

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JAMES AND EBRINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Chipping Campden

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115713

Acting Headteacher: Mr Philip Morgan

Lead inspector: Mr Graham R Sims

Dates of inspection: Monday 17th – Thursday 20th May 2004

Inspection number: 257680

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	182
School address:	St James and Ebrington CE Primary Schools Pear Tree Close CHIPPING CAMPDEN Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL55 6DB
Telephone number:	01386 840634
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Joan Holden
Date of previous inspection:	14 th September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The federation of St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary Schools was formed in 1981 when the small village school at Ebrington was threatened with closure. Since that time, the two schools have been run as a federation under one governing body and one headteacher. The schools are situated three miles apart, one in the village of Ebrington and the other in the town of Chipping Campden, each serving its immediate neighbourhood and the surrounding rural areas. Ebrington has 55 pupils in three mixed-age classes and St James has 127 pupils in five mixed-age classes. The total number on roll in both schools is less than in an average-sized primary school. The socio-economic background of the pupils varies considerably but, overall, is above average. A below average proportion of pupils (around 9 per cent) is known to be eligible for free school meals. No pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, although there are two pupils from homes where English is not the main spoken language and who are at an early stage of learning English. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal times of admission or leaving. An average proportion of pupils (17 per cent) have been identified as having special educational needs. Five pupils receive help from outside specialists for moderate learning difficulties, physical needs or social, emotional and behavioural problems. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Children are admitted into the Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. The attainment of children when they start school varies enormously, and from year to year, but is average overall. The schools have been through a difficult time over the last two and a half years, firstly because of the ill health of the headteacher, necessitating periods of absence, and then because of his subsequent resignation. Since January 2003, the deputy headteacher has been running the two schools as acting headteacher, and the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator has taken over as acting deputy headteacher with responsibility for Ebrington. These changes have also necessitated a number of temporary staff appointments. The governing body has tried without success to appoint a new headteacher, but is hoping to make an appointment for January 2005. Because the schools are voluntary-aided Church of England schools, the inspection of religious education and collective worship is carried out separately under

Section 23 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996 (Denominational Education) by an inspector approved by the Diocese and appointed by the governing body.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and Design Design and technology English as an additional language
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
22556	Mr E Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education Special educational needs
12997	Mrs C Cheong	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Geography History Personal, social and health education and citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall, the federated schools of St James and Ebrington offer a **satisfactory** quality of education and provide satisfactory value for money. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average. Pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, and leadership and management are all satisfactory. However, these overall judgements mask the fact that, currently, the quality of education at Ebrington is significantly better than at St James.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- During a difficult and lengthy period without a headteacher, the acting headteacher and acting deputy have worked hard to improve the school's procedures and to instigate change.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and, in the main, behave well. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are particularly good at Ebrington.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in English at the end of Year 6 at Ebrington are well above average, but the quality of writing is below average for a significant number of pupils at St James.
- The quality of the teaching at Ebrington is consistently good, but it is only satisfactory at St James, where teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do.
- Good attempts are being made to improve the curriculum, but there are not enough cross-curricular links, and provision for geography and physical education is unsatisfactory.
- The school does not monitor the academic progress of pupils, the quality of teaching and learning, or the quality of work in each subject closely or rigorously enough.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Previous key issues have, largely, been dealt with effectively. Planning for the school's youngest children now relates more closely to the recommended curriculum. The provision for information and communication technology has improved, although standards are still below average. Provision for physical education at Ebrington remains a weakness because of lack of facilities. The most significant improvements have been in the results achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

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' overall achievement is **satisfactory**. Children enter the reception with widely varying, but generally average, skills. They make satisfactory progress, and most children achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year.

Since the last inspection in 1998, results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have risen at a faster rate than in most schools. In 2003, at the end of Year 2, results were above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. At the end of Year 6, they were above average in science and well above average in English and mathematics.

Inspection findings reveal a picture of similar standards at Ebrington, but significantly lower standards at St James. This reflects, to some extent, the differences in the natural abilities of each intake of pupils, but also the disruption to teaching which has occurred since the departure of the previous headteacher. In 2003, standards at the end of Year 6 were higher at St James than at Ebrington. Taking pupils' work at both schools into consideration, overall standards are average in English and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and above average in mathematics. There are, however, weaknesses in pupils' writing in all classes at St James.

Standards in most other subjects are satisfactory, but they are below average in geography because not enough time is devoted to teaching the subject, and in information and communication technology because not all aspects of the curriculum have been covered, although future planning takes this into account.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. The ethos at Ebrington is very good. Pupils' behaviour is not always managed consistently at St James. Overall attendance is well above the national average. Punctuality at the start of the day is satisfactory, but lessons do not always start and finish on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education.

The overall quality of the teaching is **satisfactory**. It is consistently good, and at times very good, at Ebrington. Lessons are interesting, conducted at a good pace and motivate the pupils to learn. Although there is some good teaching at St James, there is some unsatisfactory teaching and much that is only satisfactory. In these lessons, teachers' expectations with regard to pupils' participation and their standard of work are not high enough, and some teachers are not consistent or firm enough in managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils' learning is only satisfactory, and not as good as it clearly has been in the past. The movement of teachers between the two schools to cater for a long period without a headteacher has had an adverse effect on the continuity of teaching at St James. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but the school does not keep a careful enough check on pupils' progress. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with statements of special educational need.

The school's curriculum, the range of activities beyond the formal curriculum, the range of learning resources and the overall quality of the school's accommodation are all satisfactory. Under the acting headteacher, the school has made good steps towards improving the curriculum, but there is insufficient cross-curricular work, particularly with regard to the development of key skills in English and information and communication technology. Insufficient time is given to geography, and lack of facilities hinders pupils' progress in physical education at Ebrington.

The overall quality of procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety and to provide them with support, advice and guidance is satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, and there is a caring ethos, particularly at Ebrington. However, staff have not received formal training with regard to child protection procedures and there are no formal arrangements to ensure that pupils have a voice in the school.

The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Links with other schools and the community are good. Many parents are very supportive of the work of the school, and communication between school and parents is improving. Reports to parents on their children's progress provide insufficient information.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. The governors, acting headteacher and acting deputy have done well to steer the school through a difficult and extended period without a substantive headteacher. The school's procedures have been rationalised and progress is being made on developing the curriculum and improving facilities for information and communication technology at Ebrington. Governors are becoming more proactive and better informed. However, senior staff are not rigorous enough in ensuring that day-to-day procedures are followed consistently by all staff, and subject co-ordinators do not have a clear enough understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress within their subject areas. Staff are not helped by having to manage two schools situated three miles apart.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Through the parent-teacher associations of both schools, there is very good support from parents, many of whom have a very positive opinion of the schools. However, a significant minority are dissatisfied with some aspects, particularly with the way the school seeks parents' views and keeps them informed and the way the school manages homework and children's behaviour. The inspection findings indicate that there is some justification in these views.

Pupils are generally positive, but more so at Ebrington than at St James, where some pupils claim to be bored. Most pupils, however, feel they are treated fairly by teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the management of the school, ensuring that agreed procedures, such as those for managing behaviour, are implemented consistently, that pupils' progress is monitored more carefully, and that subject co-ordinators monitor the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress within their subject areas more effectively.
- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of and improve the quality of the teaching at St James.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing and ensure that literacy skills are developed through all subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve the planning of the curriculum, making better use of cross-curricular links, particularly in information and communication technology, and ensuring sufficient time is devoted to the teaching of all subjects, particularly geography.
- Pursue every avenue to improve facilities for physical education at Ebrington.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff in child protection procedures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although pupils' achievement at Ebrington is better than at St James.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's national test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved significantly since the last inspection, although current standards are lower than those achieved in 2003.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in mathematics in both schools.
- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 at Ebrington, but are below average at St James.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils' writing skills are weak, particularly at St James.
- Standards are below expectations in geography and information and communication technology.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment when they start school varies considerably, both within a particular year group and between the two schools. Overall, however, attainment on entry is average.
2. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection, although children at Ebrington have experienced some disruption to their teaching over the last year, which affected their progress until the recent appointment of a new teacher stabilised the situation. Children's achievement and progress are satisfactory in both schools. Most will have reached the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year. They achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development, and standards in this area of learning are above average. Children also achieve well in developing their understanding of number, although in terms of their overall mathematical development standards are average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores¹ in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.2 (16.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.8 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.1 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. In 2003, the results of the national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools², they were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Almost all pupils reached the nationally expected Level 2³, and almost a third exceeded this level in reading and mathematics and a quarter in writing. Although there has been some fluctuation in the results since the last inspection, they have improved at a faster rate than in most schools and were significantly higher in 2003 than at the time of the last inspection.
4. Inspection findings indicate that standards are currently not as high as those achieved in 2003. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average in English and science. In mathematics, pupils achieve well and standards are above average. The current group of pupils in Year 2 at St James contains a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the previous year group. The progress of pupils at St James has also been affected by the fact that too much of the teacher's time and attention has had to be devoted to managing the difficult behaviour of a small number of pupils, and this has affected the progress of others. The progress of pupils through Key Stage 1⁴ at Ebrington has been affected by some unsatisfactory teaching in the past,

¹ **Average point scores** are used as a way of comparing fairly the performance of pupils in one school with those in another. The level achieved by each pupil in the national tests is converted into a points score. The points achieved by all of the pupils are added together and divided by the number of pupils who took the test to arrive at an average point score. An average point score of 15 at the end of Year 2 is equivalent to a middle of the range Level 2, which is the standard expected of seven-year-old pupils. At the end of Year 6, an average point score of 27 is equivalent to Level 4, the national expectation for eleven-year-olds.

² The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 6) and to the average for similar schools (ie at the end of Year 2, the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals; at the end of Year 6, the average of the results for all schools whose pupils achieved similar results in their national tests at the end of Year 2).

³ The standard of pupils' work is assessed against National Curriculum Levels. The national expectation for each subject is that pupils should be working comfortably at Level 2 by the end of Year 2, and at Level 4 by the end of Year 6.

⁴ The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also

but now that the staffing situation has stabilised for this group of pupils, they are achieving well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (30.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.1 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.6 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well above the national average and the average for similar schools in English and mathematics and above average in science. This particular group of pupils made good progress between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Over a third of pupils in English and a half in mathematics and science exceeded the national expectation by achieving Level 5 in their tests, indicating good provision for the school's more able pupils. As at the end of Year 2, there has been some fluctuation in the school's results since the last inspection, but the trend has been firmly upwards and at a faster rate than in most schools. The results in all three subjects were significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. The school sets itself suitably challenging targets. The school exceeded its targets for English in 2003. It did not quite reach its overall target for mathematics, but comfortably exceeded its target for higher-attaining pupils.

6. The overall picture revealed by the inspection findings is not as good as that shown in the 2003 results. It shows that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average in English and science. They achieve well and reach above average standards in mathematics. There is, however, a significant difference in the standards and achievement of pupils in the two schools, as standards are well above average for the smaller group of pupils at Ebrington and below average for the larger group at St James. This has not always been the case, but reflects the nature of these two particular groups of pupils. In 2003, pupils at St James achieved better results than those at Ebrington, although by a much smaller margin than is apparent this year. In 2002, the situation was the reverse. Pupils' writing skills are weak in most classes at St James, and to a lesser extent in some classes at Ebrington, because teachers are not rigorous enough in marking pupils' work or using opportunities to develop writing skills through subjects other than English.

7. There are no groups of pupils whose progress is of particular concern. Pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs make good progress towards achieving the targets set in their individual educational plans, and their overall achievement is satisfactory. However, most targets are designed to improve their ability in literacy and some pupils would benefit from additional support in numeracy. Two pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs benefit substantially from the very good support they receive from the two teaching assistants who attend to their needs. Two children who are at an early stage of learning English, one of whom has only very recently joined the school, receive sensitive and careful support from staff and are coming on in leaps and bounds. Over the last few years, the boys' national test results

frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

differ from those of the girls, but not to the extent that this causes concern. In some years, boys do better than girls; in other years, the situation is the reverse.

8. With the exception of geography and information and communication technology, standards in other subjects of the curriculum are fairly typical of those found in most schools. Standards in geography are below expectations because the school devotes too little time to the subject. Standards in information and communication technology are improving, but there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge of the subject because the curriculum has not been taught in its entirety in the past. Pupils produce some good work in design and technology. In the small amount of work seen in physical education, standards were average. However, lack of facilities at Ebrington imposes severe restrictions on the development of some aspects of physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. **Good** provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is **very good**. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have a good attitude towards school and enjoy learning.
- Pupils' behaviour at Ebrington and in the reception classes is very good. Most pupils behave well at St James, but staff are not consistent in managing the behaviour of some pupils.
- Good relationships at both schools help pupils to learn.
- There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to be enterprising and take responsibility.
- Attendance is well above the national average.
- Lessons and breaks do not always start and finish on time.

Commentary

9. The pupils at Ebrington have very good attitudes towards school, and they are interested and keen to learn. The majority of pupils at St James respond well to their teachers and enjoy school. Pupils of all ages are eager to take part in the full range of activities, and most are enthusiastic to be involved. At both schools, pupils are polite, friendly and helpful to visitors. Many pupils are confident and have a high level of self-esteem. The good relationships at both schools create a happy and purposeful learning atmosphere in most classrooms. During lessons at Ebrington, pupils are very attentive and they listen very well to their teachers and to each other. They behave very well and the high expectations of staff result in virtually all pupils rising to the challenge and displaying a keen sense of self-discipline and maturity, particularly in Years 5 and 6. At St James, while behaviour is generally good, there are a small number of pupils whose attitudes are not quite so positive and, in some lessons, their disruptive behaviour and poor listening skills affect their own learning and the learning of others. Although the school has recently revised its behaviour management policy this is not always consistently applied at St James. The inspection findings endorse the views of parents, which, although largely positive, also indicate significant concern about the behaviour of some pupils and the way it affects the learning of others. The school has recently introduced a good system for recognising good work and behaviour by awarding 'golden time' and star pupil awards which pupils value and try hard to achieve. Bullying or harassment of any kind is not tolerated, and parents and pupils speak highly of the school's prompt action to deal with any incident. There have been no exclusions during the last academic year.

10. Pupils' personal development is good and this makes a strong contribution to their progress and achievements. Most parents feel that the school encourages pupils to become mature and independent. At both schools, pupils were seen willingly and carefully looking after younger pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage settle in well and make good progress in developing social skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and this helps them to develop personal skills and confidence. Those with a Statement of Special Educational Need are encouraged by their teacher and classroom assistants to become increasingly independent and this helps to develop their confidence and self esteem. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are welcomed and quickly become well-integrated members of the school. Although many pupils are keen to help with special responsibilities, insufficient opportunity is provided for them to develop their skills in taking initiative and decision-making within the life of the school. In all classes, pupils work well together with partners and in small groups, and they share resources co-operatively and sensibly.
11. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and their social skills are good. During lessons and assemblies, pupils are given regular opportunities to consider the world around them and to share moments of wonder and appreciation of their local environment. Assemblies and religious education lessons are used well to promote pupils' spiritual awareness and pupils are respectful of values and beliefs and the way in which they have an impact on people's lives. Through various subjects, pupils are encouraged to appreciate their own culture and to celebrate the richness of a diverse multi-cultural society. For example, many pupils learn to play musical instruments, take part in Maypole dancing and musical productions. They study the different religions of the world, enjoy topics such as Pakistan and learn to appreciate the music and art of other cultures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.0
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.5
National data:	0.4

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

12. Unauthorised absence is slightly higher than is usually found. The school has not yet developed rigorous systems for following up unauthorised absences. Punctuality is satisfactory and, at both schools, pupils arrive on time in the morning. However, playtimes frequently overrun, and lessons in some classes finish early in the mornings to allow children to get ready for lunch, resulting in an unnecessary loss of teaching time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of the teaching, the curriculum, extra-curricular provision and care for the pupils is **satisfactory**. The school's links with parents are **satisfactory**, and with the local community and other schools are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of the teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' learning is **satisfactory**. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' work are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the teaching at Ebrington is consistently good and, at times, it is very good. At St James, too much of the teaching is only satisfactory and some is unsatisfactory.
- The teaching provided for the personal, social and emotional development of children in the reception year is good, but there are not enough opportunities for them to learn through structured play.
- Some teachers develop pupils' writing skills well through carefully planned sequences of lessons, but writing skills are not consolidated through written work undertaken in other subjects.
- Withdrawal lessons for pupils with special educational needs are managed well, and very good support is provided for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve.
- Some teachers are not rigorous enough when marking pupils' work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	3 (7%)	22 (50%)	17 (39%)	2 (5%)	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.

13. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is better at Ebrington than at St James, but there is some good teaching in the reception year and Year 6 at St James. Generally, however, teachers' expectations with regard to pupils' participation and the standard of their work are not high enough in some classes at St James. Evidence from pupils' books, from displays around the school and from talking with pupils reinforces these views. Most parents are reasonably happy with the quality of the teaching and the progress their children are making, but some are not. This reflects the inspection team's view that some of the teaching could be better. A significant number of pupils at St James also feel that their lessons could be more interesting and fun. Decisive steps have been taken by the acting headteacher to improve the quality of teaching for younger pupils at Ebrington, and the needs of these pupils are now being served well. The school has needed to move key staff in order to cover the period without a headteacher. This has had an adverse effect on the quality of the teaching and how much pupils learn in Year 3 to Year 6 at St James where the current acting deputy headteacher had previously provided significant experience and guidance for the staff, and where good teamwork had been a significant factor in raising standards.
14. The overall quality of the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage in both schools is satisfactory. Some good and very good teaching was seen during the inspection. The teaching for children's personal, social and emotional development and for the development of children's understanding of number is good. In both these areas, the high expectations of teachers, their good relationship and manner with the children, and good teaching methods ensure good achievement. In all other areas of learning, the teaching is satisfactory. Where the teaching is not so strong, teachers lack methods and ideas to address the most urgent learning needs of every child, and there is insufficient opportunity for children to learn through structured-play activities. Assessment and record-keeping systems are satisfactory. However, they lack detail of the children's personal starting points. Examples kept of their work are not consistent

and expectations differ between the two classes. Teachers do not always set small achievable targets for individual children.

15. The teachers generally have a sound understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum. Their expertise in the teaching of information and communication technology has improved recently, although further training is still required in some aspects of the curriculum for this subject. Appropriate plans have been made to ensure that this is provided. Some subjects are not taught in sufficient depth. This applies particularly to geography, where pupils have made insufficient progress in their learning.
16. The quality of teachers' planning varies. In some classes, the teachers are very skilful in building on pupils' previous experiences by planning a sequence of lessons in which knowledge and skills are built systematically or in which a more substantial piece of work is put together over the course of a week. In some classes, particularly in English, teachers provide mechanical exercises which are not particularly stimulating and whose relevance is not immediately apparent to the pupils. Few staff are successfully developing pupils' literacy skills through the teaching of subjects other than English, and teachers still make insufficient use of new technology as a tool for learning across the curriculum.
17. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from suitable class work, which is well matched to their ability, and from occasional withdrawal periods. In class, the help they receive from teaching assistants is generally satisfactory. At times, assistants provide very good support for pupils, but assistants are not always as fully involved in lessons as they could be, particularly during those periods in which the whole class is being taught together by the class teacher. The withdrawal of pupils is timetabled carefully so as to minimise the disruption to pupils' learning. The specialist support teacher works closely with the teachers so that the withdrawal pupils are in class for the main teaching and the tasks set for the withdrawal pupils run parallel to the classwork. The specialist staff who support pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need know their pupils very well and provide very good support for them. The very small number of children who are at an early stage of learning English also receive sensitive and helpful support from their class teacher and assistants and, as a result, are making good strides in learning English.
18. The school has teachers who display good, and very good, teaching practice, but because of lack of monitoring of the quality of teaching, there is inconsistency across the two schools, and the good practice is not disseminated as effectively as it could be. The biggest differences are seen in teachers' expectations and the demands they make of pupils. The less successful lessons lack pace, pupils are not kept sufficiently to task and are not always clear enough about what is expected of them. The variation in teachers' expectations is also reflected in the quality of work in pupils' books. In some classes, there are too many pieces of unfinished work, insufficient work has been completed or pupils are given too many worksheets to complete which do not challenge them sufficiently. In a few classes, pupils' behaviour is not managed effectively, which gives rise to a restless atmosphere or disruption to the learning of others by a small number of pupils whose behaviour is unacceptable. There is, however, much that contrasts favourably with these aspects, particularly at Ebrington, where pupils are frequently absorbed in what they are learning, behaviour is often very good, lessons are conducted briskly and pupils are left in no doubt about what is expected of them.
19. Procedures for assessment are generally satisfactory, but teachers' class records do not track pupils' progress sufficiently clearly so that staff know exactly how well their pupils are achieving in relation to National Curriculum levels and what steps pupils need to take in order to improve. The quality of teachers' marking varies considerably. In

some classes, teachers provide helpful comments which show pupils how to improve. Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they are frequently not rigorous enough in pointing out where pupils have made mistakes. As a result, pupils are unaware of how work they have produced could be improved, and mistakes are perpetuated. This applies particularly to the quality of pupils' English in written work produced for other subjects. Even when helpful suggestions are made, pupils rarely re-visit a piece of work in order to make improvements or act on the advice given.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum, opportunities for enrichment, and accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attempts are being made to improve the curriculum, but there are not enough cross-curricular links, particularly for the development of literacy and information technology skills.
- Curricular provision for geography is unsatisfactory.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school prepares pupils well for transfer to later stages of education.
- The lack of a hall at Ebrington hampers pupils' progress in aspects of physical education.
- There are no freely available secure outdoor play spaces available for children in the reception year at either school.

Commentary

20. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, to achieve satisfactorily. It provides a suitable programme for personal, health and sex education, including advice on the misuse of alcohol and other drugs. Some improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage now takes note of governmental guidance and is based around the Early Learning Goals⁵. Subject co-ordinators have recently been re-evaluating how well the school covers the National Curriculum and have mapped out new long-term outlines to provide better coverage. The present situation, however, is that there is not always parity of experience between different classes containing pupils of the same age. Coverage of the geography curriculum is particularly weak, as very little time is devoted to teaching the subject. Too little use is made of links between subjects to promote the learning of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills or key skills such as research or note-taking. There is a satisfactory range of additional opportunities to enrich the curriculum, such as residential visits and after-school clubs.
21. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans, drawn up by the special educational needs co-ordinator in

⁵ **Early Learning Goals:** are a set of standards which it is expected that most children will achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

conjunction with the class teacher, are well matched to their needs. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly, and targets are adjusted accordingly. In the main, pupils are supported well and make good progress in developing their literacy skills, although some pupils would benefit from additional support to help develop their numeracy skills. Provision for the small number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is particularly good. The special educational needs register is well managed and kept up to date.

22. The school prepares pupils well for their move from class to class. There is good liaison with the local secondary school. Visits by secondary school staff to St James and Ebrington and visits of pupils to the secondary school help to prepare pupils well for their transfer to secondary education.
23. Most of the classrooms at both schools are of a good size and bright and airy. Some recent improvements in accommodation have taken place in both schools. The new computer suite, combined with the library, at St James has significantly improved the school's facilities for teaching information and communication technology. Improvements to provide better facilities for information and communication technology are also underway at Ebrington. Whilst the accommodation at Ebrington has its own charm, it also has significant shortcomings. The lack of a school hall severely restricts opportunities for physical education, particularly when the weather is inclement, as well as for drama. A number of parents expressed their concern at the number of physical education lessons which are lost for this reason, and the inspection findings endorse these concerns. At neither school is there a secure outdoor play space for children in the reception year, and this limits their learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **satisfactory**. Pupils receive **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance. **Satisfactory** provision is made to seek and act upon pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are happy at school and are well cared for.
- Staff know pupils very well and are alert to their individual needs.
- Induction arrangements are good in the Foundation Stage and new pupils to the schools are supported well.
- No member of staff is formally trained in child protection procedures.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support to meet the objectives of their individual education plans.
- No formal arrangements are made to ensure that pupils have a voice in the school.

Commentary

24. Both schools follow satisfactory procedures for ensuring that pupils learn in a safe environment. All staff know pupils and many of their families very well, and pupils are well cared for whilst in school. Risk assessments of the accommodation and learning resources are conducted regularly, and issues of safety are monitored well. Although it is the school's policy to follow the guidelines from the local authority relating to child protection, no member of staff has attended a training course to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and their responsibilities. Pupils have good and trusting relationships with adults in each school, and they feel confident that help is always at

hand. At Ebrington, parents value the strong family atmosphere which ensures a high degree of care for their children. Some parents are concerned about the supervision of pupils at lunchtime at St James. Inspection findings indicate that satisfactory arrangements are made at both schools for supervision in the playground and at lunchtime. Since the last inspection, the school has ensured that each school has a member of staff who is trained in first aid. However, in the case of absence, there is no additional back-up to take over this responsibility.

25. Although the special needs co-ordinator is based at Ebrington, all pupils with special educational needs are well supported which enables them to be fully involved in all activities and to achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils have full access to all outside support agencies. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and, if deemed appropriate, pupils are placed on the special needs register so that appropriate action can be taken. This includes pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties. Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need are cared for very well, and support staff are insistent that the pupils under their care play a full part in the life of the school. In one instance, extensive records are available of the pupil's progress, both physical and academic, and progress is further enhanced by providing activities for the pupil to do at home. This is excellent provision.
26. Children and their parents are supported well when they start in the reception year. Children visit several times, and this helps them to settle down quickly in a secure and caring environment where they make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
27. In lessons and informally around the school, teachers listen carefully to what pupils have to say and value their ideas. The school development plan has the target of creating a school council over the next two years. However, currently there are no formal channels to give pupils a strong voice in the management of the school or to contribute their views and ideas for the improvement of the school and its environment. Older pupils are very keen to take responsibility, and the lack of provision means that opportunities are missed to promote pupils' personal development and initiative.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **satisfactory** partnership with parents. Links with the community and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many parents are very supportive of the work of the school, which receives strong support from the two Friends Associations.
- Annual reports to parents provide insufficient information about their children's progress.
- Arrangements to involve parents in the formulation of their children's individual education plans are inconsistent.
- The school is not proactive in seeking parents' views.
- Good links between the local community and both schools help to enrich pupils' learning.
- There are good joint ventures with other primary and secondary schools.

Commentary

28. Many parents are very satisfied with the quality of education provided, although over a quarter of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they have some concerns. Most parents feel comfortable about approaching the schools to discuss a problem or to ask questions and have the opportunity to do so informally at the beginning and end of each day. However, staff rarely use these occasions to initiate conversations to inform parents about their children's progress. The school has no formal system of seeking parents' views, and some parents feel that the communication between governors and parents in relation to major issues and the information they receive about what is happening in school could be better. Those who attended the pre-inspection meeting for parents acknowledged that there had been recent improvement in communication. The inspection findings indicate that, although there are examples of good communication with parents, there is room for improvement. There is no regular newsletter, but parents are provided with specific information about activities and organisation as the need arises. Notice-boards for parents are located at both schools and contain current information. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend review meetings to discuss their children's individual education plans, but some parents feel there is inconsistency in the way this is managed. The inspection findings indicate that their views are justified. Parents of pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 find the termly curriculum newsletter helpful to enable them to support topics at home, but this practice is not followed in every class. Regular consultation evenings are held for parents, and these are found to be helpful and are well attended. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage regularly use reading record books as a means of communication with teachers. The annual reports to parents about their children's progress do not meet the statutory requirement to report each subject of the National Curriculum separately. Although the reports contain clear information about what has been taught, insufficient information is provided about pupils' progress against the national level and targets for improvement.
29. Many parents provide good additional help at home for their children's learning, although a small minority of parents find it difficult to maintain an effective partnership with the school in this way. Both schools receive strong support from their Friends Associations. A small number of parents help regularly in school with the library, displays, sewing, design and technology and listening to pupils reading.
30. At Ebrington, members of the Women's Institute provide very good support for the school and have organised a Victorian Day and helped with environmental studies. At St James, members of the local historical society support topics and citizenship. The school has strong links with the church, and pupils take part in a range of community activities such as visiting the elderly and performing Maypole dancing in the town. These opportunities help enrich the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' personal development. The good links with other local primary schools, including shared training days for staff and joint activities for pupils, provide good additional support for pupils' learning. Through their outreach programme, Chipping Campden School assists the school well with the curriculum and with technical support for information and communication technology.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is **satisfactory**. Management procedures are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have helped to move the school forward and give it a clear sense of direction.
- The governing body is assuming an increasingly proactive role in school development.
- The management for the special educational needs provision is good.
- The management of the curriculum and learning is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

31. Governors are supportive of the school and are becoming increasingly involved in its work and in forward planning. They have been actively involved in the production of the last school improvement plan, and appropriate procedures and time-scales have been established for monitoring progress. Governors are becoming increasingly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but do not yet play an active enough role in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides for all pupils. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties, with the exception that the named person with responsibility for child protection procedures has yet to undergo specific training for this role. Governors have taken appropriate steps, though without success, to appoint a new headteacher, and procedures are once more underway to secure a good candidate for the post.
32. Over the last 18 months, the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have moved the school forward and given it a sense of purpose. Initial strategic planning reflects the direction in which the school intends to move and has established clear guidelines for the future. The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have an astute grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development, but recognise that there is still a great deal to be done to improve aspects of the school, notably at St James. However, the school has not been able to make permanent appointments and this, to a degree, has not given the school the stability that it needs in order to move further forward.
33. Since the last inspection, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved and an information technology suite has been established at St James. However, information and communication technology facilities and the provision for physical education at Ebrington school are unsatisfactory and are a barrier to raising achievement. The organisation and management of special educational needs is good and forms an effective basis on which future development can take place. The co-ordinator ensures that pupils are identified at an early stage and that appropriate support is provided in class and in withdrawal sessions. In-service training to update staff on special educational needs procedures has taken place recently, and parents are well informed of their children's specific needs and progress.
34. Even though they have only been established very recently, all members of staff now have clearly defined roles and responsibilities but, as yet, aspects of these responsibilities are not undertaken effectively. The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided for the pupils lacks rigour and is not sufficiently clearly directed at raising standards, particularly at St James. Assessment lacks consistency, and the work of the support staff is not monitored sufficiently so as to maximise their efficiency. On a number of occasions during the inspection, lessons were not punctual and this represents a loss of teaching time.
35. Financial planning is good, the expertise of individual governors is being increasingly used and principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The governors have

managed to maintain a healthy budget balance of more than 5 per cent, but this is in order to safeguard the level of staffing in both schools, particularly at Ebrington.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	448,624
Total expenditure	449,190
Expenditure per pupil	2,657

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	36,138
Balance carried forward to the next	35,572

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff expect children to behave very well and children respond positively in the main. The promotion of good work-habits is well established.
- Children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development and in their understanding of number, largely because of good teaching and the encouragement teachers give.
- Not enough use is made of assessment to track children's progress or to set small achievable learning steps in key areas such as reading and writing.
- Too little use is made of play activities.
- There are weaknesses in the accommodation for reception children in both schools that constrain some aspects of their learning.
- Good methods of settling new children into the schools ensure that the children are happy and confident on arrival.

Commentary

36. There has been good improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The progress of the youngest children in the schools at that time was limited by inadequate curricular planning and assessment in the required areas. These are now satisfactory.
37. At the time of this inspection, the children in the Foundation Stage were taught in mixed-aged classes in both schools, alongside children in Key Stage 1. At St James there were 17 reception-aged pupils and at Ebrington there were 8. At both schools, children start school with standards which are generally in line with those found nationally, but the ability of individual children on entry to school varies greatly. The school has good procedures for settling new children into both schools. Achievement and progress are generally satisfactory, so that, when they start Year 1, most children will have achieved most of the Early Learning Goals, the targets for children nationally for the end of their reception year. In personal, social and emotional development they are likely to have exceeded this standard, and also in the number part of mathematical development, where strong teaching is raising standards. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The accommodation inside classrooms in both schools is satisfactory, but outside the children do not have continuous access to separate, secure, freely available play areas. Also, the lack of a hall at Ebrington limits opportunities for lessons in physical development.
38. Planning, teaching and assessment are now correctly based around the curriculum for this age group. Resources, a key issue in the last inspection report, are now better and are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. Good teaching was seen in both schools and one very good lesson was observed. In this lesson, very good relationships and teaching methods helped children to achieve the task of making model vehicles while at the same time developing very well their

social skills. Where teaching is only satisfactory, teachers lack methods to address the most urgent learning needs of a minority of the class, and too little use is made of play. Assessment and record-keeping systems are satisfactory, but they lack detail of the children's personal starting points. Examples kept of their work are not consistent between the two classes and expectations of what children are capable of doing sometimes differ too. Teachers do not always set small achievable targets for individual children.

39. In the area of **personal, social and emotional development**, the children achieve well because teaching is good. The children benefit from working alongside the older children as they set a good example for behaviour and concentration. They demonstrate good levels of independence, involvement and co-operation, and when given choices are able to select materials for themselves. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to have achieved the expected level, such as knowing how to take turns and sharing fairly. A considerable minority will have exceeded the expected level. Children are confident, interested in what is provided for them and well motivated to learn. Supported well by the adults who work with them, they are beginning to form good relationships with each other. Their behaviour is generally very good.
40. The teaching of **communication, language and literacy** is satisfactory and children achieve satisfactorily. At the end of the reception year, children's attainment is generally in line with the average nationally, but for reading and writing a considerable minority in St James will not have achieved the national expectation. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with expectations. By the time children end their reception year, most of them communicate successfully over a wide range of topics. A small minority have a good level of spoken language and are able, for example, to explain how non-fiction books work. In reading, teachers correctly stress the learning of sounds. However, in one class the philosophy of not starting children on reading books until they are confident with word-building, or giving them a home reading diary, demoralises children, and achievement for this small minority is unsatisfactory. Parents are encouraged satisfactorily to help children read at home. Writing and handwriting are taught satisfactorily and standards are also likely to be as expected by the end of the year.
41. The children's attainment in terms of their **mathematical development** is at the expected level by the end of reception. Their attitudes to this aspect of their work are very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. In their understanding of number, standards are higher than average, with a considerable minority in both schools achieving better than national expectations, and in a very few cases much better; for example, in their ability to find three coins to equal 14 pence. The children's learning is enhanced by the good range of counting songs they are taught. There are missed opportunities for children to explore mathematical concepts at St James, as no sand or water is provided for them to learn through first-hand experience.
42. The children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is secure by the time they transfer to Year 1, and they achieve satisfactorily. Most attain the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of their learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but too little provision is made for structured-play activities and first-hand experiences. Although children's achievement is satisfactory overall, there are times when some of the activities are inappropriate as reception children are expected to do the same task as pupils in Year 1 without adequate account being taken of the different ability levels. Because of space constraints within the mixed-age classes, the children have too few ongoing free-choice activities which would enable them to find out things for themselves. Religious education is taught regularly. Children are learning some well-known Bible stories and they joined

in the writing of prayers in one class. The school meets statutory requirements in ensuring that religious education is taught to children who are five or over.

43. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the provision for **physical development** as no physical education lessons were seen and no sessions of children freely using large toys and bikes outside. The lack of a hall at Ebrington and secure freely-accessible outdoor play spaces at both schools limits opportunities for play and physical development. Teaching of small movements, such as those needed for writing and cutting out, are satisfactory and, for this part of physical development, achievement is satisfactory. Children have satisfactory control over their bodies in larger-scale movement in the classrooms.
44. In the **creative development** area of learning, most children attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory, and good when children are provided with a range of activities or resources from which they can make choices for themselves. In one class, children have regular access to painting activities. Good interactive labelling on the painting easel focused the children's work well with the instruction to "paint a bear". There are regular opportunities for the children to take part in music-making activities, and they are keen to join in as they take part in impromptu singing sessions where they are taught a good range of songs. There are satisfactory opportunities for children to take part in role-play activities and, at the time of the inspection, the "toy museum" was open in one class, and a kitchen in the other, although little use was made of role-play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a marked improvement in the school's results at both key stages since the last inspection.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average at Ebrington, but they are below average at St James.
- There is some good, and very good, teaching at Ebrington, but too much at St James which is only satisfactory because teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not high enough.
- In many classes, pupils' writing skills are weak, particularly at St James.
- Teachers are not rigorous enough when marking pupils' work and miss opportunities to help pupils learn from their mistakes.
- There has been some good leadership in the past, but the current situation without an English co-ordinator is unsatisfactory as nobody is keeping a close check on the work in both schools.
- Teachers do not make enough use of opportunities to develop pupils' language and literacy skills through the teaching of subjects other than English.

Commentary

45. Since the last inspection, there has been a marked improvement in the school's results at the end of both key stages. The rate of improvement has been greater than in most schools. At Key Stage 1, results improved from below the national average in 1998 to

well above the national average in reading and above average in writing in 2003. At Key Stage 2, the improvement has not been quite as marked, but the results in 2003 were well above the national average, though not as good as those achieved in 2002, which were amongst the top 5 per cent of schools in similar circumstances. The small numbers and significant differences in the overall natural ability of pupils in different year groups account for fluctuations in results over the last few years. Previous results indicate parity of performance in both schools. In 2003, results were slightly better at St James than at Ebrington. In 2002, the situation was the reverse. Boys' results have lagged behind those of the girls at both key stages, but more markedly at Key Stage 1. The school has identified the differences and is taking appropriate action to provide greater motivation for boys through varying the type of work and range of books used.

46. The inspection findings paint a less positive picture than the results in 2003. They reveal satisfactory achievement, and standards which are no better than average overall at the end of both key stages. This is partially due to the fact that the overall natural ability levels of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 at St James are significantly lower than in previous years, but is also a result of the unsettling effects of staff changes over the last 18 months. Unlike in previous years, there is a significant difference in the standards achieved at the two schools, with pupils in Year 6 achieving well above average standards at Ebrington but below average standards at St James, reflecting not only the fact that there is a significantly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, but also lack of continuity of teaching for this particular year group.
47. Many pupils in both schools are articulate and confident when speaking, particularly some of the older pupils at Ebrington who show good maturity for their age. Standards in speaking are above average overall. Listening skills are less secure, and are no better than average overall, particularly amongst pupils at St James, where some do not listen well when others are speaking. Most pupils are competent, fluent readers, and standards in this aspect of English are above average in many parts of the school. A number of older pupils at St James still struggle to read fluently and with understanding, even though a considerable amount of well-focused help is given to pupils with special educational needs in this year group. A significant amount of time is devoted to reading during the week, which largely accounts for the fact that this is the strongest of the four key skills. There are, however, variations in the usefulness of guided reading sessions for pupils who are not working directly with a member of staff. In a very good session for the oldest pupils at Ebrington, apart from the low buzz of activity from the group of pupils working with the teacher, silence reigned in the classroom as the rest of the class concentrated on their readers, some carrying out research from a range of non-fiction books, others reading books of their own choice. In reading sessions in some other classes, pupils reading on their own are not always as profitably engaged. Whilst pupils are given good guidance as to suitable reading books in their early stages of reading, significantly less guidance is given to older pupils, thereby missing opportunities to encourage pupils to try different authors or different styles of writing.
48. Writing is the weakest of the four key skills and standards are below average at the end of both key stages. Whilst many of the oldest pupils at Ebrington write very well, using a good range of vocabulary and structuring their writing well, the same high standards are not evident elsewhere. Pupils' writing is, too often, slipshod and inaccurate, completed as a chore rather than with a sense of pride. One of the reasons for this lies in the nature of written tasks set for pupils. In many classes, the writing of pupils of all abilities sometimes comes alive and pupils write at length because they are interested in what they are writing. Too frequently, however, writing tasks are mundane, mechanical exercises, which fail to stimulate the imagination. Younger pupils at St James start each week with writing about what they did at the weekend. Such a task lacks variety and

stimulation, and does not help pupils to develop the ability to produce different types of writing. Yet when a pupil who had been producing four or five lines of diary writing was asked to produce an imaginative story, he went on to produce four pages and showed an immediate improvement in quality.

49. The overall quality of the teaching and pupils' learning at both key stages is satisfactory, but it is good, and at times very good, at Ebrington. Here, lessons are interesting and motivate the pupils to learn. The teachers have high expectations with regard to pupils' participation and the amount of work they are expected to produce. Too many of the lessons at St James are only satisfactory and, in some classes, teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour sufficiently well to ensure that all pupils make the best use of their time. The quality of teachers' planning varies considerably, and this has a direct impact on pupils' motivation. In some classes, new activities are started each day, with the result that pupils produce many short pieces of work and rarely produce a major piece of writing. Too many activities involve the use of worksheets with mechanistic, unchallenging tasks. In classes where better planning is evident, teachers plan a series of activities which link together. Pupils in Year 6 at St James, for example, were compiling their own 'Mr Men' stories for pupils in reception. They had spent one lesson looking at the characteristics of Roger Hargreave's writing, another planning their own characters, and a further lesson planning the plot before they continued with their writing in subsequent lessons. Even though some pupils struggled to produce good-quality writing, they were motivated and keen to work.
50. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are too low in some classes. Some pupils produce very little work when working independently, and their books contain too many unfinished pieces of work. Few teachers are rigorous enough in the marking of pupils' work and too readily accept poorly presented pieces of work. Teachers rarely indicate where pupils have made mistakes and do not give enough indication of what pupils need to do to improve. Rarely are pupils asked to go back over a piece of work to learn from their mistakes. Information and communication technology is sometimes used to good effect to present pupils' work, but rarely to produce successive drafts, giving pupils the opportunity to improve their work without having to rewrite everything. Good attention is given to the very small number of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue, and these pupils are making rapid strides in learning English.
51. The leadership and management of English is unsatisfactory at present. It is clear that the school made good progress in improving its provision for English after the last inspection, when leadership of the subject was criticised. The rapid improvement in results in both schools and at both key stages is an indication of this. Teachers' expertise improved through in-service training and staff meetings under the guidance of the subject co-ordinator, who kept a careful check on what was happening throughout the school, helped to guide curricular planning at St James and ensured good liaison with teachers at Ebrington. Since this co-ordinator relinquished the post in September in order to concentrate on other duties whilst the school was without a substantive headteacher, staff have lacked the same level of guidance, and the school is currently without a coordinator. The close liaison between the two schools has disappeared, so there are now marked differences in the planning and expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving evident in the two schools. Nobody has kept a careful check on the quality of pupils' work, and there has been little systematic observation of the teaching in order to identify where improvements might be made. Formal testing at the end of each year allows the school to have an overview of how well pupils are doing, but the tracking of pupils' progress, even through assessed writing tasks, is not sufficient to give teachers a clear idea of what they need to do in order to help pupils improve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. The use and development of pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Staff have yet to fully appreciate how much subjects other than English can contribute to the teaching of these skills, and too many opportunities are missed to enrich pupils' learning by identifying cross-curricular links with other subjects. When pupils do complete written work in another subject, little attention is paid to the quality of pupils' writing, which serves to reinforce careless habits and does not make pupils aware of how they can improve.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Standards are good at the end of both key stages and all pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good and is most effective when pupils are provided with challenging and demanding tasks.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently to improve standards.
- Teaching and learning are insufficiently monitored.

Commentary

53. The 2003 national test results for Year 2 were above the national average and the average for similar schools. The test results for Year 6 were well above the national average and the average for similar schools on the basis of how well pupils performed when they were in Year 2. Inspection findings show that standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils of all abilities achieve well and are making good progress. However, there is considerable disparity in standards between the two groups of pupils in Year 6 in the two schools. The lower standards apparent in Year 6 at St James reflect their lower natural ability, highlighted by the significant number of pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs. There has also been some disruption in their teaching due to staff changes and this has adversely affected their progress. The pupils in Year 6 at Ebrington have a higher natural ability, and the inspection findings indicate that standards in this group are well above average. There is no significant evidence of differing achievement between boys and girls. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
54. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good number skills. Most pupils have a clear understanding of place value and good mental agility skills. Most can name different two-dimensional shapes and a few pupils know the names of common three-dimensional shapes. Pupils know some of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes, such as the number of sides and corners different shapes possess. Most pupils in Year 2 are confident and enjoy problem-solving activities, particularly mental activities. The current ability range in Year 6 pupils is very wide. The higher-attaining pupils, virtually all of the pupils at Ebrington, have well-developed mathematical skills and mental abilities. These pupils use and apply their mathematical skills confidently and use all four mathematical operations well. They understand relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages and use calculators and non-calculator methods for solving problems. However, there are a significant number of pupils in Year 6 at St James who have difficulty with basic calculations, particularly calculations involving multiplication and division. Most pupils in both schools name and describe a range of different shapes and the higher-attaining pupils calculate area and perimeter using appropriate formulae.

These pupils estimate the size of angles with a commendable degree of accuracy. Pupils in both schools represent data in graphical form and can interpret simple graphs. Discussion with pupils at St James showed that they understand the concept of probability but are less confident in calculating the probability of an event occurring.

55. Teaching and learning are good at both key stages. The teaching is invariably good at Ebrington and occasionally very good. The teaching at St James is more variable, with occasional unsatisfactory teaching, some satisfactory teaching, but much of the teaching good. Scrutiny of pupils' work also indicates a predominance of good teaching. Most lessons begin with a brief mental session and, at its best, as was seen in one lesson at Ebrington, this fully engages and motivates all pupils and sets the tone for the whole lesson. Tasks in both schools are usually well matched to pupils' abilities, including tasks for those pupils with special educational needs, and this helps pupils to make good progress. In a few instances, lessons lack pace and fail to maintain pupils' interest and motivation, resulting in pupils not remaining on task. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not sufficiently high and pupils' work is poorly presented. At both schools, teachers' marking does not indicate how improvements can be made.
56. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' progress through scrutiny of their work and has seen standards rise consistently since the last inspection at a faster rate than the national trend. Teaching and learning have been monitored, but this has not fully eliminated the few unsatisfactory aspects of teaching.

Mathematics across the curriculum.

57. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Some examples were observed of mathematics being used to enhance pupils' learning, as for example in science, but the school does not plan sufficiently for the progressive development of pupils' mathematics skills through other subjects. The use of pupils' mathematical skills tends to be incidental rather than consistently well planned.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved steadily since the last inspection.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative activities.

Commentary

58. On the basis of the 2003 teacher assessments for Year 2, pupils' attainment was in line with national expectations and above standards in similar schools. The results for Year 6 were above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools based on what pupils achieved when they were in Year 2. Inspection findings indicate that attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and that achievement is satisfactory overall in both key stages. The slight disparity between test results and the inspection findings is because of the lower natural ability of the group of pupils in Year 6 at St James. Here, a significant number of the pupils are recognised by the school as having special educational needs. The teaching

programme for pupils at St James has been disrupted over time and this has had an adverse effect on their progress. Pupils at Ebrington, who have had more settled teaching, have made good progress. Overall, pupils identified with special educational needs make progress comparable to other pupils in the two schools.

59. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of life processes, living things and the requirements for growth. Their knowledge of materials and their properties and physical processes is satisfactory. Pupils handle equipment sensibly and have an appropriate vocabulary to describe their work. Their idea of fair testing and factors that might influence their results is less well developed. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a satisfactory scientific knowledge and understanding across all aspects of the subject. All pupils have opportunities to carry out experimental work but have insufficient opportunities to develop their investigative skills progressively across the age range. This restricts pupils' ability to initiate, plan and undertake their own investigations and to take responsibility for their own learning.
60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages, and there are some good features. Where the teaching is good, pupils take responsibility for their own work, select the equipment they need and initiate their investigations. In one such lesson seen during the inspection, pupils displayed initiative and worked diligently for sustained periods of time. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils in Year 6 at St James indicate that experimental activities for the potentially more able pupils are too directed with too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative. These pupils are insufficiently challenged and have too few opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations. In these instances, teacher's expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are too low and pupils do not show enough care in collecting and presenting their results. The conclusions drawn are too simplistic and too often poorly presented. Teachers' marking does not focus sufficiently on standards and in suggesting how pupils' achievement could be improved.
61. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A suitable scheme of work is in place and the curriculum is monitored through scrutiny of pupils' work. Teaching and learning have not been consistently monitored and several factors have mitigated against this. Until recently, the co-ordinator worked on a part-time, mornings only, basis with science taught on afternoons in both schools. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly, but the results are not used as well as they might be to track pupils' progress, to set targets for improvement and to raise standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been significant improvement in the subject over the past year, although the school has still not done enough to rectify past weaknesses.
- Pupils are now making satisfactory progress, but standards are still below the expected level at the end of Year 2 and Year 6
- Teachers' knowledge of the subject has improved significantly over the last year, but there are still gaps in their understanding of certain aspects of the curriculum.
- Resources available to staff and pupils have improved at St James, but they are still inadequate at Ebrington.

- The subject co-ordinator has provided good leadership over the last year, but is given insufficient opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in both schools.
- Staff make insufficient use of new technology as a tool for teaching and learning in other subjects.

Commentary

62. Having been identified as an area for development in the previous two inspections, the provision for information and communication technology is still not as secure as it should be. However, since a new co-ordinator took over responsibility for the subject a year ago, and with the support of the acting headteacher, quite a lot has been achieved in the last year and the school has a much more purposeful approach to developing the subject than before. A new scheme of work, taught as a two-year rolling programme, has been introduced. However, as only the first year of this programme has been taught in its entirety, there are still aspects of the National Curriculum which have not yet been covered. Consequently, standards are still below the levels expected at the end of both key stages because of the gaps in pupils' knowledge, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory because they have made sound progress in the aspects which have been taught.
63. Throughout the school, the strongest aspect of pupils' work is their ability to use technology to exchange and share information. In this aspect, pupils are working at the nationally expected level. Work on display from pupils in Year 6 in both schools indicates that they have the necessary skills to set out text in different ways, such as a two-column journalistic report or a piece of imaginative writing using different styles and incorporating images. At St James, pupils have mastered the basics of a graphics program on which they have produced designs for a new playground. Older pupils are also confident in using computers to find out information. During an art lesson, for example, two girls were asked to see if they could find information about Islamic prayer mats. They confidently accessed the Internet and found a helpful web-site, which was then shared with the rest of the class. Younger pupils in both schools know how to enter text using a word processor and produce pictograms to display data in graphical format. There are weaknesses in pupils' ability to develop their ideas and make things happen. Pupils have had little experience, for example, of control technology or simulations. This was also a weakness at the time of the last inspection. They also have insufficient opportunity to review, modify and evaluate their work, for example, by producing successive drafts of a piece of work or combining work from various different sources into a finished product.
64. Because of timetabling arrangements, only one lesson in information and communication technology was observed during the inspection. The quality of pupils' work, and evaluations by an external consultant, indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved considerably over the last year as a result of in-service training. There are still gaps in teachers' knowledge of certain aspects of the curriculum, but appropriate plans have been made to provide training for staff before these units have to be taught in the second year of the school's two-year programme.
65. Although there has been significant improvement in the level of resources for the subject, resources are still inadequate and there is disparity in the equipment available to pupils in the two schools. Teachers at St James have access to a small computer suite, housed in the same room as the school's library. This is a significant improvement which enables all classes to have one lesson a week in which to teach information and communication technology skills. The availability of this room is having a good impact on developing pupils' skills, although the facilities are still under-used.

Insufficient computers are available for pupils at Ebrington, although plans are well under way to convert a room in the former headteacher's house to use as a small suite. The planned purchase of laptop computers for this room should also lend greater versatility to the use of these resources. The various computers available within the classrooms are used more frequently than at St James, particularly in Years 3 and 4, where pupils are particularly keen to use the computers to produce finished copies of their work. There are, however, insufficient computers available for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, and Year 5 and Year 6 at Ebrington. As yet, neither school has interactive whiteboards⁶, although the parent-teacher association has funded the purchase of a digital projector, camera and keyboard, and staff are starting to put these pieces of equipment to good use.

66. The subject co-ordinator has provided good leadership over the last year as various improvements have been instigated. She has also improved her own skills through attendance at various training courses. A new scheme of work has been implemented, and resources have been reorganised to align with the scheme. Training has been provided for staff and arrangements made for teachers to work with a consultant on units of the course with which they are unfamiliar. There has been good consultation with experts, and arrangements to improve the facilities at Ebrington are now well underway. New assessment procedures have been introduced, so that pupils' skills are now assessed at the end of each unit of work. Further training, however, is required to help all staff to learn how to assign pupils' work to a National Curriculum level so that they have a really clear understanding of how well their pupils are doing in relation to national expectations. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and has started to collect samples of pupils' work into a portfolio, although this does not yet give a clear indication of how well pupils are achieving in all aspects of the subject. The main weakness is that there is not enough opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning to identify areas for further improvement and to ensure parity of experience and expectations in the two schools.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is still unsatisfactory. Whilst teachers at St James are providing regular lessons to teach specific skills, they are not relating these lessons sufficiently well to other areas of the curriculum, thereby missing opportunities to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects. Although the computer suite is available for use in the mornings during English and mathematics lessons, it is rarely used for this purpose, which represents an inefficient use of a good resource. Pupils' work in information and communication technology is linked more effectively to other subjects at Ebrington, although the pupils have fewer opportunities to use new technology here because of the lack of resources. Other subject co-ordinators have yet to take on the responsibility of identifying where and how information and communication technology can be used to enrich the teaching of their subjects.

HUMANITIES

68. History and geography were not a major focus for the inspection, so work in these subjects was sampled. Discussions were held with pupils in both schools and with the

⁶ The computer image is projected onto a large screen. Teachers and children can operate the computer by tapping on the screen. A 'flipchart' facility enables notes written on the screen with an electronic pen to be saved automatically in word-processed form.

subject co-ordinators, samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and two lessons were observed in geography. No lessons were observed in history, so no overall judgement can be made on provision in this subject.

69. From discussions with the co-ordinator and with pupils, who talked enthusiastically about the Romans and the Celts, and an examination of teachers' planning and pupils' books, there is every indication that standards in **history** are in line with national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. The teaching of facts appears to be stronger than the development of skills. The curriculum is currently being updated and widened, a need recognised correctly by the school, as it is only just satisfactory, with some of the history topics being covered in little depth. Assessment and record keeping are satisfactory, with regular assessments being recorded. Leadership and management are satisfactory.
70. The provision for **geography** is unsatisfactory. Standards of attainment are below those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Last time the school was inspected, no overall judgement on geography was made. In the two lessons seen at Ebrington as part of this inspection, teaching and learning were good. In these lessons, teachers used questioning well to draw out pupils' knowledge and ideas; for example, when matching pictures to captions in work on Pakistan. As a result, pupils achieved well. However, discussions with pupils, and an analysis of their work and teachers' planning from both schools, indicate that by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment in geography is below national expectations for their age. This is because only one unit of work a year has recently been undertaken and, therefore, skills and knowledge are forgotten between units. Little is recorded in pupils' books. Current curricular planning has some elements missing, especially topics about the local area and associated fieldwork investigations. Expectations are sometimes too low, with work planned around the lower levels of the National Curriculum, so younger pupils in the mixed-age classes are challenged more than older ones. Leadership and management of geography are unsatisfactory, although the co-ordinator is aware of the gaps in the coverage of the curriculum and is currently working on improving it. The school has a satisfactory school-wide assessment and record-keeping system.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. Due to timetable and time constraints, little of the work of the school in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education was seen. Consequently, no overall judgements on the quality of provision in these subjects could be made other than in physical education.
72. From the art-work on display in both schools, pupils appear to achieve average standards in **art and design**, although there are indications that skills are not developed as systematically as they should be. Self-portraits produced by pupils in Year 6, for example, indicate that pupils have not been taught basic skills of observation and proportion, such as where eyes, nose and ears are positioned on the head. A criticism of the previous inspection was that the school lacked a structured scheme of work, which resulted in a lack of progression in the acquisition of skills. The school has been slow to tackle this issue, although the co-ordinator has been working with an adviser to draw up a new scheme which should cater more effectively for the school's mixed-age classes. There are some good extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in art. At St James, pupils have the opportunity to attend an art club after school, and this is well supported. An art week towards the end of the summer term provides a good focus for artwork for all pupils. Although the development of art has been one of the focuses for this year, other priorities have meant that it has still not been possible to

monitor effectively what is happening in both schools. This is a weakness which needs to be rectified if staff are to improve their skills in teaching the subject.

73. From the limited amount of work on display, pupils appear to achieve above average standards in some aspects of **design and technology**, although pupils do not cover a great range of work over the course of the year. A fruitful link with the local Women's Institute at Ebrington enables the school to provide pupils from both schools with very good support during their design and technology project days. A recent project to design and make a pair of slippers not only produced a very good variety of individual designs, but finished products which showed good degrees of skill in making them. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about the project and were appreciative of the help they had been given. A similar degree of care and inventiveness is evident in the range of shelters made in model format by pupils in Year 6 at St James. Pupils' recording and subsequent evaluation of their work in design and technology is not as good, and the worksheets given to pupils to complete limit the opportunity for them to learn how to structure a well-written evaluation which, in turn, could provide another means for pupils to improve their writing skills. The co-ordinator has drawn up a two-year cycle for covering the curriculum for design and technology, but the programme is not entirely successful in ensuring that all pupils receive a similar experience, and not all units of study are covered. The co-ordinator's role has only recently been clarified, and very little has been done in the way of monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' work, a situation which is unsatisfactory. There are good links with the local high school, and pupils from Year 6 have the opportunity to carry out a design and technology project there, using equipment and resources which neither St James nor Ebrington possesses, as part of their induction arrangements to secondary school.
74. No evidence of work in **music** was observed during the inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Facilities for physical education at Ebrington are poor.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunity to evaluate their own or others' performance.

Commentary

75. No physical education was timetabled for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 during the inspection, neither was any gymnastics seen in either school. Standards of attainment in the games activities seen in Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations.
76. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have good hand-eye co-ordination and co-operate well in games situations. In throwing, catching and striking a ball, most pupils show satisfactory control and fluency. Pupils apply basic safety principles and are sensitive to each other's needs. The school's policy of inclusion is actively implemented and all pupils take a full part. The school reports that virtually all pupils learn to swim and have opportunities to take part in outdoor adventure activities.
77. In the lessons seen, teaching, learning and pupils' achievement were satisfactory. All pupils take part in physical education and whilst no physical education was seen in Year 1 and Year 2, these pupils, in discussion, could describe gymnastic activities they had undertaken. Teaching was most effective when the lesson was well structured and pupils understood the purpose of the activities. In the less successful lessons, too little

time was devoted to warm-up and cool-down activities and the purpose of such activities not clearly understood by pupils. Discussion with older pupils indicated that they understood some of the body changes that occur during rigorous exercise, but they were uncertain as to the beneficial effects of exercise in maintaining a healthy life style. In one lesson, pupils were encouraged to consider strategies and tactics in a game, but in most lessons pupils had too few opportunities to evaluate their own performance and that of others and to practise so as to improve.

78. Ebrington School has poor facilities for physical education. There is no suitable indoor area for games and gymnastics and, whilst some games take place on the yard, this is hardly adequate since it is small, sloping and any games activities are dependent on favourable weather conditions. During the inspection, a nearby field was used, but this necessitated a 10-minute walk either way. The recently mown surface was totally unsuitable for small ball games and frustrated pupils' attempts to play. Facilities at St James are better, though the field used for games was unmarked.
79. Leadership and management are satisfactory because the co-ordinator has put an appropriate scheme of work in place and this is used by all teachers. Some monitoring of the teaching takes place essentially during combined sessions in Key Stage 2. This also enables the co-ordinator to be aware of pupils' standards but, apart from this, no assessment takes place.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship as only one personal, social and health education lesson was observed. However, through talking to pupils, an examination of planning and the curriculum for personal, social and health education, which includes work on diet, health, sex, drug abuse and being a good citizen, it can be concluded that provision is at least satisfactory. Teachers currently plan individually for parts of the curriculum, supported by outside school personnel. From September 2004 onwards, teachers will adhere to the new school-wide plan, which will improve provision and ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

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	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	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	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
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	5

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