

INSPECTION REPORT

PICKLENASH JUNIOR SCHOOL

Newent, Gloucestershire

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115733

Headteacher: Mr A J Thomas

Lead inspector: Mr P Kemble

Dates of inspection: 24 - 26 November 2003

Inspection number: 260752

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	228
School address:	Ross Road Newent Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL18 1BG
Telephone number:	01531 820589
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	12 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Picklenash Junior School is an average sized primary school catering for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. There are 228 pupils on roll. The school draws the majority of its pupils from the immediate area, but a small number travel up to ten miles to attend the school as a result of parental choice. Pupils' levels of attainment on entry into Year 3 are typically below average. Seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a below average figure. Thirty-eight pupils (16.7%) are on the register of pupils with special educational needs, broadly in line with the national average. Four pupils (1.75%) have statements of special educational need, slightly above the national average. Virtually all pupils are from white British backgrounds.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7269	Mr P Kemble	Lead inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs
11564	Mrs J McKay	Lay inspector	
20097	Mr J Griffiths	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music
12997	Mrs C Cheong	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Picklenash Junior School's effectiveness is satisfactory overall, with significant strengths in provision. The headteacher and staff work well as a team to provide a safe and secure environment for all pupils. Standards of care, support and guidance are very good and make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in mathematics, science, music and physical education.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Standards in writing and information and communication technology are below average.
- The ethos of the school is very good; pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The headteacher, staff and governors together provide good leadership and management.
- Other subjects of the curriculum are not used well enough to promote pupils' writing skills.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to match work to pupils' needs.

The school was previously inspected in October 1998. Since then, improvement has been satisfactory overall, notably in standards in mathematics and science, the ethos of the school and links with the community. In response to weaknesses identified in the previous report, the quality of teaching has improved well, particularly over the last eighteen months. Improvements to the provision for literacy have seen standards rise in reading, spelling and handwriting, but they are still not high enough in writing. Leadership and management are now good, with clear targets for action and effective monitoring and evaluation procedures. Assessment procedures are now in place, but assessment information is not always used well enough to match activities to pupils' capabilities. Standards in information and communication technology remain a weakness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good in mathematics and science. In English, their achievement is satisfactory in reading, but unsatisfactory in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in music and physical education. Standards are at average levels in all other subjects except information and communication technology where they are below average. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; attendance levels are slightly below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Standards of care are **high** and levels of inclusion are **very good**. **The quality of teaching is good.** Improvements to the way lessons are planned, a more rigorous analysis of school and national test and assessment information, and the provision of a good range of additional educational experiences to extend pupils' skills have led to the generally good quality of pupils' learning. Teaching in all classes is often good or better. Basic skills are taught well overall, although opportunities are missed to promote pupils' writing skills in other subjects, and the use of assessment information is effective in some subjects. Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum, with a strong emphasis on creative activities, but there is an imbalance in the amount of time allocated to literacy lessons and some of the foundation subjects

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school, a strong sense of purpose and high aspirations. The headteacher, key staff and governors manage the school well and their commitment to educational inclusion and raising standards is evident in the school's welcoming and warm ethos and pupils' good attitudes to their work. All statutory requirements are met. Teaching and support staff work very well as a team and carry out their roles and responsibilities conscientiously, successfully promoting pupils' personal development. Procedures carried out by all staff for monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and standards are good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

There are satisfactory links with parents. The vast majority of parents are pleased with many aspects of school life, and in particular the quality of teaching. A significant minority have reservations about the leadership of the school and the way they are consulted about future developments. The headteacher and governors are aware of the reasons for these views and are working hard to improve links with the parents concerned. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and show great interest in all that is provided for them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Promote pupils' writing skills more effectively across the curriculum.
- Increase the effectiveness of assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Raise standards in information and communication technology.
- Take steps to improve attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Standards in the core subjects are **well above average** in science, **above average** in mathematics, **average** in religious education and **below average** in English and information and communication technology. Achievement is **good** in mathematics and science. Achievement in writing and information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards overall are rising above the national trend.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils achieve well in music and physical education.
- Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in writing and information and communication technology.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (27.5)	26.8 (27.7)
science	30.0 (28.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' standards were well above average in science, above average in mathematics and below average in English. When results are compared with those of similar schools, the picture is the same. Targets set by the school for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics were appropriately high. They were met in mathematics, but not in the writing element of English.
2. Results of national tests over time show that they have risen above the national trend, but with English results generally lower than those of mathematics and science. There has been a significant improvement overall since 2002, particularly in mathematics and science. This is due mainly to the impact of strong leadership from the management team and subject co-ordinators in developing a consistent approach in all classes to raising standards.
3. The level of attainment of pupils into Year 3 is typically below average. School data shows, and the inspection confirms that, when pupils' attainments in Year 6 are compared with their attainments on entry, achievement is good in science and mathematics and satisfactory in English. However, pupils underachieve in writing.
4. Good achievement in mathematics and science is the result of a strong focus on learning through practical activities, the planning of interesting and motivating tasks and effective use of assessment to match tasks to pupils' differing capabilities.
5. In English, there has been a major focus on developing pupils' literacy skills over the last two years. This has resulted in improved standards in speaking, listening and reading. Spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation are better than at the time of the previous inspection, but many pupils do not write as fluently or as extensively as might be expected. This is mainly because other subjects of the curriculum are not used well enough to promote their writing

skills. However, their past work shows that standards over the last twelve months have made a significant improvement and are continuing to rise.

6. In English and mathematics, an analysis of school and national test and assessment data has been used well to identify areas of weakness. Action taken has been very effective in mathematics, and is now beginning to have a significant impact in English. Staff, accommodation and resources have been deployed well to raise standards, although information and communication technology has not been used well enough to support pupils' learning.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of good teaching in class lessons and in withdrawal groups. Their achievement is good and matches that of other pupils in all year groups. Teachers are involved in preparing their individual education plans and this helps them to include activities in lessons that relate to targets in pupils' plans. The care and attention pupils receive from learning support assistants are very good, for example in additional literacy sessions for pupils experiencing learning difficulties in reading and writing.
8. Pupils' achievements in other subjects of the curriculum are at least satisfactory except information and communication technology where achievement is unsatisfactory. Many pupils achieve well in music and physical education as a result of good teaching and the provision of a good range of extra-curricular activities that promote and extend their skills. Examples were seen during the inspection of good standards of work in aspects of art and design, geography and history, resulting from the good subject knowledge and enthusiasm of teachers who successfully motivate pupils and sustain their interest and achievement.
9. Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology has suffered over the last twelve months because of major alterations to the school accommodation creating difficulties for the headteacher and governors in maintaining consistent provision. However, teachers' planning and pupils' past work show that opportunities are missed to use information and communication technology to promote learning across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Provision for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave well in and around the school.
- Pupils show an interest in lessons, mainly concentrate well, and work hard to complete the tasks set.
- Relationships between pupils themselves, and between adults and pupils in school, are good.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

10. The school works hard to create opportunities for pupils' personal development and is successful at helping them to become mature and responsible. Pupils take their responsibilities and duties seriously, for example the Year 6 pupils who act as prefects during the lunch hour. Others have responsibilities for selling 'tuck' and for manning the playground 'friendship bench'. Members of the school council are currently involved in drawing up designs for marking out the playground and the swimming-pool fence.
11. Pupils are learning to work independently and co-operatively through the many good opportunities provided in lessons for them to work in pairs and small groups. As a result, relationships between pupils themselves and with adults in the school are good. Pupils play co-operatively at playtimes. Parents spoken to said that the occasional incidents of bullying

were dealt with swiftly and fairly.

12. Pupils make considerable effort to achieve the various rewards. For instance, each classroom has a 'star of the week' and the Tree of Achievement in the reception area of the school recognises and promotes both personal and academic achievement. Pupils are keenly aware of sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. For assemblies, pupils enter the hall quietly and respond appropriately to the calm, peaceful atmosphere which teachers create. They move around the school in an orderly manner, and are polite to visitors.
13. In lessons, especially where teaching is good, pupils are active learners and participate fully. They listen attentively and respond with enthusiasm. Pupils with special educational needs have a good self-image and display a positive attitude to school and their work. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities which teach pupils to be team players and contribute significantly to their personal development.
14. Pupils learn about their own culture through history, religious education and visits to local churches and other places of interest. They participate in many local community events in an area which has many ancient historic links. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness in daily acts of collective worship, in personal, social and health education and religious education lessons. Collective worship is planned effectively and takes place in a quiet, respectful atmosphere.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

15. The last officially reported attendance figure was satisfactory, but the recent one for 2002/03 shows a decline in the figures. The overall attendance rate was 93.9% against a national average of 94.2%. Below average attendance is largely caused by a small number of families who, in spite of the intervention of the educational welfare officer, continue to stay away from school. A number of families also continue to take holidays during term time. The school regularly reminds parents through its newsletters of the importance of regular and punctual attendance on the attainment and progress of its pupils. Most pupils spoken to during the inspection said they enjoyed coming to school, and the vast majority of pupils arrive on time.

Exclusions

16. Two pupils were excluded during the period 2002/2003.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	235	2	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and often make lessons interesting and stimulating, promoting good attitudes to learning amongst pupils.
- Lessons are well prepared with appropriate resources available to pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good teaching.
- Assessment information is not always used well enough to match work to pupils' differing needs.
- Pupils' writing skills are not promoted well enough in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	6	10	8	-	-	-

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.

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in Years 3 to 6. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when inconsistent teaching was reported to be a weakness. Improvement is due to changes in personnel, improved procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and significant improvements to the quality of teamwork amongst all staff. The impact of improvement is evident over the last two years. During this period, staff have focused on identified strengths and weaknesses in their lesson plans, with the result that pupils achieve above and well above average standards in mathematics and science, and are making rapid improvements to the standard of writing.
18. Activities planned are often stimulating, creating interest and enjoyment amongst pupils. For instance, Year 4 pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of how boys and girls grow at different rates because their tasks were relevant to them and sustained their motivation and interest. Year 6 pupils responded well to an interesting theme in a lesson on personal, social and health education in which they enjoyed discussing: 'Children have the right to be forgiven.'
19. Pupils benefit from lessons that are well prepared beforehand. Their quality of learning is enhanced because resources are readily available, no time is lost in waiting for a turn and pupils move on in their learning at a good pace. This was evident in a Year 5 art and design lesson, where sewing skills were taught. Very good preparation of the materials and equipment required led to pupils making good progress and achieving well.
20. The special educational needs co-ordinator has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs by implementing procedures whereby class teachers draw up individual education plans with the co-ordinator's support. Consequently, teachers are very familiar with targets set for pupils and lesson plans often contain special activities for these pupils, either in the classroom or in groups withdrawn from the lesson. This is a particular characteristic of literacy, numeracy and science lessons and makes a significant

contribution to pupils' achievements. Teachers and learning support workers liaise extremely effectively to promote pupils' progress towards the targets set.

21. Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge. The good or better lessons seen during the inspection were characterised by confident teaching because teachers had a good knowledge and understanding of the skills and content being taught. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 all made good gains in geography and history skills because their teachers' own interest and enthusiasm encouraged them to concentrate and work hard.
22. In lessons judged to be satisfactory, teachers had not matched activities closely enough to pupils' needs, due mainly to inconsistencies in the way teachers use assessment information to decide what pupils of differing capabilities should tackle in lessons. As a result, work was either too hard or too easy for some pupils. For instance, it was too hard for lower attaining pupils in a Year 6 literacy lesson and not hard enough for higher attaining pupils in a Year 3 numeracy lesson, resulting in a loss of concentration and slow progress being made by these pupils.
23. Assessment procedures are good overall, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but teachers vary in their ability to use the information to consistently plan activities with appropriate levels of challenge. Subject co-ordinators are hampered in their ability to influence the quality of activities in weekly lesson plans because, unlike yearly and termly planning, there is no common format for teachers to use.
24. Teachers do not promote the skills pupils learn in literacy lessons well enough in other subjects and this is one of the main reasons why writing standards have remained below average over time. However, this situation is rapidly improving as teachers become more creative in the ways that they promote literacy and other skills in the foundation subjects.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory** overall. **Good** provision is made for learning outside the school day. Pupils' learning benefits from **good** accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is a good match of teachers to the requirements of the curriculum.
- Time between units of work is too long in some foundation subjects.
- National curriculum guidelines are not sufficiently adjusted to suit the characteristics of pupils in the school.

Commentary

25. Curriculum provision in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Its breadth meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, and of drugs awareness and sex education. Provision for personal, health and sex education is satisfactory, and there are useful plans in the school improvement plan to further develop provision in the current academic year. The curriculum is enhanced well by much extra teaching of music and a good range of after-school clubs, such as netball and chess. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
26. The balance of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. However, the amount of time given to the teaching of English, although illustrating the school's commendable efforts to raise standards, means that subjects such as history and information and communication technology receive less time than might be expected. The length of time between units of work is too long in some subjects. For instance pupils are not taught any history or geography for half a year. This leads to skills and knowledge being forgotten. This method of tackling

subjects in blocks of time meets national recommendations for coverage. It is however, an example of how the school sometimes follows government published curriculum guidance closely with too little adjustment being made to cater for the particular needs of the pupils currently in the school.

27. The curriculum is inclusive. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. The curriculum provides well for pupils identified as having special educational needs, with a good match of work to their capabilities, helping them to make good progress and achieve well. Levels of challenge are often good, especially in reading, mathematics, science, music and physical education. Gifted and talented musicians benefit from additional tuition.
28. Teachers' planning for the year, each term and each week is generally thorough. Subjects are successfully combined in class projects and this method helps to make lessons interesting and stimulating for pupils. However, despite the amount of time allocated to literacy lessons, other subjects of the curriculum are not used as well as they might be to promote literacy skills, and writing skills in particular.
29. Pupils' learning is successfully enriched by the provision of a good range of extra-curricular activities. For example, good use is made of visits to places of educational and cultural interest, with most areas of the curriculum being included during pupils' time in the school. Also many visitors come into the school to work with pupils. The school has a particularly strong emphasis on music, so much of the extra provision is to do with this. As a result, many pupils have an opportunity to learn a musical instrument and this strong provision enriches school life very well. The school provides a good range of after-school clubs, covering sports and the arts well. The regular uptake for these is good, with the full age-range of pupils in the school being well represented and many staff involved. There is also a residential experience each year for the older pupils which supports curriculum work well.
30. Teaching and support staff have a wide range of talents and expertise which are used well to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Accommodation is good. The new classroom extensions provide much needed additional space. Pupils benefit from a new library, a large information and communication technology suite and extra rooms for small group work. The school swimming pool is used well to promote good standards, although it is expensive to maintain. Resources are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

There are **very good** procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school provides them with **good** support, advice and guidance, and involves them well in its work and development. Procedures for child protection are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents of pupils with special educational needs are pleased with the way the school supports them during their time in this school.
- The school monitors pupils learning and personal development well, and teachers try to ensure that they do their best.
- Most parents spoken to during the inspection felt that their children were secure and cared for well.

Commentary

31. The last inspection judged the school as providing a secure and happy environment which made a positive contribution to the quality of education. Since that time, the school has sought to maximise this aspect of pupils' lives, to good effect. Procedures for ensuring child protection are well known and carried out in accordance with local practice. Staff are

supported well by outside agencies, who regularly visit the school. Teachers and all adults in the school know pupils well and recognise their needs. Many parents spoke highly of the personal achievements of pupils since they entered the school. Teachers are able to settle pupils quickly when they start in Year 3 because of the good liaison existing with the adjacent infant school.

32. The close attention given to provision for pupils with special educational needs provides a good example of the quality of care found in the school. Learning support workers show considerable sensitivity and patience as they work with individuals or groups of pupils. In sessions observed in the library and in withdrawal rooms, they helped pupils to feel relaxed and valued their contributions, making a significant contribution to the development of their self-esteem and to their achievements. Parents of pupils with special educational needs report that they are pleased with the way their children are cared for and integrated into school life.
33. Lunchtime supervisors make an important contribution to pupils' welfare, health and safety during mealtimes and in the playground. They take their responsibilities very seriously and report that they would like to receive more training to further improve the quality of the guidance and support they give to pupils.
34. Pupils' personal development is mainly monitored informally, but teachers know their personal and academic needs well. They record a wide range information which is used in the comprehensive end of term reports. The systems of house points and rewards for good work and behaviour are applied and monitored carefully, and as a result, pupils' behaviour is good.
35. Pupils report that they have no hesitation in asking an adult for help should they have a problem. Parents spoken to during the inspection said they would have no hesitation in approaching the school if they had concerns about their children's well-being.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **satisfactory** links with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The active and supportive Picklenash School Association (PSA) provides many social activities and many valuable resources for the school.
- Links with the local feeder school and the local comprehensive are very good.
- A small but significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the management of the school and feel that they are kept informed but not consulted about school life.

Commentary

36. Parents are mainly supportive of the work of the school. Some pupils travel as far as ten miles to school each day, and some parents were pupils themselves at the school. Inspectors support parents' view that information provided for them is satisfactory and well received. For example, there are regular newsletters and curriculum plans which keep parents well informed of work to be covered by their children. Annual reports to parents on their children's progress are comprehensive and include targets for development. In reading diaries there are good examples of dialogue between teachers and parents.
37. A number of parents and members of the community come in to hear reading and help in other lessons. PSA members work extremely hard to raise valuable funds for the school and also plan a good number of social events each year. In these ways the contribution of parents to their children's education is good.

38. A small number of parents questioned the amount of homework pupils' receive. The school believes that homework promotes a smooth transition for pupils when they go on to the next stage of their education, when they will have to complete a much larger amount of work at home. Inspectors support this view and judge that homework makes a useful contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all year groups.
39. Replies to the questionnaire and comments from parents who attended the meeting and from those talked to during the inspection show that a small but significant number are unhappy with the leadership of the school and the arrangements to consult them about future plans. The headteacher and governors are aware that some parents have reservations about their work. Inspectors judge that efforts to improve relationships with these parents and plans to improve the involvement of all parents more fully in school life are helpful and positive.
40. The school has very good links with the local community and feeder school. The good links established between the feeder schools and the local comprehensive mean that there is a smooth transition when pupils are either entering or leaving the school. Parents of pupils who had left to go on to the comprehensive said their children were well prepared for the next stage of their education.
41. Local businesses have made a significant contribution to the school's resources; for instance, the donation of microscopes from the local community school, and computers donated by a local company and installed by another. This company also helped in the installation of computers in the new computer suite. There are good links with Gloucester Rugby Club, and the school also gives frequent support to local organisations and charities. It also participates in county-wide brass workshops in Cheltenham Town Hall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **satisfactory**. The leadership of other key staff is **good**. Management is good, especially arrangements for self-evaluation and its use to focus on areas for improvement. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors, headteacher and staff have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The ethos of the school is very good.
- The commitment of all staff to raising standards is strong.
- Staff monitor the school's performance well and take appropriate action to address weaknesses.
- The school's finances are managed well.
- Co-ordinators do not monitor teachers' weekly lesson plans effectively enough.
- Co-ordinators of foundation subjects do not have enough opportunities to observe lessons.

Commentary

42. The atmosphere within the school is calm and the environment welcoming. Pupils from different backgrounds work and play harmoniously together. They benefit from the high expectations of their academic and social achievements from all staff and a strong commitment to raise standards further. In this context, the work of the headteacher and staff has led to standards rising above the national trend and pupils achieving very well in science and well in mathematics. Achievement in English is satisfactory overall, but action taken, particularly in the last twelve months, has seen a significant improvement in a short time in pupils' writing standards.
43. Since the last inspection, problems involving the leadership of the school and staffing have been largely resolved and this has meant that the school has been able to move forward at a good pace in its development in recent times, leading to the present positive atmosphere. In

this context, the headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. He has a clear vision for the future of the school and strives earnestly to achieve his goals. He has an overriding commitment and determination to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement and is becoming increasingly successful as the impact of his leadership strengthens. For example, he has been very successful in appointing key staff, leading governors and staff in planning significant improvements to the school's accommodation and resources and improving the accuracy of procedures to forecast future budget spending.

44. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher. She works very effectively with him in leading the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and standards. Her work in co-ordinating the school's approach to assessment is having a significant impact on pupils' standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with pupils of all capabilities generally well challenged by their tasks.
45. Subject co-ordinators work hard to carry out their roles and responsibilities. For example, science standards have shown a significant rise as a result of the co-ordinator's expertise and drive. Music standards are above expectations as a result of the commitment shown by the co-ordinator and all staff to maintaining the status of music in the curriculum.
46. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good co-ordination of the school's approach to their learning. The co-ordinator keeps meticulous records of individual pupils' progress towards targets in their individual plans and her management of the work of learning support workers is very good. The co-ordinator liaises very effectively with school staff, with staff in the adjacent infant school and the feeder secondary school, and with outside agencies, helping pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
47. Monitoring and evaluation procedures carried out by core subject co-ordinators are particularly effective, with opportunities to observe colleagues teach and to evaluate teachers' planning for the year and for each term helping them to identify areas for improvement and plan appropriate action. Action plans prepared for the current academic year are good. Foundation subject co-ordinators have fewer opportunities to observe lessons.
48. Teachers evaluate their daily lessons after they have been taught and co-ordinators use their comments to judge the effectiveness of the planning. However, they rarely see these plans before they are taught and this limits their ability to influence levels of challenge or appropriateness of activities, particularly in the foundation subjects.
49. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The comprehensive improvement plan, produced by the headteacher and other key staff in consultation with the governing body, shows a good understanding of the school's current situation and of how standards could be raised further. For example, governors have set aside funding for the purchase of additional classroom computers in order to improve provision for information and communication technology.
50. The enthusiastic chair of governors works closely with the headteacher and makes an invaluable personal contribution to the school. Governors demonstrate their commitment in the way they have worked to improve the school's facilities. For example, members of the governing body have been instrumental in helping to equip the new computer suite. Their efforts have facilitated savings that have allowed the school to purchase more equipment than the budget would have otherwise allowed. Governors oversee the management of resources successfully and are alert to the principles of best value in their financial decision-making. All statutory requirements are met.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	534527
Total expenditure	549609
Expenditure per pupil	2339

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23968
Balance carried forward to the next	8886

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good overall, and pupils are making good progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Not enough use is made of other curriculum subjects to promote pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

51. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in speaking, listening and reading, and below average in writing. Results over time of national tests at the end of Year 6 show that standards have remained below the average of similar schools since the previous inspection. However, as a result of a major focus on literacy skills, significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and effective use of national literacy guidelines, pupils are now making good progress and standards are rising. Achievement for all pupils is satisfactory in speaking, listening and reading, but they are underachieving in writing. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
52. At the time of the previous inspection the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory. It is now good overall and is one of the main reasons why standards are rising at a significant rate. Evidence from pupils' past work shows that improvement has been most significant over the last twelve months. New members of staff and improvements to teamwork and planning have led to the implementation of a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting, as well as raised expectations of pupils' achievements.
53. Pupils have good attitudes to their work as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and thorough planning. They take part in lessons with interest and enthusiasm, which helps them to make good progress. For instance, in an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils worked very well in pairs and small groups as they wrote in the style of a newspaper report, basing their paragraphs on notes made in previous lessons. Motivation was high because of their teacher's own enthusiasm and high expectations. The task was very relevant as it related to fictitious events in the school. Consequently the quality of pupils' discussions and the pace of work were very good and all pupils achieved very well.
54. Standards in speaking and listening are average in Years 3 to 6. Pupils respond well to regular well-planned opportunities in all classes. For instance, they are encouraged to explain their methods in mathematics, present their findings to the rest of the class in science, geography and history and participate in discussions during personal, social and health education. By Year 6, most pupils listen attentively and with respect to others, and many use a wide range of vocabulary well during conversations. Nearly all pupils express themselves confidently and clearly. Standards represent satisfactory achievement from below average standards on entry into Year 3.
55. Pupils achieve well in reading. Many enter school with below average skills. By Year 6, standards are comparable to those attained nationally because teachers successfully maintain and sustain pupils' interest in books in lessons and make effective use of the school library. There is a strong emphasis on reading skills in Years 3 and 4 in particular, and pupils with

special educational needs and lower attaining pupils make good gains in their learning as a result of high quality teaching from learning support assistants, both in and out of the classroom. Pupils in each class benefit from at least two guided reading sessions each week when reading skills are taught and used to good effect to promote writing activities, such as play scripts and instructional writing.

56. Teachers recognise that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in writing. An analysis of school and national test and assessment data shows that standards have, until recently, improved little since the previous inspection. However, the impact of consistently good teaching over the last twelve months is evident in pupils' past work in books and in work on display, with many writing competently in different styles and for different purposes. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 show good, imaginative use of vocabulary; for instance, 'The board screeches as the teacher writes' and 'The chips mutter in the pan'. Average and lower attaining pupils do not use vocabulary so effectively and do not write in sufficient length for their age and capability. Handwriting is satisfactory overall and the presentation of final versions of written work is often good.
57. The subject co-ordinator leads staff very well in their continued efforts to raise standards and provides very good support and encouragement. She has led staff effectively in implementing good assessment procedures. Information is used well to match work to pupils' differing capabilities, providing good levels of challenge and stimulation. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are good overall, and the co-ordinator regularly observes colleagues teach. However, monitoring of teachers' lesson plans generally takes place after, rather than before, lessons are taught, reducing the influence she has on lesson quality.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Other subjects of the curriculum are not used effectively to promote the writing skills pupils learn in literacy lessons and this is one of the reasons why they underachieve in this area. Good examples were seen during the inspection; for example, in a Year 6 history lesson in which pupils wrote in a reporting style, using learning from current literacy lessons. However, in planning for subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education, opportunities are missed to use and extend writing skills. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**. As a result of good teaching pupils achieve well. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above national expectations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attainment of Year 6 pupils is above the standard found nationally in all areas of the mathematical curriculum.
- Teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well over their time in the school as a result.
- Learning support assistants provide good support.
- Assessment and record keeping are good.
- There are no systems in place for individual targets setting with pupils.

Commentary

59. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported to be in line with the national average. The 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 showed standards to be above both the national average and that of similar schools. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

60. Standards are better than at the time of the last inspection because of good teaching. Teachers use lively teaching methods, mostly based on the format of the National Numeracy Strategy, to hold pupils' interest and help them learn. Pupils benefit from teachers good knowledge of the curriculum. Teachers introduce pupils to a good variety of methods supported by clear explanations and demonstrations. As a result, pupils generally demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of number facts and methods. For instance, in an excellent Year 6 lesson the teacher's very good command of the subject helped pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in their understanding of four-quadrant co-ordinates.
61. Pupils are given effective opportunities to develop ways of working out answers mentally, although there are variations in the effectiveness of teachers' use of the oral and mental part of numeracy lessons.
62. Staff are correctly putting a greater emphasis on problem solving and encouraging pupils to explain their thinking. These approaches are helping to raise standards. For instance, pupils are keen to take part in lessons and explain their methods well when they are given suitable opportunities to do so. Standards of presentation of pupils' work are generally good. Teachers' good behaviour management ensures a calm productive atmosphere in classrooms and, as a result, pupils are confident, attentive and hard working and achieve well. The marking of pupils work is inconsistent, with some pupils not being told clearly what they need to do to improve.
63. Teachers provide suitable tasks and learning materials for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants both in the classrooms and in withdrawn groups and make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The establishment of clear targets to raise standards was a key issue in the last inspection report and this has been achieved in general terms. Homework is regularly set and used well to reinforce learning. Resources are generally satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator is evaluating strengths and weaknesses in pupils' standards well and informing staff of what needs improving. She is beginning to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum, but does not have enough opportunities to observe colleagues teach.
65. Assessment and record keeping systems are good and have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. However, no system is in place for individual target setting with pupils. As a consequence, they are not always sufficiently clear about where they are going wrong or why.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Opportunities for using and applying of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils in all classes are familiar with transferring data into graph form in science and geography, taking and recording measurements in science and incorporating knowledge and understanding of shape and measure in both art and design and design and technology activities. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology, particularly data bases.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from a strong emphasis on investigations and experiments.

- The subject is led very well by the co-ordinator.
- Information and communication technology is not used effectively enough to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

67. Standards attained by the current Year 6 pupils are well above average. This reflects the results of the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 which were well above average. A significant number of pupils are working towards the higher levels of attainment. All pupils are well challenged by their tasks. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. No significant difference is noted between the performance of boys and girls.
68. The quality of teaching is good overall and is one of the main reasons why pupils learn well. Teachers take advantage of many pupils' preference for practical rather than written activities and teach skills, knowledge and understanding through regular investigations and experiments. Pupils learn to investigate in a systematic way and to use their knowledge to make predictions and explain what occurred. As a result, they are developing a secure understanding of living things, materials, light, sound and forces.
69. A strong feature of teaching is the way pupils are questioned in order to get them to think. For example, Year 4 pupils made good gains in their understanding of different rates of human growth as they discussed as a class and in small groups how to make their investigation fair and what they could conclude from their results. Pupils' learning was well supported by the teacher's effective use of resources, including helpful guidance on well-prepared worksheets to focus their thoughts as they worked.
70. In this lesson, pupils with special educational needs benefited significantly from the work of a learning support worker, who kept them motivated and interested by asking pertinent questions and moving their learning along at a good pace.
71. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted well in all classes by the practical approach to science. Teachers promote correct scientific vocabulary well in lessons and this helps pupils to understand the words they are using. They are encouraged to write about their work, often with the help of useful work sheets, which encourage a common format to recording investigation results. However, opportunities are missed to promote more extended writing, particularly amongst higher attaining pupils, in order for skills learned in literacy lessons to support learning in science.
72. Links with numeracy occur frequently due to the practical nature of investigations and the need to collect, display and interpret data. Marking of work is good, providing both supportive comments and advice on how pupils may improve work. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communications technology to support learning in science, such as collecting, displaying and interpreting data, as well as word processing science reports.
73. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of how the subject will be developed further. She is instrumental in raising pupils' achievement because of her effective promotion of the practical approach to science. Her work has been influential in that staff in the comprehensive school, to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 6, are developing a similar approach. Little time has been given to monitoring lessons but teachers' planning is monitored and evaluated well. Results from end-of-project tests in each class are effectively analysed, as are national test results, giving the co-ordinator a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from the use of the recently completed computer suite.
- The work of a highly skilled ICT learning support worker is very good.
- The use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

Commentary

74. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are below those expected nationally. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress. Standards have declined since the previous inspection, when they were reported to be broadly average.
75. One of the reasons for the decline in standards is the major building programme. School accommodation has been extended over the last twelve months and imaginative design and modifications to the building have incorporated a large computer suite. This room, used by all the classes, has enough computers for pupils in each class to work alone when necessary. At the time of the inspection, pupils had been taught in the room for only three weeks. Before this, little or no teaching in ICT had taken place for over a year due to the disruption caused by the building programme, and in particular, building targets not being met by contractors.
76. Teachers are now using the new suite but they are hampered by the difficulty of demonstrating skills by the present method of a class of thirty pupils around one computer. The school is aware of this problem and is awaiting delivery of interactive white boards to help teachers clearly demonstrate skills to a whole class. However, teachers show confidence as well as competence when demonstrating skills to pupils, and overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning is satisfactory, but pupils' differing levels of ability are not fully provided for, especially levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Learning is hampered by pupils' lack of keyboard skills and familiarity with computer programs. Formal assessment procedures have yet to be established.
77. Pupils enjoy using computers and have positive attitudes towards the use of ICT equipment, such as a digital camera. They behave well when sharing a computer and its keyboard. They treat hardware with respect and use the correct terminology because they have been taught well to do so.
78. Provision is enhanced by a knowledgeable and very good learning support worker who makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' skills in lessons, and particularly those of special educational needs and lower attaining pupils.
79. The headteacher is the temporary co-ordinator since the resignation of the previous co-ordinator at the end of the Summer term 2003. He is carrying this additional role until another member of staff can take on the task. Governors and the headteacher are aware that, although the new computer suite provides a very good resource for regular whole-class learning, use of computers on a daily basis is limited because of their lack of availability to pupils and teachers in classrooms. As a result, plans are in place for the purchase of additional computers for all classrooms.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. The use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped. The school has acquired resources to extend the curriculum, for example sensors and data loggers for science, but at present they are not in use. There are satisfactory links with some subjects, such as numeracy, where,

for example, Year 4 pupils are taught to construct graphs from data collected during a science investigation.

HUMANITIES

81. In humanities, work was sampled in geography, history and religious education, with only two lessons seen in geography, one in history and one in religious education. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work that standards are broadly average and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.
82. In **geography**, evidence from pupils' past work, work on display and the lessons seen indicates that knowledge and understanding of the local area has improved since the last inspection. Year 3 pupils spoke knowledgeably about parts of the Newent area that they considered needed improving. They produced interesting and imaginative posters urging local people to keep the environment clean and tidy. Year 4 pupils recognised several familiar localities as they studied Ordnance Survey maps for settlements of Viking, Celtic or Anglo-Saxon origin.
83. In **history**, pupils' good knowledge of the local area is helpful in furthering their understanding of how people lived in the past. Year 6 pupils studied a map of Newent in Victorian times and were able to draw conclusions about Victorian life styles as they discussed how and why shops and services have changed over time.
84. A study of teachers' planning shows that good links are often made between geography and history themes to make class projects relevant to pupils. This approach is helpful in promoting and sustaining interest. In the lessons seen, pupils showed considerable enjoyment and good attitudes to their work. However, opportunities are missed to promote their writing skills by linking written tasks to learning in literacy lessons.
85. Staff have correctly identified a weakness in the ability of many pupils to make connections between sources of evidence, such as photographs, artefacts and data, to draw conclusions about aspects of their learning. Action taken to improve this skill is good. Pupils have access to a good range of resources, including artefacts, books, videos and CD Roms, which are used well to promote research skills. Pupils' past work shows that many topics are taught through research to answer key questions, with a strong emphasis on describing the evidence used to reach a conclusion.
86. In **religious education**, pupils are benefiting from an integrated study of world religions, rather than studying one religion at a time. Evidence from past work and from talking to pupils suggests that this approach is successful in promoting interest in, and developing thoughtful consideration of, other people's beliefs, as well as extending knowledge. For instance, good use is made of visits to churches of different denominations in Newent for pupils to study the similarities and differences between customs and traditions in worship. A display of Year 3 work showed how pupils had prepared questions for priests and clergy about Holy Communion.
87. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was excellent. Year 5 pupils compared the qualities of Jesus with those of people who are their role-models. Pupils responded very well as the teacher revealed her own thoughts about how her life had been influenced by someone she admired. As a result, the standard of whole-class and group discussions was high and pupils produced a good standard of written work as they recorded their thoughts and views.
88. The subject co-ordinators are effective in helping teachers to plan lessons that are generally interesting and motivating. They have helped to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding well by promoting a good range of visits, visitors to school and residential trips. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are satisfactory. Evidence from these procedures has helped co-

ordinators identify that information gathered from assessment procedures is not used as well as it might be to match work to pupils' differing capabilities. This results in a tendency for all pupils to work on the same activity, with higher attaining pupils in particular not always being sufficiently challenged.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

89. Work was sampled in art and design and design and technology, with only one lesson seen in art and design and one in physical education. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work that standards are broadly average in art and design and design and technology, and above average in physical education, and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.
90. In **art and design**, standards in displayed work are good. Pupils achieve well in observational drawing and sketchbooks are well established as a learning tool in most age groups. These standards are an improvement since the last inspection when standards were similar to those found nationally. However, sometimes the work produced is all too similar, and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to choose the media for themselves. The planned curriculum is satisfactory, but there is a limited range of projects being undertaken, mostly involving work of a similar size and in two dimensions. The work of famous artists is included in the planning but the range of chosen artists is narrow, with no work included that celebrates the work of female artists or artists from other cultures.
91. In **design and technology**, pupils gain experience of a range of materials and techniques and of developing the skills expected through designing and making a variety of products. Activities are linked closely to art and design. Year 5 pupils made good gains in a variety of sewing and embroidery skills and techniques in a lesson to design and make a Christmas textile design. During the lesson, boys and girls worked with equal enthusiasm and interest and achieved well.
92. In **physical education**, the school is strongly committed to achieving high standards in sport, with many after school clubs and the involvement in teaching of students from a local further education college. In the Tag Rugby club, both boys and girls greatly enjoy the coaching they receive and are keen to take part and excel. In swimming, standards are very good with school records showing that many pupils far exceed the national average by the time they leave the school. In a Year 5 dance lesson, pupils' response to the mood and rhythm of African music was satisfactory but they did not use the movements discussed and planned at the start of lesson as well as might have been expected. They were, however, encouraged by their teacher to evaluate each other's performance and this helped them to further practise and refine their movements.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The work of the co-ordinator has a significant impact on the standards achieved.
- Pupils sing well in class and assembly.
- Many pupils benefit from instrumental tuition.

Commentary

93. Pupils' standards are above national expectations and have improved from the average standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils sing very well in assemblies,

showing both enjoyment and enthusiasm for music. Recorder groups are used regularly for accompaniment and pupils play well.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers make use of good resources to provide varied, enjoyable lessons. Expectations of pupils' achievements are high. Pupils show considerable enjoyment as they participate in class and whole school activities. Together, these qualities lead to them making good progress in all aspects of the required curriculum and achieving well.
95. A class of Year 5 pupils showed interest and enjoyment, as well as very good standards of singing, when they rehearsed songs for a forthcoming Christmas concert. They made good gains in their awareness of rhythm, diction and tempo because the teacher regularly drew their attention to ways of improving performance. As a result, they confidently tackled songs with difficult rhythms and key changes and sang tunefully.
96. Teachers are developing pupils' skills of critical analysis well so that pupils often adjust and alter their own performance and encourage others to do so. Year 3 pupils used percussion instruments effectively to describe a walk in the woods. They recorded their performances in order to play them back and evaluate their compositions and improve them.
97. Music has a high profile in the life of the school, largely due to the very good leadership, enthusiasm and efforts of the subject co-ordinator. The long established orchestra, started by the co-ordinator in 1996, is a major feature of the school and performs at a variety of venues in the local community, especially Christmas and Easter services. The orchestra meets weekly at 8.00am, illustrating the commitment and enthusiasm of staff, pupils and parents.
98. The co-ordinator believes that the opportunity for pupils to participate is a major priority, illustrating the inclusive nature of the school's provision. Consequently, over one hundred pupils play recorders. There is a good range of other instrument tuition in the school, organised through the local education authority. There are opportunities from Year 3 onwards for violin and brass tuition, with woodwind being introduced from Year 5. Pupils learning to play these instruments form the backbone of the school orchestra.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

99. Personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons are promoted to good effect through a sensitively planned programme in which, for example, pupils discuss personal responses to a variety of issues that affect health in an atmosphere of trust and caring. Good citizenship is effectively developed in lessons. During the inspection, pupils debated local issues such as vandalism and litter.

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	2
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	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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