

INSPECTION REPORT

CHERRY ORCHARD FIRST SCHOOL

Pershore

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116717

Headteacher: Mr. John Nelson

Lead inspector: Mrs Bernice Magson

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th September 2003

Inspection number: 257185

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	128
School address:	Cherry Orchard Persnore Worcestershire
Postcode:	WR10 1ET
Telephone number:	01386 552515
Fax number:	01386 550132
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M. Adams
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small first school situated in Persnore, a market town in Worcestershire. It admits pupils, aged 4 to 9, from the local community and neighbouring districts and has a special needs' unit for pupils with Able Autism. The social indicators are average. There is little movement of families in and out of the area. All pupils are of white British origin, and sometimes include a small number of Travellers' children. Their attainment on entry to school is average, and remains so overall at the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1. A quarter of the pupils have special educational needs. The school received a national achievement award in 2001 in recognition of its improving standards. The school is an integral part of its local community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18143	Bernice Magson	Lead inspector	English, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), special educational needs
14083	Andy Anderson	Lay inspector	
22884	Sandra Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Science, art and design, music, physical education
23686	Pam White	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, geography, religious education, Foundation Stage

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
THE ABLE AUTISM UNIT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This **effective school** provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. They attain average standards by the age of 9. The quality of teaching and learning, and leadership and management is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, behave very well, and develop very good relationships with others
- Pupils have too few opportunities for independent study
- Limited use of made of assessment in setting targets for improvement by the pupils, and in checking their effectiveness
- Teachers' marking gives pupils insufficient guidance on how to improve
- Plans for school improvement have some important shortcomings
- Pupils are fully included in all activities, with good provision for those pupils with special needs
- In promoting its strong family ethos, the school benefits from a good sense of pride, care and commitment by staff, governors, parents and the wider community
- The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage in their personal, social and emotional development

Generally, there has been a satisfactory rate of improvement since the last inspection in 1998. The teachers' planning is now satisfactory. Standards have improved in writing and physical education, and are now above average. Standards have declined in the assessments in science in Year 2 and have fallen in mathematics in Year 4. However, as a result of improved teaching in Year 4, standards are now rising at a rapid rate. The resources and accommodation have improved for reception children, and the equipment for ICT has been upgraded. The opening of the unit for pupils with special needs has improved the pupils' understanding of the needs of others.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average points scored in National Curriculum tests.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	C	B	D	E
Writing	B	B	A	B
Mathematics	C	A	D	E

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Overall the achievement of pupils is satisfactory throughout the school. Standards seen by inspectors in the school are average except in physical education where standards are above average and in reading in Year 2 where they are below average. Over the last three years pupils' results in the Year 2 national tests have been broadly average, although in 2002 standards in the national tests were well below pupils from similar schools in reading and mathematics. However, the test results in 2002 were depressed by the inclusion of special needs pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, though the pupils in Year 4 and those with special needs make good progress.

The pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are curious about the world around them and very eager to learn. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory**, and

they develop good social and moral understanding. Punctuality is good, and attendance is above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but good in Year 4 and in the reception class where teachers have higher expectations of their pupils, and learning has a greater challenge both in focused teaching activities and in pupils' own investigations. Some teachers make insufficient use of assessment to ensure that the lesson content is matched appropriately to pupils' individual needs. The teaching assistants make a good contribution to the teaching and learning. Similarly, parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning in the home.

The school has a satisfactory curriculum. The attractive learning environment enhances the provision. Good participation in sports is helping to raise standards in physical education. Good attention is given to the curriculum for personal and social development, and the pupils have a good understanding of citizenship and social responsibilities. The school's links with the community work well and enrich the curriculum, for example, through educational visits out of school. The teachers know their pupils well and care for them effectively so that they can succeed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

In general, the leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and key staff are satisfactory. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The work of the governing body is satisfactory overall, but some of their statutory duties are incomplete. The headteacher is very committed to the care and support of the staff and pupils, and is effective in creating good staff teams. However, there is insufficient vision and direction from the headteacher about the future aims of the school and a lack of clarity in the longer term planning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents have very positive views about the school. They take a keen interest in its work and give good support across a wide range of activities. The pupils enjoy school and participate eagerly in all its activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide the pupils with more opportunities for their own investigations and study
- Make greater use of assessment information to set targets with pupils and monitor their effectiveness
- Improve the teachers' marking so that the pupils have a better understanding of how to improve
- Improve the school's development plan so that it identifies clear long-term success criteria focused on raising standards, is carefully costed and is monitored rigorously by the headteacher, senior managers and the governing body.

To meet the statutory requirements it should also:

- include statutory information in the school prospectus
- review and update the school policies and procedures for the care and support of pupils and staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage and in Year 4 it is good. Standards are satisfactory overall. In the core subjects, standards are average by Years 2 and 4. There are some differences in the performance of boys and girls in national tests, but there is no consistent pattern. Since the inclusion of pupils from the Able Autism Unit in national tests, comparisons of test results have limited accuracy. The pupils with special educational needs achieve well towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over time, the Year 2 test results in writing are good and have shown a good rate of improvement
- In Years 1 to 3, the pupils' levels of independence and decision-making skills are under-developed, especially of the more able pupils
- The children in the Foundation Stage achieve standards above the expected levels in their personal, social, and emotional development
- The pupils have good speaking and listening skills. By Year 4, they use mature vocabulary for their age and can explain their ideas logically and systematically
- In reading, the Year 2 pupils attain below average levels. Although they read words accurately, their comprehension skills are weak.
- Standards have improved in physical education since the last inspection

Commentary

1. When the children start school in the reception class, they have attained expected levels appropriate for their age. They make good progress and achieve all their early learning goals by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1. Because staff emphasise it and teach it well, children make especially good progress in personal, social and emotional development. The children are prepared appropriately for the next stage of their education.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.4 (16.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.5 (15.2)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	15.9 (18.1)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Standards in national tests in Year 2 fluctuate, but a comparison of the average points scored over a three-year period shows that standards have exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2002, almost all pupils achieved the national expectations. The provisional results for Year 2 pupils in the national tests in 2003 indicate that standards have risen in mathematics and science and have been maintained at an above average level in writing. Nevertheless, in some lessons the pupils in Years 1 to 3 are under-challenged because the teachers tend to over-direct their work. The current inspection evidence indicates that standards in the core subjects are average by the end of Year 2.
3. In Year 3, the pupils are making satisfactory progress and achieving the nationally expected levels for their age. In Year 4, the rate of progress is more rapid because the teacher has higher expectations of pupils and challenges them well. Although standards by Year 4 are average in

English, mathematics and science, there is good improvement in the pupils' independent work and decision-making skills. For example, they visit the library and bring information and photographs to school to extend their knowledge. The more able pupils can draw comparisons and make predictions of outcomes based on their previous learning.

4. In physical education, standards are above average in Years 2 and 4, because of good specialist teaching and are satisfactory in all other foundation subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attendance is good. Their attitudes are very good and they behave very well in lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with their moral and social development notably good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils like coming to school and their attendance and punctuality are good
- They are very eager to learn
- The parents feel that the children behave well in the school. Behaviour is very good in lessons and good around the school
- The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good
- There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to appreciate wider world cultures

Commentary

5. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. They are attentive, co-operative and collaborate well together. They ask a good range of questions to satisfy their thirst for learning. When offered opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, at breaktimes and lunchtimes, they respond in a mature and responsible manner.
6. The vast majority of pupils behave very well overall. All staff have high expectations of what constitutes good behaviour and consistently implement the school's behaviour management procedures. In the Foundation Stage, the children behave very well. Their early personal development is very good. Already they have settled into school and understand the school rules. The very good behaviour resulting from this good provision is reflected in the absence of any recent exclusions. The school has established a good link with a school in a contrasting locality to help prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society. Although letters and emails have been exchanged the link is still in early stages of development.

Attendance

7. The attendance data held by the school supports the figures in the table below, but the electronic programme that produces the annual statutory absence report persistently produces different and less favourable figures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorized absence	
School data	3.6
National data	5.9

Unauthorized absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	128	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils are introduced to a satisfactory curriculum enriched by visitors and visits out of school. Although many monitoring procedures are informal, the teachers know their pupils well. The parents work hard to develop the quality of its provision.

Teaching and learning

The quality of the teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but vary considerably between classes. In the Foundation Stage and in Year 4, the teaching is mostly good. The school's assessment procedures are unsatisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are attentive, work hard and respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour
- Assessment data is not consistently used to match tasks to pupils' abilities
- There are too few opportunities for the pupils to work independently to extend their learning;
- Some very good teaching was seen in Years 3 and 4
- The marking gives the pupils insufficient guidance on how to improve
- The learning objectives and targets for improvement are not made sufficiently clear to the pupils and marking gives only limited guidance
- The teachers work hard to ensure good levels of inclusion in the learning activities for all pupils
- The teachers recognize the pupils' interests and make lessons relevant so that they are keen to learn
- The teaching assistants give good support in lessons, especially to the pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	5(16%)	13(42%)	13(42%)	0(0%)	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.

8. In the reception class, the teacher's good understanding of how children of this age learn strengthens the quality of the teaching and learning. Moreover, good relationships are established, so that the children are confident. Working in small groups with good opportunities for talk, the children explore and discover the world around them. Skilled questioning by the teacher ensures that the learning objectives of the activities are appropriately developed, and that the children's knowledge and understanding increase successfully. The pace of learning is good.

9. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teachers' expectations are satisfactory, but there is little opportunity for extended learning to take place. The lessons are well organized and the pupils are managed effectively. In Year 2, the teaching groups are large and the opportunities for independent learning are limited. The pupils are not used to investigative work and find it difficult. Both teachers make some good links between subjects to improve the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in a letter writing activity, the Year 2 pupils were involved in constructing questions to find out about "Katie Morag and the Isle of Struay" thereby linking the activity effectively with their work in geography. There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets. The teacher has a satisfactory understanding of the pupils' standards through regular testing but there is insufficient use of this data in tracking pupils' progress or in identifying subject strengths and weaknesses.
10. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching and learning improve. In the better lessons, the teachers have secure subject knowledge; identify the criteria of good work and praise good achievement. They vary the activities to maintain the momentum of the learning and motivate the pupils to improve their performance. The older pupils in Year 4 express their views and ideas confidently because the teacher values their contributions. Her skills of questioning are very good and promote discussions. "I've two or three things I'd like to say..." they suggest, and the teacher and class listen intently and respond with candour to new ideas. The teacher is beginning to extend these frank discussions very effectively into a written dialogue in exercise books. This expertise is not yet evident across the school. The Year 4 teacher gives good attention to tracking pupils' progress and as a result the rates of learning are increased because tasks challenge pupils more appropriately.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and in the Foundation Stage it is good. It is inclusive and offers some good enrichment experiences. The accommodation is very good. Overall, the resources are satisfactory and as a result of recent improvements the provision for ICT is now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is planned for the inclusion of pupils with autism in lessons alongside their peer groups
- There is insufficient monitoring of the curriculum by subject leaders. As a result, there is a limited consistency of approach in the development of the curriculum, except in literacy and numeracy
- A good range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum
- Participation in sporting clubs and competitions is helping to raise standards
- There is good breadth in the learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about the heritage of wider world communities, for example, in art, music and dance

Commentary

11. The school has adopted national guidelines to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets all the general statutory requirements. However, further work is needed to match the scheme to the needs of the whole range of the pupils. The timetable allocations allow all subjects to be taught to a satisfactory depth. In the Foundation Stage, the staff works closely with the parents to provide a full and interesting range of curricular experiences. The school addresses sex and relationships issues as appropriate. An outside agency provides good help with the presentation of a "Drugs' awareness" programme, but there is no written drugs' policy. There are useful curriculum links with the local receiving middle school. This helps to provide a progressive curriculum and learning continuity for the pupils as they enter the next stage of their education.
12. There is a high level of inclusion into the mainstream classes for the pupils from the able autism unit. They are helped to work with other pupils by the very well informed support staff who use the pupils individual education plans to focus clearly on the next step in learning. The links with

parents, previous schools, the unit and main school classes ensure a smooth and successful transition in the curriculum for these pupils.

13. Because subject co-ordinators do not effectively monitor and evaluate the curriculum weaknesses are not always identified and the school's improvement plan lacks rigorous attention and structured enhancement of the curriculum. Some cross-curricular links are evident, but mostly through literacy. There is a wide range of visits and visitors available for all classes. Good use is made of the local vicinity and the wider area. Visits enrich the work in all subjects, particularly history and geography. There is an annual residential trip for pupils in Years 3 and 4, where the outdoor pursuits include archery, abseiling and orienteering. This trip gives pupils good opportunities to work at challenging team activities, such the making of a 'survival' tent. The physical education programme for sport provides opportunities for the pupils to compete against other schools. All pupils learn a musical instrument by Year 4.
14. There are sufficient members of staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The school's accommodation contributes well to the quality of education. The light, bright, airy and spacious building is in very good order. The attractive, well-tended school grounds, with their many different, purposeful zones, are a good environmental resource. There is also good ICT provision for pupils. The resources in some subjects, however, are only just satisfactory. In some lessons, there are insufficient quantities for simultaneous, whole-class 'hands on' work; and many subjects have few specialist resources.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides effective care for its pupils. However, some procedures are not formalized and rely on the staff 's knowledge of the pupils. The involvement of the pupils in the school's work and development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good pastoral support of the pupils, and the caring, committed staff know them very well
- The written policies and formal procedures for welfare, health and safety do not conform with legislation
- There are insufficient formal opportunities for pupils to express their views about the school

Commentary

15. There are very good relationships within the school and the pupils feel happy and secure. Teachers know their pupils well. Pupils and staff have high levels of trust with each other and are honest and open in their dealings. However, the school does not have a school council and there are few additional opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for what happens in the school.
16. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. School procedures are explained well and parents understand that they should send their children to school.
17. There are good arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils on visits out of school. Supervision at breaks and lunchtimes is alert and vigilant.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with the parents and the community is good. Satisfactory links are made with local schools and colleges. There are also good links with specialist providers for pupils with special needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents hold the school in very high regard
- They are very supportive of their children's learning at home and at school

- The induction arrangements are good and much appreciated by parents, particularly those who have children with special needs
- The “Parents and Friends Association” is very active in support of the school, both socially and financially
- The school prospectus omits some items of statutory required information.

Commentary

18. The parents indicate that they are very pleased with most aspects of the school. They state freely that the headteacher and his staff are very approachable and the school is always welcoming. They receive regular information in the way of newsletters and letters about specific events and activities. A good number of parents help in the classrooms and accompany the children on out-of-school trips. They are proud of the school and its achievements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.

The headteacher provides sound leadership and management and the governing body satisfactory governance. All the leaders of the school are strongly committed to providing an inclusive education in which the care and needs of all pupils are fully considered.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good partnership between the headteacher and governors providing support and guidance to each other in their duties
- There are some significant shortcomings in the school’s long-term planning
- The establishment and on-going management of the Able Autism Unit shows a good team commitment and vision on the part of the headteacher and governors
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well-managed and effective
- A thorough analysis of assessment data provides the school with an accurate measure of current standards
- There is an appropriate system of professional development for all staff linked effectively to the school priorities
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning.

Commentary

19. The headteacher places great emphasis on the development of a strong family ethos in which pupils feel happy and secure and new staff are integrated effectively into the staff team. The parents recognize his good endeavours and appreciate the caring environment created within the school. Currently, the school is experiencing a time of staff change and although the headteacher is committed to raising standards, he is finding it difficult to predict and plan for its long-term future. There is little monitoring of teaching and learning and the work of subject coordinators is limited. The school’s improvement plan lacks vision and direction, and is without clear success criteria against which to measure progress. As a result the headteacher’s leadership of the curriculum and teaching is unsatisfactory.

20. The governors take an active role in the functioning of the school, make regular visits and have a strong commitment towards creating effective governance. Governors’ committees are well structured and they fulfill most of their statutory duties. Governors’ roles are allocated so that they have a satisfactory overview of the entire curriculum. Their financial decisions are linked carefully to initiatives to improve the curriculum and environment of the school. Governors understand the school’s strengths and weaknesses and recognize the need for clear aims and priorities. Prudent financial planning has enabled them to maintain good levels of staffing and an attractive learning environment. For example, careful budgeting for a library and computer suite has improved the learning resources available to the pupils. However, there is a lack of monitoring of the effectiveness of agreed priorities to ensure that best value is achieved, and a rigour is applied

to the school's efforts to raise standards. The day-to-day administration by the office manager is very good.

21. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	298592	Balance from previous year	22408
Total expenditure	321000	Balance carried forward to the next	17974
Expenditure per pupil	2419		

THE ABLE AUTISM UNIT

What is the effectiveness of the Able Autism Unit?

The unit provides an effective quality of education for its pupils. The teaching in the unit is good. The teacher and support assistants work effectively as a team to settle the pupils and provide them with worthwhile learning opportunities. They know the pupils well. As a result, the pupils are making good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's ethos of inclusion is beneficial to these pupils and they are valued members of the school community
- The support care and guidance of these pupils are good
- The teacher has high expectations of pupils and her teaching is matched to their needs. Her management is firm and her instructions clear so the pupils understand their learning tasks and respond well
- The monitoring of pupils' learning is immediate and feeds effectively into their education programme
- The accommodation and resources are of good quality and appropriate to individual needs

Commentary

22. The unit has shown good development since it opened in 2001. Now at almost full pupil capacity, the systems are fully established and supported by relevant documentation. There are good links with local specialist agencies providing good support and assistance when the pupils' are in transition and induction into a new setting. The school has established good parental links and works hard to maintain good communication. The parents of all pupils in the unit are very positive about the school. They are pleased with the transport arrangements and the good induction procedures and are happy to see their children settled in school. The parents of the initial group of pupils indicate that their children are making good progress.

23. The school has established a well-structured daily timetable for each pupil. Good pictorial representation of each activity enables the pupils to feel confident and secure. The introduction of story sacks gives pupils good opportunities to talk about their activities as they handle small cards explaining each action they will undertake. Story sacks have a good focus on routines. They are so successful that on a visit to the swimming baths, during the inspection, the pupils coped with a fire alarm practice as successfully as all other pupils present at that time. Child-friendly target and behaviour boards enable the pupils to understand their progress and strive for further success.

24. These pupils are mostly integrated well into mainstream classrooms and their peer groups are fully supportive. However, on occasions, some integration has limited advantage to any of the pupils. Mainstream teachers are not sufficiently involved in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the arrangements for integration.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school makes good provision for the children in all the areas of learning. Initially, the children attend on either full-time or part-time basis depending on their age. They receive a good start to their education. The Reception class is well lead and managed. Various teacher-directed and exploratory activities are available. The teaching is judged to be good overall in all the areas of learning. The teacher and support assistants form an effective team. The children achieve well, especially in their personal social and emotional development. The assessments are good and used well as an on-going profile of each child's achievements. One of the main strengths of the provision for the children in the reception class is the very good induction programme. This helps to establish very good relationship with parents and has a positive influence on the way the children settle quickly into the school 's routines. The attainment of the children when they start in reception varies from year to year, but is judged to be broadly average.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children quickly develop independence and self-confidence
- The school environment, both indoors and out, together with very good relationships, helps the children to feel secure and valued.
- They co-operate well with each other and with the adults in charge of them
- They show particular sensitivity and tolerance towards those in the group who have special educational needs.
- They develop a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong

Commentary

25. The children achieve well and are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they are five. There is a good school emphasis on this area of learning. All members of the staff have high expectations. At the time of the inspection, the children had been in school for only a very short time, but they entered confidently, settling down to the activities and finding the books, toys and equipment they needed. Almost all of the children follow instructions and know what is expected of them. Relationships are very good. The children respond well to the adults supervising them, and they generally listen and behave very well. They have good attitudes and are keen to take part in all activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are constantly talk together and to listen to others;
- Children are encouraged to use communication, language and literacy skills in all the other areas of learning.
- There is a good range of books, stories, songs and poems to enrich their vocabulary and to encourage reading
- The lower attaining children are making good progress in communication skills
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to write freely and practice their writing skills

Commentary

26. The children achieve satisfactorily and are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they start in Year 1. Regular opportunities to recite rhymes and poems and to join in the sharing of news, knowledge and information help the children to use and improve their spoken language. Good questioning by the teacher and assistants play a key part in this process. The children's reading skills are developed through the learning of initial letter sounds and key words from early reading books. The teacher also encourages the children to predict what comes next as a successful strategy for understanding what is read. The new reading scheme is providing a good structure for the development of early reading skills, but at the time of the inspection it was too early to judge whether or not it is improving reading standards. The children practice writing letter shapes and write news, lists and labels in order to improve their writing skills. However, a scrutiny of the children's work shows limited attempts at independent writing. More opportunities and regular practice need to be provided so that the quality, quantity and accuracy of the children's writing improve at a faster pace.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned activities enable the children to learn about numbers, shapes and money
- The children's mathematical learning is consolidated and extended well through games and role-play
- Further opportunities are needed for the more able children to use their growing mathematical knowledge to solve problems

Commentary

27. The children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Their achievement is satisfactory. The teachers' use of songs, rhymes and counting games to help make the learning of numbers fun has a positive effect on the children's progress. They learn the importance of 'touch and count' to ensure accuracy in counting when using a variety of apparatus, including their fingers. Additionally, the use of correct mathematical language ensures that the children's mathematical knowledge and understanding develop well. Good links are made with other areas of learning, for example, when the children 'pay for food and give change' in the home corner café.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The class teacher's 'real-life' approach to teaching and learning includes finding out about and using the local environment;
- There is a wide range of planned learning experiences that stimulate children's curiosity and interest
- The children have strong relationships with teachers and support assistants who provide very good role models and sources of information
- There is limited opportunity for children to learn about cultures that are different from their own

Commentary

28. The children achieve soundly in this area of learning and are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they start in Year 1. Walks around the school grounds and visits to the town ensure that the children's learning about the local environment is based on first hand experiences.

The children are well supported in their practical activities by the teacher and the learning assistants, who ask pertinent questions to enhance their learning. The children gain sound early computer skills as they use computer programs to reinforce language and number skills. However, opportunities for the children to learn about cultures other than their own are inadequate.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have regular and frequent access to a good quality outdoor play area
- The children's confidence, independence and dexterity develop well through the planned activities

Commentary

29. The children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in their physical development by the time they start in Year 1. Their achievement is satisfactory. The school has fully addressed the minor issue of the last inspection to provide children with greater experiences with large outdoor equipment and more resources are now provided. The children achieve well as they climb and balance with increasing confidence. They show good dexterity and co-operation as they use tools and equipment. For instance, the children were beginning to use scissors with a degree of skill and control as they cut around the shape of a cat.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children experience various creative activities that include art, music and imaginative play
- Their learning experiences are supported and enhanced by visits and visitors to the school
- There is very little evidence in teachers' planning of the children creating models using recycled materials

Commentary

30. The children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in their creative development by the time they start in Year 1. As few activities were observed in this area of learning during the inspection, judgements are based mainly on the work on display and the teacher's planning. The children were stimulated and inspired when a parent visited the class to demonstrate his skill as a cornet player. They learned about the instrument, identified high and low sounds and were able to observe and listen closely. Children of all ability groups had the opportunity to blow into the mouthpiece to try to produce sound and several of the lower attaining children were the most successful. This was a memorable and worthwhile learning experience. Their learning was further enriched as they listened to recorded music featuring a cornet as part of a Big Band. Current teacher planning for creative activities indicates that the children have insufficient opportunities to create freely using re-cycled materials and this is an aspect that needs to be developed.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In speaking and listening standards are above average throughout the school because the teachers have good questioning techniques which extend pupils' skills
- A well-structured literacy programme ensures that knowledge and skills are taught appropriately to pupils of different ages and abilities
- The national test results are analyzed and strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance identified
- In lessons, there is good inclusion of pupils with special needs and the tasks are adapted appropriately to make the learning meaningful. For example, a large-sized letter writing frame enabled a pupil to write his ideas independently
- The library is attractive and contains a good range of reading material. However, insufficient use is made of the library for independent study and for the teaching library skills
- The use of assessment information is unsatisfactory in tracking pupils' progress
- The teachers' marking and reading records gives praise, but fail to provide the pupils and their parents with sufficient information about how improvements can be made.

Commentary

31. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory. In many lessons pupils achieve well because of the good structure to their learning tasks. Standards are average overall. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement in standards of writing, because of a good whole-school focus on the teaching of writing skills. The pupils have regular opportunities to write for different purposes. The quality of children's handwriting is inconsistent, but better in Year 4 than in other classes. The teachers enjoy teaching writing and their enthusiasm is transmitted to pupils. Consequently, all pupils write confidently and enjoy their tasks. However in Year 1 to 3 worksheets are used frequently across the curriculum, which restrict opportunities for independent work. In 2002, standards in national tests showed good pupil achievement in writing when compared to the results in similar schools. The provisional results of the 2003 cohort indicate that these good standards have been maintained. In recent tests, boys and girls performed equally well, but over time the performance of boys is better than that of the girls.
32. Although standards in reading are average overall, the pupils have a narrow range of knowledge and limited appreciation of children's literature. The pupils' progress in reading is less rapid than in writing. Early reading skills are taught well and by Year 2 most pupils are confident in using sounds to build unfamiliar words. However, inadequate attention is given to the pupils' understanding of a text, and this restricts their progress overall. Some older girls in Years 3 and 4 have suggested that the reading scheme books are "boring." Over a three-year period their performance in reading has been below that of the boys. The school has recognized the need to widen its reading resources and a new reading scheme has been introduced this term. The initial indications are that the pupils are enjoying the wider range of books and the increased focus on comprehension is developing skills at a more rapid rate. In 2002, standards in national tests were well below those of similar pupils because few pupils had the necessary advanced reading skills. The curriculum includes regular opportunities for guided reading with the teacher. However, the teaching has insufficient variety and many pupils dislike these sessions. Reading records give little information to pupils and their parents about how to improve. Parents recognize that the profile of reading needs to be improved and through the "Friends" association have provided additional resources.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

There are some good links between literacy and other subjects. In one very good lesson Year 4, for instance, the pupils used an historical text about Victorian practices of child labour in order to identify key facts to use in a story. These pupils are also beginning to make mature judgements about childhood injustices. In a link to science and health education they identified problems of lung diseases and made connections with smoking problems today. The pupils word-process their stories, using dictionaries and spell checks for greater accuracy. Poetry is linked with art, for example in the calligrams made by Year 3 pupils to illustrate their poems. These links could be extended

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some good teaching of counting skills in Year 2 and some that is very good in Year 4.
- Relationships are very good and have a positive effect on the learning
- The younger pupils are not always provided with practical apparatus such as blocks, cubes or number lines that would support them when learning to add and subtract
- There are too few opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematics to solve practical, open-ended problems
- The marking is inconsistent and does not show the pupils how they can improve their work.

Commentary

33. The pupils achieve average standards by Years 2 and 4. Most pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The pupils in Year 4 are making good progress and are achieving well. The children with special educational needs are well supported both in class and in the Able Autism Base. They also make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, the basic skills are soundly taught. By Year 4 the pupils can count accurately, know and can use number facts and some multiplication tables. Over the three years since 2000, the school's results have been very variable and show that the boys have achieved slightly better than the girls. However, the scrutiny of work and lessons observed during the inspection revealed no significant difference in their performance.

34. The quality of the teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall All the classes are following the National Numeracy Strategy. In all of the lessons observed, the teachers used good questioning skills to help the pupils clarify how they arrived at their answers. The very good relationships that exist between the teachers and pupils are a positive feature in the pupils' learning. The pupils concentrate and want to succeed. They are happy to talk about their mistakes and recognize how to improve. As a result, there are some good standards of work and behaviour. However, at times all the pupils complete similar tasks and this means that the work can be either too challenging or too easy for some pupils. In these instances, the teaching and learning are less effective, and this adversely affects the pupils' progress. Some teachers direct the pupils' learning too closely, which restricts their ability to use their mathematical knowledge to investigate and to solve problems independently. The teachers assess the pupils regularly using national tests and the results are analysed in order to set class and group targets. The coordinator analyses the information from tests and assessments in order to identify areas for improvement. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Most of the pupils, but particularly the older ones, use mathematics confidently to help learning in other subjects. This is evident, for example, when they are counting and reading results in science or when measuring in creative and design activities. The pupils' ability to use ICT in mathematics is

developing as the school updates its software. Currently, it is used by the younger pupils to reinforce their learning about numbers and by the older pupils to create graphs and bar charts.

SCIENCE

The school makes **satisfactory provision for science**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A generous time allocation allows good breadth and depth to the curriculum
- The pupils are enthusiastic and collaborate well
- The pupils have insufficient opportunities for independent investigation, exploration or recording
- The use of assessment information is unsatisfactory to set targets for pupils' improvement and marking gives insufficient guidance to pupils.

Commentary

35. The provisional results for the 2003 national tests indicate that standards have risen, although over time the results fluctuate. At present, standards are average in Year 2 and Year 4, but lower than at the last inspection. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The scheme of work ensures progress and continuity and the teachers planning is monitored by the coordinator for its effectiveness. The teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the skills of investigation well. There is broad and balanced coverage of all areas of science with particular emphasis on the teaching of the skills of scientific investigation and ensuring that the pupils understand the concept of a fair test. In most lessons, however, the teachers systematically direct the pupils through this process, often in large groups. There is little opportunity for the pupils to work through their investigations independently in small groups or pairs. The resources are adequate overall, although there are some difficulties in Year 2 because of larger class numbers. The marking of the pupils' written work gives insufficient indicators to the pupils of how to improve.
36. Most of the recording involves the use of worksheets. They are neatly presented in books and show good levels of achievement, particularly in regard to the pupils' factual knowledge. However, this does not help the average and more able to extend their writing skills or to learn how to format records of the resulting data. In many lessons, there is little variety in worksheets and some pupils are under-challenged. Conversely, the less able pupils become over reliant on adult help because the work is too hard.
37. The assessment of the pupils' performance is not used effectively. The data from the Year 2 national tests is not analyzed and used to set more ambitious targets for the pupils, particularly those of average and above average ability. Moreover, the areas in need of further development have not been identified. There is little monitoring of the teaching and learning and as a result standards fluctuate rather than showing year on year improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject has a high profile in the school and the pupils are eager to learn and to work purposefully on all tasks;
- Good provision of computers in the suite and in classrooms ensures that the pupils have regular opportunities to learn new skills;
- Since the last inspection, the teachers' knowledge has increased, enabling them to teach the curriculum with greater confidence and use an appropriate range of methods;

- The curriculum has suitable breadth and balance but links to other subjects are still developing

Commentary

38. Standards are generally average, the current Year 4 are working at a higher level and are predicted to achieve above the expected levels by the end of the year. Standards are improving rapidly as pupils have more opportunities to use the improved resources. The teaching and learning are satisfactory over time and the pupils achieve well in lessons. The pupils are expected to work independently through logical steps to achieve success. The Year 4 class teacher is enthusiastic for the development of the subject, and provides her pupils with challenging tasks. In every lesson, there is a good emphasis on the use of appropriate vocabulary and technical competence. All the four key areas of the ICT curriculum are developed. Sensitive support is given to pupils with special educational needs and additional help is provided as necessary. The pupils give good support to each other and exchange ideas confidently.

39. A new coordinator is taking responsibility for the subject from the start of next term. Next steps have been identified for the development of the subject and a good action plan has been prepared. The "Computer Club" is a good out-of-school provision, where for example the pupils have learnt how to send emails.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

The application of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum is developing only slowly. Although the teachers recognize the potential and value of ICT, they do not yet build sufficient worthwhile links into the curriculum. Some use is made of computers to practice literacy and numeracy skills. The Reception children, for example, improve their recognition and understanding of the values of numbers. In science, some use is made of computers to collate data and display results in graphs.

HUMANITIES

No history lessons were seen during the inspection, but the inspectors looked at a sample of the pupils' previous work. Two lessons were seen in geography and one in religious education.

History

The provision in history is satisfactory. The evidence from talking to pupils and from a scrutiny of their previous work indicates that by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 standards are average. The majority of the pupils achieve satisfactorily. History is often taught alongside geography in a topic approach.

Geography

The provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning about the local area are of good quality. There is a strong environmental emphasis to the work in geography
- The pupils' learning is well supported by visits that provide practical, first-hand experiences.
- Good links are made with work in literacy, history and science
- Most pupils complete the same task and this restricts the achievement of some of the lower and higher attaining pupils who find the work either too easy or too challenging.

Commentary

40. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4 standards are average. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. The majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. By the time pupils leave school they have made steady progress in their learning about the local environment, their homes and the use of simple maps. The quality of

the teaching and learning in the two lessons observed was good. The pupils enjoy their geography lessons because they are well prepared and organized. However there are limited opportunities for individual recording of information because of the frequent use of worksheets. The teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to motivate the pupils so that they are keen to learn more. For instance, the pupils are shown how to contrast and compare different locations with their own locality. Good links are made to social issues when the pupils become involved in discussions about recycling or the position and size of litterbins. Walks and visits around Pershore also help to make the pupils' learning meaningful. Good liaison links with the middle school ensure that there is progression in the pupils' learning of geographical skills and knowledge.

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator is very knowledgeable and oversees the teachers' planning to make sure that the elements of the curriculum are covered appropriately. However there is little monitoring of the teaching and learning in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and bring about improvements. Assessment procedures are limited and the standards of the pupils' work are not known precisely.

Religious education

The provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the teaching observed in Year 4 was very good
- The Year 2 pupils have good recall of their learning about the Jewish faith
- There is little monitoring of the teaching, learning and standards.

Commentary

42. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Across the school, pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactory levels of learning as they begin to understand some of the similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity, for example, and the ways in which various people worship. The pupils have a range of knowledge based on stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. They learn of similarities and differences between the major world faiths and the higher attaining pupils show a mature understanding of these features. By the time they leave the school, the Year 4 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of stories from the Bible. They also know about places of worship and the main Christian festivals
43. The quality of the teaching in religious education is good overall. The planning for religious education is based firmly on the County Guidelines. The topics are allocated to different year groups and the required skills and knowledge are built up progressively as the pupils move through the school. Due to the good planning and teaching, this is generally successful, although the school has recognized that it needs to widen the pupils' learning and appreciation of other faiths and cultures. In the lesson observed during the inspection, the teaching was very good. It was well linked to the pupils' own experiences and previous learning. The teacher's skilled questioning and good use of small group discussion enabled all the pupils to understand the varied uses of a church. The use of a well-chosen video excerpt sustained their interest and helped to develop their understanding of the wider influence of the church on some people's lives. In this session, the relationships with the pupils were very good and the teacher showed a good knowledge of the subject under discussion. A weakness in the teaching is that it does not provide enough opportunities for the pupils to record their thoughts and ideas independently since the small amount of recorded work is frequently done on worksheets.
44. The leadership and management of the subject are generally satisfactory, although the resources for religious education are sparse. However, the budget is used effectively to ensure that a range of artifacts is borrowed regularly to support the teaching and learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology

Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards by Years 2 and 4. However a scrutiny of pupils' models and some design plans indicate that standards are at the expected levels. The teachers' plans show that the subject is taught most frequently in conjunction with other subjects. For example, in Year 1 the pupils made fabric houses as part of a topic on homes. In the one lesson seen, the Year 1 pupils worked enthusiastically and cooperatively to design and build houses of straw for "The Three Little Pigs." The teacher and her assistants made a good effort to ensure that all pupils were fully included in the building work, and at the moment of testing all pupils and staff participated vigorously in the competition to find the best construction. By Year 4 pupils are able to judge their picture frames for attractiveness, suggest and trial various improvements and test joints for strength. Teacher assessment arrangements are informal and there is limited knowledge of pupils' standards

Music

The provision for music is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 4 all pupils are able to read simple music and play a musical instrument
- The music coordinator has very good subject knowledge
- Some staff lack musical expertise.
- The subject is not monitored.
- The resources are insufficient for whole class use.

Commentary

45. The quality of the teaching varies across the school. The whole school works from a taped scheme, which has yet to be evaluated by the new subject coordinator. There are few musical links across the curriculum, for example in singing and recorder playing in assembly. Where a teacher with good subject knowledge takes the lesson, many extra exciting activities are introduced to reinforce and extend the teaching points. They ensure maximum pupil participation and the lessons move briskly. In the less successful lessons some activities are tedious and many pupils are passive throughout. Consequently, the learning is slow. However, good use is made of specialist teachers. She has very high expectations resulting in lessons that are brisk, challenging and well directed. Homework is set each week. Pupils enjoy participating in these lessons and high standard of performance achieved.
46. The quality of the teaching of music has not been monitored and evaluated. The new coordinator has good subject knowledge, but as yet has had no opportunity to develop the subject. The resources are insufficient making it difficult at times for all pupils to have access to good quality non tuned instruments. The provision for multicultural music is unsatisfactory both in terms of resources and planned curricular links.

Art and design

It is not possible to make a judgement about standards as only one lesson was observed and there is very little work available for analysis. The curriculum is based on a published scheme of work that provides a reasonably sound structure. The teachers' planning shows that a broad range of activities is undertaken, but the pupils have no opportunity to study the work of artists from around the world. Sometimes there is a lack of variety in teachers' plans. Links to other areas of the curriculum are not developed in depth. The resources are adequate.

A new coordinator was appointed this term. Currently, there are few plans either to develop art or use it to enrich the curriculum. There has been no monitoring of the subject to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Physical education

The provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have a wide range of sporting opportunities, including-extra curricular activities;
- The teaching observed in gymnastics is good, and swimming skills are well taught
- The curriculum is very inclusive
- The dance curriculum is under-developed because some teachers lack expertise in this aspect of the work
- There is no written guidance to ensure that skills are taught in a progressive sequence.

Commentary

47. Standards are satisfactory overall and in swimming they are very good. The pupils attend swimming lessons from the reception class to Year 4. Expert swimming instruction and a very good ratio of adults, both in and out of the pool, ensure that all pupils have individual attention and make rapid progress. As a result, all pupils are able to swim 25metres on leaving the school. The teachers and their assistants give good support to pupils from the Able Autism Unit. As a result, these pupils feel secure and confident and make good progress.
48. The one gymnastic lesson observed was of good quality with constant pupil involvement and a variety of group, paired and individual activities. The lesson was taken at a brisk pace and with constant reinforcement of the learning objectives. The pupils made good progress in their acquisition of skills and their ability to work co-operatively within a group.
49. The very good school grounds are used to offer extra opportunities in football, netball and tag rugby, some of which involve competitive games and tournaments. The residential visit for Year 3 and 4 pupils enables them to experience archery, abseiling and orienteering. The school also benefits from classes taken by a local professional gymnast and coaching from the County's Cricket Club. These activities enrich the curriculum and help to raise standards.
50. However, the dance and movement lessons are less successful where there is an over reliance on taped programmes. The teachers' lack of subject expertise means that teaching points are not developed and the programme is not adapted to the needs of the class. Furthermore, there are no planned links with other areas of the curriculum.
51. The scheme of work gives insufficient detail about the development of skills, which are to take place. There is no current monitoring of the physical education curriculum and no identification of future developments in the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision in personal, social and health education is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very high expectations and teaches very clear principles of right and wrong
- The pupils have a good respect for the feelings and beliefs of others
- The school is proud of its community links and works hard to maintain them

- A range of visits and visitors to the school helps the pupils to learn about their own culture and the important part they play within the local community

Commentary

52. The pupils are taught right from wrong from an early age and in assemblies. During PSHCE lessons they have time to reflect on their own feelings and to consider the needs of others. There are good opportunities for pupils to express their views and to listen to and appreciate the views of others. The teachers provide a range of interesting experiences for the pupils. Most pupils have a good awareness of their own culture and traditions but across the school, the planning and teaching do not include enough opportunities for the pupils to learn about the food, dress, homes, stories, poems and music of other cultures.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
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	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	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).