good pastoral care and the value given to pupils' views.

Improvement since the school was last inspected in summer 1999 is satisfactory. Learning opportunities in the Nursery now meet children's needs well and there is better support for pupils with special educational needs. Co-ordinators, particularly for key areas such as English and mathematics, now have release time from classrooms. A long-term plan of work for ICT has been put in place but further action is needed to develop the ICT provision across the subjects. More also needs to be done to ensure that work in all subjects supports pupils in making consistent progress as they move up through the school. Performance management for teachers is satisfactorily in place.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	C	D	D
mathematics	C	C	D	D
science	E	B	D	D

*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.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. In the present Year 6, the standard of pupils' work is at the level expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. The difference between the current standards and those indicated by the 2004 tests is largely a reflection of natural variations in the ability of year groups. Standards in Year 6 are also at the level expected at this age in ICT and the humanities. Not enough evidence was gathered to make firm judgements on the standards and pupils' achievement in other subjects.

In the tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004, pupils' results were above the national average in reading, close to it in writing, and well above it in mathematics. Teachers assessed pupils' performance in science as broadly average. Standards in the present Year 2 are at the level expected nationally in English and science, and above this level in mathematics. Standards in religious education are at the level expected in Year 2, but they are lower in ICT, geography and history.

Pupils' achievement in relation to their capabilities is satisfactory in Year 6. In Year 2, achievement is good in English, mathematics and science, satisfactory in religious education, but unsatisfactory in ICT, geography and history. Pupils' progress as they move up through the school is uneven. In English, mathematics and science, for example, it is good in Years 2, 5 and 6. Progress is also good in other subjects in Year 6. However, overall progress is only just acceptable in Years 3 and 4.

Children in the Nursery and Reception Year make a very good start in their personal, social and emotional development. They also get on well in early reading, writing and mathematics and achieve satisfactorily in the other areas of learning. Because attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below the level expected, few children are on course to reach the nationally expected standards at the end of the Reception Year except in their personal, social and emotional development.

Throughout the school, different groups of pupils achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs often do well when there is intensive one-to-one or small group support. Pupils with English as an additional language progress at the same rate as their classmates.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Older pupils, particularly those in Year 6, have very mature and responsible attitudes and behave very well. They provide a very good example for younger pupils. However, there is variation in the standards of attitudes and behaviour in the other year groups, which is directly linked to the effectiveness of teaching. Behaviour around the school and at play is satisfactory. Although personal development is satisfactory overall, pupils do not sufficiently develop an appreciation of their own and other cultural traditions. Attendance is well below the national average. The school's efforts to promote good attendance are satisfactory and a new programme of rewards for good attendance has been introduced recently. However, not all parents make enough effort to ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive at school punctually.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education, including the teaching, is satisfactory. Teaching and the range of learning opportunities ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress overall during their time in school. However, the quality of teaching varies in the different year groups. It is good in the Nursery and Reception Year. English, mathematics and science are taught well in Years 2, 5 and 6. Teaching in Year 6 is also good in most other subjects. However, in Years 3 and 4, the teaching is only just adequate. The curriculum in the humanities subjects is covered too thinly. ICT is not used well enough as a tool for learning across the subjects.

The quality of pastoral care and relationships with adults create a climate supportive of learning. Links with parents give good support to pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides a satisfactory educational direction for the school and ensures its smooth day-by-day running. However, there is not enough use of the good practice in the school to improve the overall quality of

teaching and learning. Although there is satisfactory co-ordination of English, mathematics and science, not all subject co-ordinators' roles are well enough developed. This is a factor in the unsatisfactory provision in the humanities and in the lack of sufficient development of ICT as a tool for learning across the subjects. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents who made their views known to inspectors are pleased with the school. The vast majority of pupils also have positive views. They recognise that their opinions matter and are listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the use and development of pupils' ICT skills across the subjects.
- Improve the provision in the humanities subjects.
- Make effective use of the good practice in the school to develop the quality of teaching.
- Develop the co-ordinators' roles in subjects in which they are insufficiently effective.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards presently in Year 6 are at the level expected nationally in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), and in most other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception Year.
- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 2, 5 and 6.
- There is underachievement in the humanities subjects (religious education, geography and history).
- Pupils do not use their ICT skills well enough across the subjects.
- Singing standards are good in Year 6.

Commentary

1. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. They were also below average compared with the performance of other schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. In the end-of-Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2004, pupils' results were above the national average in reading, close to it in writing, and well above it in mathematics. Compared with the results achieved by other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was well above average in reading, above it in writing, and in the top five per cent of schools in mathematics. Teachers assessed pupils' performance as broadly average in science.
2. The Year 6 results in 2004 were much the same as at the last inspection, as were the Year 2 writing results. The results for Year 2 pupils were better than at the last inspection in reading, and very significantly better in mathematics. The results in both Years 2 and 6 have varied in the intervening years largely because of the natural differences found in year groups of pupils. The school sets appropriately ambitious targets and is making satisfactory progress towards the current targets.
3. Standards in the present Year 6 are at the level expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. In Year 2, standards are also at the nationally expected level in all strands of English and science, and they are above this level in mathematics. In relation to their capabilities, pupils now in Year 2 are achieving well, and those in Year 6 are achieving satisfactorily. Although Year 6 pupils' present achievement is no better than satisfactory, they are making good progress this year in mathematics and science and very good progress in English.
4. As pupils move up from Year 1 to Year 6, their progress is inconsistent. This is because, although it is satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching varies in the different years. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 2, and 5, as well as making substantial gains in Year 6. In Year 1, progress is securely satisfactory. However, in Years 3 and 4, it is only just adequate overall, and is unsatisfactory in mathematics in Year 3 and in science in Year 4. The school recognises that pupils' progress is uneven. However, it has not

sufficiently identified why progress slows in some years and, as a result, has not tackled the weaknesses well enough.

5. In ICT, standards are at the level expected nationally in Year 6 but they are below this level in Year 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 6, but it is unsatisfactory in Year 2. A main problem is that Year 2 pupils are not given enough ICT experiences and they have not had much access to the computer room this term. Throughout the school, except in Year 6, pupils do not use their ICT skills well enough across the subjects. Standards of language, literacy and mathematics across the subjects are satisfactory.
6. There are weaknesses in the provision in the humanities that mean that there is underachievement in these subjects. Overall, pupils' achievement is not as good in these subjects as at the last inspection. In religious education, standards are at the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2, but they are below the expected level in geography and history. In Year 6, in the topics covered this year, standards are as expected at this age. As in English, mathematics and science, pupils are making good progress in geography and history in Year 6. Their progress is satisfactory in religious education. However, because curriculum coverage is too thin and the teaching is not challenging enough in many year groups, pupils are not doing as well as they should be. This is the case in Years 3 to 5 in religious education and in Years 1 to 5 in geography and history.
7. Insufficient evidence was gathered to reach firm judgements on overall standards and pupils' achievements in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Singing standards are good in Year 6 and have been maintained since the last inspection.
8. Children in the Nursery and Reception Year are given a good start. As at the last inspection, they achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development, and make good progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This strong start is particularly beneficial, as these are the areas in which attainment is lowest when children start in the Nursery. In the aspects seen in all other areas, children's achievement is satisfactory. Because attainment on entry is well below the expected level, it is only in personal, social and emotional development that almost all children are on course to fully reach the expected standards at the end of the Reception Year.
9. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress when they receive intensive support in one-to-one or small group situations. Pupils with English as an additional language progress at the same rate as their classmates. Although girls tend to do better than boys in the reading tests in Year 2, boys and girls achieve equally well in their schoolwork.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (15.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.4 (13.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.9 (16.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (26.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.3 (27.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.7 (29.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also satisfactory overall. The attendance rate is well below the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Older pupils, particularly those in Year 6, have very good attitudes and behaviour and provide a very good example for the younger ones.
- The school council gives good opportunity for responsibility for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Not enough is done to develop pupils' appreciation of cultural traditions, including cultural diversity within British society.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

Commentary

10. Pupils' behaviour in the playground and around the school is satisfactory, as at the last inspection. Pupils generally behave amicably towards one another, and enjoy the social opportunities at playtimes and lunchtimes. Teachers and support staff provide a satisfactory level of supervision, particularly in the playground, which allows for appropriate intervention in the event of any unacceptable behaviour. However, there is a lack of small equipment to encourage pupils to play positively with one another.
11. There is a 'playground squad' made up of older pupils whose role is to report behaviour that infringes the school code. The headteacher is on duty in the playground at the beginning and end of each day and at lunchtimes and playtimes, which supports satisfactory behaviour. However, the arrangement whereby pupils form lines before morning and afternoon school, and at the end of playtimes, takes place in a manner that does not set high expectations for positive attitudes and good behaviour once in school.
12. In the classrooms, attitudes and behaviour are also satisfactory. Many pupils often show interest and enthusiasm. Where there are instances of inattention or other inappropriate behaviour, most teachers and teaching assistants are good at regaining pupils' concentration. There are a few pupils in the school who, on occasions, display behavioural difficulties. Almost all teachers manage challenging behaviour effectively by positive means. However, there are very occasional instances of unacceptably boisterous behaviour that pass unnoticed and unchecked. No pupils were excluded from school during last school year and this is an improvement on the situation at the last inspection.

13. For the most part, variations in the standards of attitudes and behaviour in lessons reflect the variations in the quality of teaching and learning. When teaching is effective, pupils' interest is gained. However, there are also occasions when pupils settle sensibly to activities that are not particularly stimulating or challenging. In Year 6, where teaching and learning are particularly effective, pupils are mature and sensible. They have very good attitudes, behave very well and know precisely what is expected of them. The Year 6 pupils provide a very good example for others. Children in the Nursery and Reception Year have good attitudes and behaviour. They make very good gains in their personal, social and emotional development.
14. The vast majority of pupils like school. They believe they have to work hard, and they respect the adults in school, particularly the teachers and classroom support staff. However, a significant number of pupils report that they only sometimes find lessons interesting and that other pupils only sometimes behave well.
15. The school council gives good opportunity for pupils from Years 3 to 6 to exercise some responsibility in decision taking. Regular meetings consider issues of concern to pupils. Pupils make suggestions for improvements to the premises and to procedures, and they know that their ideas are listened to and valued. There is a suggestions box into which pupils can also put confidential notes, such as about bullying. The governors and school council have conducted a survey as to whether pupils have experienced bullying. Of those pupils who responded, fewer than 10 per cent admitted that they had been bullied, but of these only a minority had reported the matter. Where an issue of bullying becomes evident, it is directly dealt with by the headteacher, and the victim is given some choice in how the matter is handled. Older pupils are confident that the school does not tolerate bullying if it is known about.
16. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Opportunities for spiritual development are promoted satisfactorily through the weekly assembly themes, such as 'working together' or 'remembering'. The values of respect and kindness towards others are emphasised. Some religious education work, for instance, that concerned with pilgrimage, also makes an adequate contribution. The school has a link with a local church and the vicar leads assemblies on occasions in a lively and imaginative way. Provision for moral development is also satisfactory. The school successfully works to help pupils consider issues of right and wrong linked to principles discussed in assemblies. Such rewards as stickers and house points are used to reinforce positive moral examples.
17. Provision for social development is satisfactory. Work in personal, social and health education has a beneficial effect. 'Circle time', when pupils sit together in a circle to discuss matters of importance to them, also contributes. The School Council provides for the exercise of social responsibility by some older pupils in the school. Some social opportunities are provided through the curriculum itself. The organisation of the teaching of design and technology, for example, affords opportunities for more extensive group work.
18. Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory overall. Opportunities to appreciate British culture are provided through the music curriculum and the school choir, including performances to groups of older people on occasions. Some pupils have worked alongside various artists in ceramics and other art media. The art and design curriculum also enables pupils to learn to produce artwork in the styles of various artists. However, much more could be done to raise pupils' awareness of their own culture, and particularly of the diversity of cultures in present-day society. This aspect of pupils' personal development is not as strong as at the last inspection.

Attendance

19. Attendance is well below the national average and unauthorised absences are higher than in most schools. This is a decline since the last inspection when attendance had improved to a level above the national average. However, there is less unauthorised absence now. The school's action to promote good attendance is satisfactory. It operates a good programme of awards that promote attendance well but these have only recently been introduced. Not enough time has elapsed for them to have an effect on attendance rates. Not all parents make good enough efforts to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive at school on time. The school monitors attendance well. Punctuality is satisfactory and lessons begin on time, but there are no awards to encourage better punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	0.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. However, the quality varies in different year groups and this results in pupils making uneven progress as they move up through the school. Although there are significant strengths in some year groups, there are weaknesses in others requiring improvement. The level of care for pupils and the partnerships with other schools and the community make a satisfactory contribution to how well pupils achieve. Links with parents give good support to pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, pupils' learning and assessment are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception Year compensate well for the weaknesses in children's attainment on entry.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 2, 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science, and also more generally in Year 6.
- There are some significant weaknesses in the teaching in Years 3 and 4.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall in the humanities subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	3 (9%)	16 (47%)	11 (32%)	4 (12%)	0 (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.

20. Teaching is effective in getting pupils up to the level expected for their age by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. The overall quality of teaching and learning is much the same as at the last inspection, but there is now more variation across the year groups. Children are given a good start in the Nursery and Reception Year. Teaching also ensures that pupils do well in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 2, 5 and 6. In Year 6, teaching is effective across almost all subjects.
21. As well as the significant strengths in teaching and learning, there are also weaknesses that need to be rectified. The overall quality of teaching and learning is only just acceptable in Years 3 and 4. It is unsatisfactory in Year 3 in mathematics and in Year 4 in science. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 5 in religious education and in Years 1 to 5 in history and geography. There are shortcomings in the provision for ICT in Year 2, where there has been too little teaching of ICT skills this year. Teachers do not do enough in classroom lessons to develop pupils' ICT skills across the subjects.
22. In the Nursery and Reception Year, adults help children to achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development. The gains in this area also support learning in other areas by ensuring that children are responsive to adults and to each other and are receptive to the learning opportunities provided. Adults set children clear boundaries so that they know what is expected of them in terms of routines, attitudes and behaviour.
23. A strong start is also provided in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. Good teaching gets children off on the right tracks in developing their early reading and writing skills, and increases their awareness of numbers and other aspects of mathematics. Good action is taken to promote spoken language and listening skills. Staff make effective use of opportunities to engage children in talk and encourage them to talk to each other.
24. In Years 2, 5 and 6, pupils make significant leaps forward as a direct result of the quality of teaching. In these year groups, teaching is sharply focused on what pupils need to learn next. Expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are high and teachers respond well to pupils' differing needs. The more capable pupils are challenged and the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are given the necessary support, as are those with English as an additional language. Frequently, teaching is well paced with lively presentation, and interesting activities capture pupils' interest. Pupils respond well by trying hard and mostly giving of their best.
25. Teaching is not only effective in English, mathematics and science in Year 6, but also across most other subjects. A particularly strong feature of the teaching in Year 6 is the challenge to pupils to develop as independent learners. This helps the more capable pupils to achieve well as, for example, they undertake research in geography and history. In a Year 6 dance lesson, pupils responded to the very effective teaching by making a very good creative and physical effort.
26. Strengths across the school include good use of the new interactive whiteboards to support learning. Effective use of these helps to maintain the pace of successful lessons. Support staff are also well deployed to assist pupils with special educational needs.

27. The areas of strength in the most effective teaching are also the areas of weakness that characterise the least effective teaching. In English, mathematics and science in Years 3 and 4, teachers' expectations of the standards that pupils are capable of attaining are lower than in other years. Work is not sufficiently varied to meet pupils' differing needs, and this most adversely affects the more capable pupils, who are not well enough challenged. Insufficiently high expectations are evident in the acceptance of unsatisfactory handwriting and presentation, particularly in Year 4.
28. The same weaknesses are evident in the humanities subjects. The shortcomings in teaching in these subjects are exacerbated by slim coverage of the curriculum, which is also a feature of the unsatisfactory science provision in Year 4.
29. Not only is assessment used well where teaching is most effective, but marking also makes a strong and ongoing contribution to pupils' learning. The most effective marking provides a dialogue between teacher and pupil. For older pupils in particular, comments tell them what they are doing well and also clearly indicate what they need to do next to improve. Where teaching is least effective, marking does not offer enough guidance to pupils. In English, for example, the comments in weaker marking are not well enough linked with pupils' individual targets. The targets themselves also tend to be lacking in challenge.

The curriculum

The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall, as are opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources give satisfactory support for the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery and Reception Year experience a good curriculum.
- There is good curriculum coverage in English, mathematics and science in Years 2, 5 and 6.
- There is too little use and development of pupils' computer skills across the subjects.
- Patchy and thin coverage of the curriculum in geography and history in Years 1 to 5 and in religious education in Years 3 to 5 leads to underachievement in these subjects.

Commentary

30. Satisfactory action has been taken to rectify the weaknesses found at the last inspection in the learning opportunities for Nursery children. The range of activities now covers all the areas of learning well. There is a clear purpose for all the activities that children undertake, whether they are adult-led or child-initiated. The range of learning opportunities is matched very well to children's needs in personal, social and emotional development. Good activities support learning in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. As a result of these effective learning opportunities and good teaching, children get off to a good start. Much is done in the Nursery and Reception Year to compensate for the weaknesses in children's attainment on entry.
31. In the other areas of learning, the curriculum for Nursery and Reception children is satisfactory. However, the lack of outdoor climbing and balancing apparatus restricts opportunities for regular, daily physical exercise. There is not always enough variation in the creative activities to extend children's independent creative skills.
32. The learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 meet their needs satisfactorily overall in English, mathematics and science, as at the last inspection. There is good coverage of all aspects of English, mathematics and science in Years 2, 5 and 6. As a result, pupils make good progress in these year groups. Coverage is less thorough and no better than adequate in Years 3 and 4. Coverage of the science curriculum is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6. It is superficial at times, especially in Years 3 and 4, which means that pupils do not make the progress that they should.
33. Adequate opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their ICT skills when working in the computer room, although Year 2 pupils have covered little ICT this term. However, there is inconsistency in the use of computers in classrooms to reinforce and extend ICT skills and also enhance learning in other subjects. Overall, the use of ICT across the subjects is unsatisfactory. The exception is in Year 6, where computers are used well to support learning, including research, in a variety of subjects.
34. In geography and history in Years 1 to 5 and in religious education in Years 3 to 5, coverage of the curriculum is patchy, inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. Topics are often covered too thinly. Work in one year does not build well enough on that covered in the previous year. Often, topics within a year are not sufficiently linked. As a result, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not continuously developed at the expected level as they move up through the school. This is a concern because the performance of pupils in Year 6 shows the extent to which pupils are capable of doing better in the lower years if given the chance. The provision in the humanities subjects has not developed well enough since the last inspection and weaknesses persist.
35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. More support is available for these pupils to meet their needs in one-to-one and small group situations. Overall, the range of learning opportunities is satisfactorily matched to pupils' needs. Appropriate attention is given to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language.
36. Extra-curricular enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to attend after-school clubs in a range of sports and the choir meets regularly to prepare for performances. A residential visit in Year 6 is a highlight that pupils look forward to. Visitors to

the school add enrichment to the curriculum, particularly in religious education, art and design, history and geography. However, visits out of school are fewer than found in most schools.

37. The accommodation provides satisfactory support for the curriculum. However, Year 4, which is one of the largest classes, is housed in one of the two mobile classrooms. The limited space restricts the range of activities that the teacher can provide. By contrast, Year 5 and Year 6, much smaller classes, can spread out and do extra activities in their large, open areas. Activities for these older pupils are well supported by the accommodation available to them. Resources are adequate overall and support the curriculum satisfactorily. There are sufficient teachers and support staff.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The support advice and guidance they receive based on monitoring are satisfactory overall. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The extent to which every pupil in the school has an adult to turn to is good and they receive good pastoral advice.
- Not all teachers give enough guidance to pupils about how to improve in their school work.
- The school council is involved well with the development of the school and pupils' views are valued.
- Arrangements to help children settle in when they start school are good.

Commentary

38. The vast majority of pupils are confident that they have at least one adult to turn to should they be worried or hurt. As a result, almost all pupils feel free to raise concerns with staff, such as about a potential bullying incident. They know staff will consider the matter and take it seriously. Pupils feel safe and well looked after personally. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well as individuals and give pupils good pastoral support. The strengths found in pastoral care at the last inspection have been maintained.
39. Although pastoral support, advice and guidance are consistently good, the picture is more patchy concerning the quality of advice pupils receive to help them to improve their academic work. In the year groups in which teaching is good, pupils receive good support. The quality of advice and guidance in this area in Year 6 is impressive and this contributes to pupils' mature approach to their school work. However, where teaching is less effective, pupils are not given enough advice about how to improve the quality of their work. It is a concern, for instance, that there are examples of pupils struggling with poor handwriting and not being given help so that they know how to improve. However, the general support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is better now.
40. The school values, listens to and acts on pupils' views. This can be seen in the way it responds positively to pupils' opinions expressed through the school council. For example, pupils have been instrumental in gaining new benches in the playground and litterbins. Pupils encouraged the school to purchase more interactive whiteboards, which are contributing well to pupils' learning in almost all classrooms. In addition, the school council has carried out its own survey on bullying and published the results. It concluded that most bullying was of a light nature and

much resulted from being bored and not having enough activities to do at playtimes. Pupils are seeking to remedy this through the purchase of more games for wet playtimes and equipment for the playground.

41. There continue to be good arrangements to help children settle well when they start at school in the Nursery. This aspect of care adds support to the very good promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development. It contributes to the good achievement of children at this early stage in their education. Satisfactory arrangements also support children starting at the school at a later point and also help them to settle quickly.
42. Child protection arrangements and procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. All requirements are met in these areas. A reasonable range of risk assessments is in place. The site is regularly checked and is secure. A good number of staff have basic first aid training, but only one is fully trained. First aid procedures are satisfactory. The quality of playground supervision continues to be satisfactory.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and satisfactory links with the community. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept well informed of what is happening in the school generally.
- There is inconsistency in how well pupils' annual reports inform parents of their children's progress.
- The school is open to parents' views and responds well to any concerns.
- The school has received good support from the Primary Network Link concerning the use of the interactive whiteboards.

Commentary

43. The school has maintained a strong partnership with parents. Parents are kept well informed through the long tradition of the weekly bulletin. This is provided very regularly and so parents know when to expect it. Termly information sheets from each year group provide curriculum information, which builds well on that included in the prospectus. These sheets usefully contain the homework timetable. Parents also have a target-setting record sheet, which gives information on their child's progress. Parents' evenings are used to review these targets and parents' attendance at these is satisfactory. In spite of the school's efforts to provide supplementary appointments, not all parents attend these reviews.
44. The quality of pupils' annual reports is satisfactory overall although, in some year groups, the standard is higher. The best contain valuable pointers as to what the child needs to do next in order to improve. However, as at the last inspection, not all parents are given such clear information. The governors' annual report is not very helpful in the explanation of the information it contains.
45. Parents' views are taken on board well by the school. Informal canvassing of views through the headteacher, who is regularly in the playground, is supported by occasional formal consultations. Parents who made their views known to inspectors indicated that they feel listened to. They see any concerns or complaints as being responded to well. The presence of

the headteacher in the playground makes him readily approachable and supports an ‘open door’ policy.

46. The Friends’ Association has recently been revived after a two-year dormant period. As it is only newly re-established, its contribution to school development has been limited. Few parents help in the school on a regular basis. However, overall parental support for their children’s learning is satisfactory, if somewhat patchy.
47. Links with the community are much the same as found in most schools. There are regular safety visits from the police and fire forces. The local area is used satisfactorily to support the curriculum, for example, through a visit to the local shops as part of work in geography. The local vicar visits the school regularly and continues to make a good contribution through his lively assemblies, which are much enjoyed by pupils. Involvement with the local community, such as when the choir sings for elderly people, contributes to the personal development of the pupils involved.
48. The satisfactory links with other schools contain two good features. The support the school has received through the Primary Network Link for the use of the interactive whiteboards has resulted in staff using them well. This development makes a good contribution to pupils’ learning. The school also has a good link with a local special school. Every year a two-day project is run within Year 6 in design and technology. This not only encourages a greater depth in pupils’ appreciation of design and technology, but it also aids pupils’ personal development through interaction with pupils with such differing needs. Transfer arrangements for Year 6 pupils to secondary education are typical of those found in most schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, including the leadership of the headteacher and key staff. Governance is also satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception Year is well led and managed.
- Not enough is done to spread good practice and to improve the weaker aspects of teaching and the curriculum.
- Not all subject co-ordinators’ roles are well enough developed.
- Financial management is good and focused on priorities for pupils’ education.

Commentary

49. Since the last inspection, there have been many changes of staff, resulting in many cases in changes to post holders of key responsibilities such as for English, mathematics and special educational needs. The headteacher has deployed staff appropriately, using their areas of expertise. As a result, the school has continued to provide pupils with a satisfactory quality of education.
50. There has been satisfactory improvement in the areas of weakness found at the last inspection. For example, the learning opportunities in the Nursery are now well organised to support children in working towards the nationally expected standards for their age. The level of support for pupils with special educational needs is better. However, there are areas in which

further improvements are required to ensure that the school meets all pupils' needs consistently and well enough.

51. The headteacher provides a satisfactory educational direction for the school and takes account of the views of staff and pupils. He involves staff fully in the process of school improvement planning. He ensures that the school runs smoothly on a day-by-day basis. The headteacher's strong presence around the school, particularly at lunchtimes and before and after school, ensures that behaviour is acceptable. He knows all the pupils well, is readily accessible to parents, and does much to ensure that the links with parents are good.
52. The deputy provides satisfactory support for the leadership and management of the school, and works well in partnership with the headteacher. The range of responsibilities allocated to the deputy, such as leading on assessment and checking pupils' progress, is appropriate. These responsibilities are carried out competently. The deputy has, for example, raised issues with individual teachers about the rate of progress of pupils in particular year groups. Together, the headteacher and deputy have a secure awareness of where teaching is most effective and also recognise that teaching is less effective in some year groups than in others.
53. The problem is that whilst pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 receive a good quality of education, there are pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have an education that is only just acceptable. Not enough is done to use the considerable strengths in the school in terms of effective teaching to improve the weaker elements. The school has the capacity, because it has some particularly good teaching, to deal with the weaknesses and improve the quality of education. Presently, there is not a sharp enough focus from the headteacher and staff team on improving pupils' learning and progress by raising the quality of teaching where it is not sufficiently strong. The deputy provides a good example to others in her teaching, as does the mathematics co-ordinator, for example, but their practice is not well enough shared or used as a developmental tool for the school.
54. Leadership and management of the provision for the Nursery and Reception children are good. There is a good team approach from all the staff in this part of the school that meets children's needs well. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is efficient. Satisfactory leadership and management are provided for the key subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, not all co-ordinators' roles are well enough developed. The role of the ICT co-ordinator has not moved on well enough since the last inspection and is unsatisfactory. This lack of development is reflected in the weaknesses in this area, particularly in the lack of use of computers to support learning across the subjects. Other subject co-ordinators' roles are too informal and insufficiently effective. This is particularly evident in the leadership of the humanities.
55. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths but their awareness of its weaknesses is less secure. However, governors are willing to question what the school does and, for example, they show initiative in having taken action to market the school. Their involvement in the financial management of the school is good. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met.
56. The school's approaches to financial management continue to support educational priorities well. The school has managed the recent period of falling rolls with its financial implications well. This is assisted by the clear and straightforward accounting system, which helps governors to follow with relative ease what is going on. The presence on the governing body of a person with the necessary experience and expertise also does much to support the school in

this area. The school readily operates a three-year budget view using standard projections and this helps to identify and prepare the school for where shortfalls may occur.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	543,200
Total expenditure	553,925
Expenditure per pupil	2,517

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	33,092
Balance carried forward to the next year	22,367

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter the Nursery after their third birthday and transfer to the Reception class in the September of the school year in which they are five. Almost all the children in the Reception class have attended the Nursery. Overall, attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below that expected nationally. Skills in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, are particularly low. Five children in the Reception class and two in the Nursery have special educational needs.

Weaknesses found in the Nursery at the last inspection have been rectified satisfactorily. There is now clear planning for all the activities that children undertake, both for those led by adults and for those that the children choose themselves from a range provided. The good teaching has been maintained and built upon. There are good procedures for checking and recording children's progress and these are used well to guide their next steps of learning.

The provision is well led and managed. Teaching assistants and a nursery nurse are effectively deployed and supported in carrying out their responsibilities. Adults work well together as a team. There is good liaison between the Nursery and the Reception class teachers, who plan work at the right levels for the different age groups.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because teaching is very good and staff have high expectations of them.
- Much individual attention and support helps children to feel confident and happy and to settle well.

Commentary

57. Children achieve very well and almost all are on course to reach the standards expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year. A small number of children are likely to exceed the expected standards. Teaching and learning are very good. Adults in both the Nursery and Reception classes set clear boundaries and expect children to behave well. This ensures that the children know what is expected of them, so that they quickly learn the correct way to behave. When they do not conform, adults respond firmly but fairly, so that children learn to appreciate the needs of others.
58. Children already know the routines well because they are clear and well established. As a result, they settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss. Good levels of individual attention and support ensure that children feel secure and confident to seek help when required. All adults in the Nursery and Reception class provide good role models by treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. These good examples lead to trusting relationships and help the children to succeed.

59. Nursery children gain confidence from being with Reception children during times when the two classes are mixed. Adults engage in play alongside children and demonstrate play activities effectively. As a result, boys and girls and children from different ethnic backgrounds mix well and sustain good levels of concentration. Effective routines ensure that children know the hygiene procedures when using the toilet and even the youngest children put on and take off their coats independently. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably, and put up their hands when answering questions. They are expected to clear up after themselves, which they do well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's spoken language and to increase their vocabulary.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught well.
- Occasionally, the focus of follow-up activities after direct teaching is not sharp enough.

Commentary

60. Good teaching and learning result in children achieving well. Almost all are on course to come close to the expected goals at the end of the Reception Year, although only a few are likely to achieve them fully. One or two are likely to exceed the expected standard.
61. Adults in both classes take every opportunity to demonstrate spoken language and to develop children's speech and vocabulary during play activities. The Nursery teacher is skilful in questioning children about their play so that they learn to give more than one-word answers and repeat new words. Good use is made of songs and rhymes as well as objects children bring in from home to introduce new words and initial letter sounds. The Reception teacher uses familiar picture books well to develop children's early reading and writing skills. For example, as children retell the story from the pictures, she writes what they say. Through this activity she demonstrates letter formation, words and sentences. In this way, children learn that print communicates meaning and is written and read from left to right.
62. Teachers provide some stimulating imaginative play situations for developing conversations and practising writing. As a result of good direct teaching in whole-class and group activities, all but the least capable children in the Reception class read and write their names and are beginning to recognise and write some familiar letters. The most capable children learn, for example, to recognise different forms of writing, such as lists, and how they are set out differently from stories. Almost all children show an interest in books because of the good use of stories to engage their interest and imagination. As a result, when looking at books, children turn the pages in the right direction and tell the story from the pictures. A few are beginning to recognise familiar words and phrases in a simple repetitive text.
63. There are a few occasions when lessons are not planned in enough detail to identify the smaller steps of learning that children need to take towards the broader learning goals. This means that the focus, particularly of follow-up activities, is not sharp enough.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Numeracy skills are developed well as a result of good teaching.
- Whole-class teaching is reinforced effectively with a good range of follow-up activities.
- Occasionally, the more capable children are not challenged as well as they should be.

Commentary

64. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Children achieve well. Although almost all are on course to come close to the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception Year, they are unlikely to reach them fully. Only a few are likely to reach the expected standard and one or two to exceed it.
65. A good range of practical activities covers the full range of mathematics including number, shapes and measures. Good use is made of counting games, rhymes, and visual aids to capture children's interest and develop their numeracy skills well. In the Nursery, for example, by copying and joining in with number rhymes, children gain familiarity with numbers and with counting forwards and back. The Reception teacher makes good use of the interactive whiteboard, large cut out cardboard coins and real money to help children become familiar with coins and their values. This learning about money is reinforced successfully through games and role-play in the 'County Bridge Supermarket.'
66. Good direct teaching in whole-class activities is followed up well with adult led tasks and independent activities that successfully reinforce teaching. Assessment information is usually used well to group children for different tasks and to plan work that consolidates and extends the whole-class learning. However, there are occasionally times when the work set is not sufficiently challenging, especially for children capable of higher attainment.

OTHER AREAS OF LEARNING

67. Provision in **knowledge and understanding of the world** and in **physical and creative development** was sampled. Not enough evidence was gathered to make secure judgements on the provision in each area of learning.
68. A satisfactory range of learning experiences is provided, both indoors and in the outdoor quadrangle area, that develops children's creativity, knowledge and understanding of the world and small physical and manipulative skills. Nursery children, for example, are helped to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world as they learn about the weather. They compare what they see through the window with weather pictures and dress a teddy in suitable outdoor clothing for cold weather. Teachers make good use of topics such as 'houses and homes' to develop children's understanding about buildings and the materials used to make them.
69. There are adequate opportunities for children to play with wet and dry sand and with water, to build using large bricks and to garden in the quadrangle. However, not enough use is made of the large, outdoor play area to follow trails, to develop aspects of road safety or to explore pushes and pulls, for example, when playing with wheeled toys. The lack of climbing and balancing equipment limits opportunities for daily physical exercise.
70. ICT skills are satisfactorily developed as children use computers to play games and to support their work in other areas of learning. For example, in the Reception class, children use the interactive whiteboard to match coins and to 'drag' them into a purse. Some good, individual support is provided for children with special needs. Consequently, these children are able to achieve as well as others. In the Nursery, the nursery nurse taught a child how to instruct a computer to play a game by touching the screen. Effective demonstration helped the child to quickly learn how to touch the screen in the right places and this resulted in good development of hand-eye co-ordination.

71. Satisfactory opportunities increase children's competence in using paint and other materials to make pictures and friezes. For example, they use salt dough successfully to make models of houses and blocks of flats. Role-play areas are set up to promote independent play and these support children in acting out imaginary situations in the home or at the supermarket. However, there is not always enough variation in the creative activities that are available each day to extend children's creative and investigative skills when they play independently.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in Years 2 and 5, and very good progress in Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are only just adequate in Years 3 and 4.
- The co-ordinator provides a good example in her teaching.
- Not enough use is made of test data to provide a basis for action.
- Too little is done to share the good practice in teaching in order to improve the weaker teaching.
- Support assistants are used well to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

72. Pupils' results in the end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2004 were below the national average. They were also below average when compared with the results of other schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. In the end-of-Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2004, pupils' performance was above the national average in reading and broadly in line with it in writing. Compared with the results of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was well above average in reading and above average in writing. The 2004 results are similar to those at the last inspection in Year 6 and also in writing in Year 2. The reading results are now better. Results have varied in the intervening years because of the natural differences found in the ability of year groups.
73. Present standards are at the level expected nationally in Years 2 and 6 across all strands of English. Pupils' achievement is good in Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 6 in relation to their capabilities. However, progress is uneven as pupils move up through the school. In Year 1, progress is securely satisfactory and good gains are made when pupils enter Year 2. However, progress slows in Years 3 and 4 and is only just acceptable. It picks up again to a good rate in Year 5 and it is very good in Year 6. This means that although pupils' achievement is no better than satisfactory in Year 6, they are now moving on rapidly because of very good teaching.
74. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, variations in the quality of teaching are the direct cause of pupils' uneven progress. In Years 2, 5 and 6, expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are high. Teaching is sharply focused on what pupils need to learn next. Activities challenge pupils and engage their interest so that, in Year 6 in particular, pupils work hard and give of their best. In Year 2, for example, pupils enjoy learning letter sounds and blends through lively and fun activities. There is good attention to

the basics of early reading and writing in Year 2, building well on the steady development of these areas in Year 1.

75. Marking is good in Years 1, 2 and 5, and it is very good in Year 6. Older pupils in particular are told clearly what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. In Years 5 and 6, marking refers to pupils' individual targets and this keeps pupils focused on what they are aiming to achieve. Although undertaken regularly in Years 3 and 4, marking is significantly less effective in supporting learning. Targets are not given enough focus and are not reviewed regularly. In some cases, individual targets are unambitious, particularly for the more capable pupils.
76. Expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are lower in Years 3 and 4 than in the other year groups. This is particularly evident in the low expectations of presentation and handwriting in Year 4, and in the ineffective teaching of handwriting in Year 3. Nevertheless, there is some accurate teaching of basic literacy skills in Years 3 and 4 and pupils are given an adequate range of learning opportunities, including support in developing writing for different purposes.
77. Throughout the school, good attention is given to the development of speaking and listening skills. Support staff are deployed well in all classes to assist the learning of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils benefit from the intensive support they receive in small groups or in one-to-one situations. As a result, they progress at the same rate as their classmates, as do pupils with English as an additional language. A weakness is that the use of computers is not established in all year groups as a means of supporting pupils' learning.
78. The overall leadership and management of English are satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides a good example for others in her teaching. She works well with the staff to implement whole-school initiatives to raise standards, such as a new approach this term to the teaching of writing. However, the good practice in teaching is not shared well enough or used sufficiently to develop the weaker teaching. Not enough use is made of the school's data to provide a basis for action, even though it clearly shows the unevenness of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6. Although the checking and development of teaching and learning are adequate overall, they require some improvement. The overall quality of provision is much the same as at the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

79. There is satisfactory development of pupils' language and literacy skills through other subjects. Almost all teachers encourage discussion and hold effective question-and-answer sessions to develop speaking and listening skills. In all classes, there is adequate attention to reading and writing in other subjects. The extent to which pupils are encouraged to read for research and to write in a variety of styles in Year 6 is impressive. The attention to language and literacy skills in all subjects in Year 6 makes a very significant contribution to the older pupils' progress in English and challenges the more capable pupils well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Year 2 and also make good progress in Years 5 and 6.

- Progress is unsatisfactory in Year 3 and is barely adequate in Year 4.
- The co-ordinator provides a good example in her teaching.
- Not enough is done to share the good practice in the school to improve the less effective teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good assistance by support staff.

Commentary

80. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were below the national average. They were also below average when compared with the results achieved by other schools with pupils whose attainment was similar at the end of Year 2. In the 2004 tests in mathematics at the end of Year 2, pupils' results were well above the national average. In comparison with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were in the top five per cent of schools. The Year 6 results were much the same as at the last inspection. The Year 2 results were significantly better than at the last inspection.
81. Present standards are at the level expected nationally in Year 6 and above this level in Year 2. Pupils now in Year 6 are achieving satisfactorily and those in Year 2 are doing well in relation to their capabilities. However, pupils' progress is inconsistent as they move up through the school. It is satisfactory in Year 1, and it speeds up to a good rate in Year 2 as a result of effective teaching. Progress is unsatisfactory in Year 3 because pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The work in this year does not build well enough on what the pupils already know, understand and can do. In Year 4, there is also some degree of underachievement because work is not always well enough matched to pupils' needs. Progress picks up again to a good rate in Year 5 where pupils are again challenged well. In Year 6, although present achievement is satisfactory, pupils are moving on well. The good progress in Years 2, 5 and 6 results from good teaching characterised by high expectations, with good challenge for all groups of pupils.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although it varies in different years. In the best teaching, in Years 2, 5 and 6, the pace is good. There is a clear focus on what pupils need to learn next and work is matched well to pupils' differing needs. These features of teaching result in effective learning by pupils who tackle the tasks set with confidence. In these year groups, teachers emphasise the correct mathematical terms and this contributes to pupils' developing understanding. They are skilled at gaining pupils' interest. As a result, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, in particular, apply themselves well and are productive in their habits of work.
83. In other year groups, the level of challenge for pupils of differing capability, and particularly those of higher attainment, is not as good. Expectations about presentation of work are also lower. In Years 3 and 4, these are the aspects of teaching that most need improvement. There are also features of the management of pupils that are not as good as they should be. Where this is the case, pupils are insufficiently attentive. In one Year 3 lesson, there was an instance of ongoing misbehaviour. There are also examples of pupils lacking self-discipline and calling out answers, because the teacher does not deal with this behaviour well enough.
84. In effective teaching, a variety of approaches is used to hold pupils' interest. For example, there is particularly good use of the interactive whiteboards. There are examples of the use of ICT in classrooms, for instance in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. However, computers are not used well enough to promote learning in mathematics for all pupils more generally. Support staff work well with pupils with special educational needs and are effective in keeping them involved and interested. Pupils respond well, try hard and progress well when such support is provided.

85. There is good marking in Years 2, 5 and 6. The teachers mark pupils' work in a way that challenges them to improve and also tells them what they are doing well. However, some marking of pupils' work, particularly in Years 3 and 4, does not extend pupils' thinking in this way. Although targets are set for individual pupils, not all teachers ensure that these targets are matched by the work covered, or that pupils are assessed against their targets. Assessment was used very well in a Year 6 lesson to create additional challenges for particular groups of pupils.
86. Not all teachers provide pupils with enough problem-solving activities, although some teachers make good provision in this area of mathematics. Furthermore, investigations are not used sufficiently across the year groups to promote independent learning.
87. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and provides a good example in her teaching. Although satisfactory strategies are in place for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning, they are not sufficiently effective in improving the weaker teaching. The examples of good teaching in the school are not used well enough for this purpose, for instance, through team teaching and demonstration lessons. The inconsistencies in aspects of provision found at the last inspection have not been corrected.

Mathematics across the curriculum

88. There is satisfactory use and development of pupils' mathematics skills across the subjects. For example, in science lessons, pupils use block and line graphs to record and interpret data. Those in Year 6 use their knowledge of arithmetic to find the average of several results in scientific tests. Year 6 pupils make good links with ICT when they produce spreadsheets to work out the areas and perimeters of rectangles.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Year 2 results in pupils achieving well.
- Pupils are taught well in Years 5 and 6 and make good progress.
- Progress is only just acceptable in Year 3 and it is unsatisfactory in Year 4.
- Good practice is not shared well enough and is not used to rectify weaknesses in teaching.
- Not enough use is made of computers to develop skills in science.

Commentary

89. The results of Year 6 pupils in the 2004 National Curriculum tests were below the national average. They were also below average when compared with those of other schools whose pupils had attained similarly at the end of Year 2. Teachers assessed pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 in 2004 as broadly average for all schools nationally and for similar schools.
90. Present standards in Years 2 and 6 are at the level expected nationally, as at the last inspection. The difference between the standards of the present Year 6 and the 2004 test results is largely a reflection of the natural variation in the ability of year groups. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 have the expected depth of knowledge and understanding in all the areas of science required by the National Curriculum, including in scientific enquiry.

91. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with good teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well in relation to their capabilities. After a satisfactory start in Year 1, all groups of pupils, including the most capable and those with special educational needs, make rapid gains in learning in Year 2. This is because lessons are lively, interesting and varied, and work is well matched to pupils' differing needs. Good use is made of resources, including the interactive whiteboard, so that learning moves forward at a brisk pace.
92. The achievement of pupils now in Year 6 is satisfactory. However, all groups of pupils make inconsistent progress as they move up through Years 3 to 6. Teaching is only just adequate in Year 3 and is unsatisfactory in Year 4. As a result, too little progress is made. The main problem in Years 3 and 4, and particularly in Year 4, is that teachers' expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining are not high enough. Coverage of the curriculum is at times superficial so that pupils do not deepen their knowledge and understanding sufficiently. In Year 4, much of the work in pupils' books, particularly that of lower-attaining pupils, is unfinished. Marking fails to inform pupils about how well they are doing and what they should do to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not learn from their mistakes, have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and do not achieve as well as they should.
93. Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 helps pupils to catch up, particularly with skills in scientific enquiry. In a well-planned and paced lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils were given a good deal of independence in planning and carrying out their experiments, which contributed well to the development of their investigative skills. Time was used efficiently. Questioning was very effective in challenging and checking pupils' understanding of the factors that affect the speed of dissolving sugar. In both Years 5 and 6, marking is effective in helping pupils to improve their work and pupils respond to teachers' comments.
94. There is adequate use and development of mathematical skills in science, such as when pupils record the results of tests in tables and graphs. However, there is too little use of computers as a means of presenting findings. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to write in science, although the extent to which worksheets and prescribed formats are used in some classes restricts the development of skills in writing independently.
95. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The deputy headteacher, who is the co-ordinator, provides a good example for teaching in science and is firmly focused on raising standards. She provides good support for colleagues. Thorough analysis of test results is undertaken to identify areas of the curriculum that need improvement. Some checking of teaching and learning through lesson observations has been undertaken, but this has so far failed to identify the extent of the inconsistencies in provision. Further work is needed through more thorough checking of teaching and standards in all classes to ensure consistency across the school and to eradicate the weaknesses in teaching. The effective practice is not used well enough to develop the quality of teaching in the years in which it is weaker. Overall, the provision in science now is much the same as at the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory** overall, but there are some significant weaknesses, particularly in the use of ICT across the curriculum and in the provision for younger pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Computers are used well to support independent learning and to challenge higher-attaining pupils in Year 6.
- In most years, pupils' ICT skills are not used and developed well enough in other subjects.
- Teaching and learning are not checked, and pupils' standards and progress are not systematically assessed.
- Resources for teaching and learning have improved considerably.

Commentary

96. As at the last inspection, the standard of pupils' work in ICT is at the level expected nationally in Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have satisfactorily completed the groundwork for producing a page for a website. They successfully identify how to construct formulae to enter into a spreadsheet so that the area and the perimeter of a rectangle can be calculated. As pupils move up from Year 3 to Year 6 they make satisfactory progress in developing their basic computer skills. However, the lack of application of these skills in other subjects in most years prevents pupils from working at a higher level.
97. Pupils in Year 2 are underachieving and have not developed their ICT skills sufficiently. This is because they have not completed the work they should have done by this stage. This represents a decline since the last inspection. The content and quality of presentation of Year 2 pupils' ICT books are unsatisfactory. Work is untitled, much is undated, and not all material is in date order. The books contain only one piece of work from the present term. A satisfactory amount of work is covered during Year 1. Whilst in Year 1, pupils use computer programs to produce repeating patterns, a bar graph, and an image using a drawing package. They have also added a few words of text to some graphics. The work completed in Year 1 is of a satisfactory amount and is at the right level for pupils of this age. The problem is that Year 2 pupils have not built adequately on their Year 1 work this term.
98. The overall quality of teaching and learning in ICT lessons is satisfactory, except in Year 2, where too little work has been done. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and teach skills and procedures accurately. As a result, pupils are correctly prepared, through instruction and demonstrations, for the tasks that they undertake on the computers. On occasions, such as in a Year 4 lesson, pupils are provided with guidance sheets that remind them of how to use the tool bars and how to give commands to the computer. These sheets help pupils to get on with their work without relying too heavily on the teacher for assistance. Although teaching and learning were satisfactory overall in a Year 3 lesson, there was insufficient focus on the correct terminology and this limited the extent to which pupils were able to fully understand the set exercise.
99. In the best teaching, in Year 6 where teaching is good, the teacher sets clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and attentiveness. Teaching proceeds at a good pace and challenges pupils, which gains pupils' involvement and elicits a lively response. Tasks are sufficiently 'open ended' to allow pupils to arrive at different solutions. As a result, pupils' confidence in ICT increases, along with the development of their understanding. Good ongoing informal assessment of the quality of pupils' learning ensures that the teacher intervenes productively in pupils' learning.
100. In addition to the lack of coverage of the ICT curriculum this term in Year 2, there is other evidence that younger pupils are not taught ICT skills systematically. For example, some Year 3 pupils have difficulty in changing the font size of text. Many are not confident in saving

work, which is a basic skill that they should have acquired in earlier years. Overall, on entry to Year 3, pupils do not have the independence expected at this age in their ICT work.

101. The leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory. The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped and low profile. Although a long-term plan of work for ICT is now in place, statutory requirements are now met and facilities to support teaching have improved significantly, there is too little use of ICT across other subjects. There is no formal checking that all classes are covering the required work. There is a lack of monitoring of teachers' planning and lessons and, as a result, the headteacher and co-ordinator do not have an adequate overview of the effectiveness of teaching and learning or of the standards pupils attain. Similarly, there are no formal arrangements for the assessment of pupils' ICT skills and knowledge. Control technology remains an area for development. A good recent development in classrooms is the installation of interactive whiteboards, which are being used well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

102. The provision for ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Year 6 pupils make good use of computers for research in several subjects. However, this is not the picture in other year groups, where pupils make only limited use of their ICT skills across the subjects. Although teachers are making good use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms, and pupils are sometimes actively involved, this does not in itself develop pupils' personal ICT skills. Not enough use is being made of the computers in pupils' classrooms. As a consequence, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise skills which they learn in the ICT room, and they are not using computers often enough to increase their understanding of other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory** because it is too patchy and inconsistent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Year 6 and pupils are making good progress in the topics covered this year.
- Teaching and the range of learning opportunities do not adequately develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they move up from Year 1 to Year 5.
- There is too little checking and development of teaching and the curriculum.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use and develop their ICT skills.

Commentary

103. Pupils now in Year 6 are working at the level expected nationally in the topics covered this school year. They have a secure body of knowledge about Greece, for example, the climate, weather, landscape and transport. They also have the understanding of rivers normally found at this age. Pupils competently undertake enquiry and apply their geographical skills as, for instance, they write instructions for a journey between their homes and local places. Pupils' achievement is good in the work covered this year in Year 6, but this is not the picture in the rest of the school.
104. Pupils in Years 1 to 5 are working below the level expected nationally and their achievement is unsatisfactory. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the local area and of the physical and human features of places are less well developed than they should be. Throughout

Years 1 to 5, the coverage of topics lacks the necessary depth to support pupils in making adequate progress.

105. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, although it is good in Year 6. Teaching is well focused on what pupils need to learn in Year 6 and topics are covered well. Marking is thorough and contributes to pupils' developing understanding. There are good opportunities for Year 6 pupils to use computers for research and to ask and answer geographical questions.
106. Although there are occasional instances of computers used to support learning in Years 1 to 5, this aspect is underdeveloped. Pupils do not sufficiently use and develop their ICT skills in geography. They do not have enough opportunities to pose their own questions and then to investigate them. In general, expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are too low. Work is seldom varied to take account of pupils' differing capabilities. Unsatisfactory presentation in pupils' books is allowed to pass without comment. All these factors contribute to pupils' unsatisfactory achievement.
107. The leadership and management of geography are unsatisfactory. There is too little checking of teaching and the curriculum. In particular, not enough is done to ensure that provision develops pupils' geographical knowledge, understanding and skills from year to year and through the separate topics covered during each year. Although the school has identified some shortcomings in Year 3 this year, the more widespread weaknesses have not been picked up. Geography has not been a main priority for the school since the last inspection and provision has not developed sufficiently.

History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 are making good progress this year because they are well taught.
- The coverage of topics in Years 1 to 5 is too superficial and pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not developed well enough.
- There is too little checking of teaching and the curriculum.
- There is not enough use and development of pupils' ICT skills.

Commentary

108. To a large extent, the provision in history mirrors that found in geography. Pupils in Year 6, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are doing well in the topics covered this year and are working at the level expected nationally. Their knowledge and understanding of Ancient Greece have developed well. For example, pupils successfully compare and contrast life in Athens and Sparta. They have a secure awareness of the causes of events such as the Battle of Marathon.
109. History is well taught in Year 6 and pupils are provided with many stimulating and challenging learning opportunities. A good amount of work has been covered this term. Skills in writing for different purposes are developed successfully. Effective use is made of computers for research and pupils are encouraged to be independent as learners. They ask historical questions and investigate questions posed by the teacher. Marking is good and provides a dialogue that helps to move learning on at a good pace. Expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are appropriately high and work is varied well to meet pupils' differing needs. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and good effort to the challenging and well-focused teaching.
110. Apart from in Year 6, the overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. The coverage of topics is too superficial and does not adequately develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Not only are many topics covered too thinly, but also the focus within a topic changes too quickly. In the work in Year 5 on Britain since the 1950s, for example, many areas are covered but are not gone into as fully as they should be.
111. Expectations of pupils' capabilities in developing historical knowledge and understanding are too low. As a result, pupils are underachieving in history and, except in Year 6, standards are below the level expected nationally. Pupils in Year 2, for example, do not have the expected knowledge and understanding of famous people from the past and the events with which they are associated. In other year groups, pupils' awareness of historical periods is more basic than expected nationally.
112. Although the provision in history requires improvement, there are some good features. In Year 5, for example, the interactive whiteboard is used well to provide presentations, such as on Victorian schools. There is also successful use of drama teaching methods to help pupils to empathise with and understand the way of life of people in the past. The use of evidence, such as diary extracts, interests the pupils. Year 4 pupils have benefited from talking to an elderly visitor who told them about life in Britain during the Second World War. However, there is too little recorded work in pupils' books in many year groups. This results in missed opportunities to develop and extend pupils' understanding. Unsatisfactory presentation is accepted, particularly in Years 4 and 5. Although computers are used well to support learning in Year 6, not enough use is made of them in other year groups.
113. The leadership and management of history are unsatisfactory. In particular, and as in geography, there is too little checking of teaching and the curriculum to evaluate how well they contribute to pupils' learning. This prevents weaknesses from being identified and rectified. The provision has not developed adequately since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning opportunities are unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 5 and there is underachievement in these years.
- There is too little development of literacy and ICT skills.
- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

114. Standards in the present Year 6 are similar to those found at the last inspection and are at the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. The achievement of pupils now in Year 6 is satisfactory. For example, they can describe and understand the significance of religious objects, places, people, books and events from Christianity and other world religions, such as Islam. They make simple comparisons between different religions and show good respect and tolerance for the values and beliefs of others.
115. Achievement in Year 2 is satisfactory, as at the last inspection, and standards are at the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Satisfactory teaching and learning opportunities in Years 1 and 2 provide pupils with the expected knowledge and understanding of special people, festivals and traditions in Judaism and the Christian faith. Consequently, in Year 2, pupils remember and write the outline of stories, and recognise features of religious life and practice. Their knowledge and understanding are deepened through suitable activities including writing at length and through art and design activities. For example, as pupils make a Jewish hat or 'Kippah', they learn when and how it is worn and about the synagogue.
116. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, although it is satisfactory in Years 1, 2 and 6. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning opportunities in Years 3 to 5 lead to underachievement in these year groups. This is mainly because coverage of the curriculum in these years is patchy and thin and there is too little recorded work.
117. Teachers' expectations are too low in Years 3 to 5 so that when work is recorded, it is often at a low level and undemanding. All groups of pupils are frequently given the same work, which does not always provide sufficient challenge, especially for the most capable pupils. There are some adequate opportunities for pupils to respond to what they have learnt, for example, in Year 4, by writing from the point of view of different religious characters. However, overall in Years 3 to 5, there is an inconsistent approach to the recording of pupils' work. Opportunities are too often missed to develop pupils' literacy skills through longer pieces of writing. Marking is inconsistent. In some classes, particularly in Year 4, unsatisfactory handwriting and presentation are accepted too readily, without any attempt to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve their work.
118. In Year 6, there are some suitably challenging activities that include preparation for and use of the Internet for research. However, in almost all other year groups, there is too little use of ICT, for example, to draft and present work or for researching information.
119. The leadership and management of religious education are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has reviewed the scheme of work in order to ensure that the requirements of the revised Walsall syllabus are met. Although this has identified aspects of the curriculum in need of improvement, there is insufficient checking of the quality of teaching across the school or of pupils' achievement. Consequently, the weaknesses in provision for religious education have not been identified and action is not being taken to correct them.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

120. Provision in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects was sampled through lesson observations, an analysis of pupils' recorded work and a scrutiny of teachers' planning. There was also some discussion with co-ordinators. Not enough evidence was gathered to make a secure overall judgement on the quality of provision in each subject.

Art and design

121. Pupils in Year 6 are working at the expected level and their achievement is satisfactory. They have experience of a range of drawing materials, but have had limited experience in the use of colour. Pupils in Year 5 are also reaching the expected standards. They share ideas with partners to develop the possibilities for their own work, and give reasons for their choice of a particular design. Not enough evidence was gathered to form secure judgements on the standards and achievement of pupils in other year groups.
122. Pupils' sketchbooks in Year 6 show that as pupils have moved up through the school, teachers have not given enough attention to detail, or to presentation and layout. Work in sketchbooks is not titled, dated or marked. However, work in the present year is well pitched for Year 6 pupils and is more appropriately challenging.
123. There is some good teaching and learning in Year 5. Present work is well linked to pupils' previous experience. In the task of producing a vase for a particular purpose, pupils were taken step-by-step through the stages of designing and making. Effective questioning by the teacher helped pupils to clarify their thinking and extended their ideas and their vocabulary, through the introduction of such words as 'rim', 'base' and 'vessel'. High expectations by the teacher and good relationships resulted in good behaviour on the part of pupils.
124. The leadership and management of art and design are satisfactory. Teachers' planning has improved and provides for the development of pupils' skills over time. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning, but there are no formal systems for assessing and recording pupils' knowledge and skills.

Design and technology

125. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are working at the level expected nationally, and are achieving well. Year 3 pupils understand why structures are constructed in a particular way, and can justify the use of particular materials. Many of them relate the choice of design and materials to the function of objects. Pupils in Year 2 can competently cut and stick materials. They have the expected knowledge of how to present a design.
126. The planning of lessons is detailed and effective. In the one design and technology lesson observed in Year 3 the lesson introduction successfully developed pupils' understanding. Instructions were clear and subsequent questioning led pupils to develop good understanding. Pupils in Year 3 were eager to contribute to the lesson but many boys found concentration difficult to sustain. In a lesson involving a design and technology activity in Year 2, teaching and learning were also good. The pupils performed according to their capabilities because of a good match of work to their needs and because their teacher had high expectations of them. Furthermore, support staff were well deployed and contributed effectively to pupils' learning, including that of pupils with special educational needs.

Music

127. A satisfactory range of musical experiences is planned, based on a published scheme of work, and is taught by a specialist, part-time teacher. These are supplemented by musical performances and an after-school club for the choir. In addition, there are opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to learn to play musical instruments, including woodwind and strings, free of charge.

128. Singing in hymn practices in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, while in Years 3 to 6, singing is above the level expected nationally both in hymn practices and in assemblies. In a lesson in Year 3 in which teaching and learning were satisfactory, the music teacher's calm manner and warm approach to pupils helped to motivate some who were reluctant to participate. However, the teacher had to deal with persistent, inattentive behaviour and this slowed the pace of learning. The leadership and management of music are satisfactory.

Physical education

129. Only one lesson was observed, a dance lesson in Year 6. In this lesson, pupils worked at the level expected nationally. They developed their skills very well because teaching and learning were very effective and sharply focused. In particular, the teacher demonstrated clearly and used video very well to help pupils identify how to enhance their performances. There was also effective support for pupils as they worked. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to evaluate the work in progress.
130. Planning indicates that teachers provide pupils with a satisfactory range of physical education experiences, including swimming, as they move up through the school. Walsall Football Club provides football coaching. There is adequate involvement in sporting competitions with other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

131. Provision in this area was sampled. No specific lessons were seen and not enough evidence was gathered to make a secure judgement about provision.
132. The range of the programme for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. It includes work on diet, health, sex and relationships education and the dangers of drugs misuse, as well as personal safety. This programme helps pupils to develop a safe and healthy lifestyle, gain confidence and develop positive relationships. Pupils' involvement with the school council, from Year 3 to Year 6, provides a good opportunity for them to experience democracy at first hand. It also helps pupils to feel valued as school citizens when they see their suggestions come to fruition.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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