

INSPECTION REPORT

**WHICKHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Whickham, Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108381

Headteacher: Mr A Dobson

Lead inspector: L A Furness

Dates of inspection: 15-17 September 2003

Inspection number: 261344

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 Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	208
School address:	Broadway Whickham Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE16 5QW
Telephone number:	0191 4887867
Fax number:	0191 4887156
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Beth Smith
Date of previous inspection:	2 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whickham Parochial Church of England School is an average size primary school situated in the south of Whickham which is one of the more socially advantaged areas of Gateshead. The school draws its pupils mainly from the local area and although 4 different ethnic backgrounds are represented the majority of pupils are white British. Two hundred and eight pupils aged 4 to 11 attend the school and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for school meals free of charge is well below the national average. The number of pupils having special educational needs is well below the national average and the number of pupils having a statement of special educational need is below the national average. A nationally approved assessment scheme used for children when they start their reception year, shows that, although the range of attainment is broad, most children have levels of attainment that are above those expected for their age in communication language and literacy in mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. The school has gained three achievement awards and has achieved healthy schools status seven times.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8245	L A Furness	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage of Learning English as an additional language English Geography Music Citizenship
9214	J Garland	Lay inspector	
32436	M Beesley	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Mathematics Art and Design Design Technology Religious Education
32246	J Wyatt	Team inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology History Physical Education

The inspection contractor was:

Focus Education (UK) Limited

113-115 High Street
Uppermill
Saddleworth
OL3 6BD

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with a significant number of excellent features. Its excellent caring ethos results in the very effective personal development of all the pupils. They achieve well and make good progress because teaching is good with some very good and excellent teaching occurring. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management inspiring both staff and pupils to give of their best. **The school provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher motivate the very receptive staff to seek every opportunity to enable all the pupils to achieve their best. The governors contribute very well to the school's success.
- High standards in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6 have been consistently attained over the last five years. However, although the majority of pupils attain the expected level in writing by the end of Year 6, *the school is introducing strategies to improve the number of pupils attaining the higher level in this aspect of English.*
- There is a very high level of commitment to the inclusion of all the pupils in all aspects of school life.
- Excellent induction procedures ensure that children in the Foundation Stage of Learning (reception) very quickly feel safe, secure and happy in the school environment.
- Very strong emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment and relationships throughout the school are excellent.
- The school offers a good broad, balanced curriculum with a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy, science, religious education, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. *Although ICT provision has improved immensely since the previous inspection, the use of ICT in other subjects is a developing area. Also the school is exploring how more creativity and innovation can be introduced into the teaching of subjects such as, art and design, design technology, history, geography and music.*

School improvement is very good. The key issues identified in the previous inspection in 1998 have been rectified very well and the school has successfully continued to improve standards, achievement and provision. The excellent school development plan is central to this process and pivotal to the work of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A*	A	C
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
science	A	A	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.*

In the reception class, the children are on course to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception with a significant number of children likely to exceed them. **In Years 1 to 6 pupils are taught well and are achieving well as a result.** By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attained well above the national average in the National Curriculum tests (2002). Performance in

Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics and in mathematics in Year 6 was particularly impressive placing the school with performance in the top five per cent of all schools and of similar schools. Although pupils made very good progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in mathematics and science, progress in English was only satisfactory (C). This is because although pupils attained well in the reading aspect of the tests their performance in writing was less successful. There was a marked difference between the numbers of pupils attaining the higher level in reading and than in writing. Results in 2003 were as impressive as in previous years, but again writing results were not as high as the reading results.

Pupils are developing into caring, sensitive individuals and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They have very positive attitudes to school, arriving at school punctually, enthusiastic and very eager to learn. Behaviour is very good in the classroom and at breaks and lunchtimes. The attendance rate is also very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The majority of teaching is at least good with evidence of very good and excellent teaching in Year 2 and in Years 4 to 6 particularly in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and physical education. The teachers carefully plan lessons that match the different abilities of all pupils. They motivate the pupils very well by making lessons interesting and consequently pupils respond enthusiastically and learn effectively. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory overall with good teaching in the personal, social and emotional area of learning.

Partnerships with parents are very good. They are actively encouraged to be involved with their children's education and parents appreciate the opportunities they have to talk to teachers. **The school provides excellent care for the pupils.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's excellent leadership has resulted in the newly established team of people working very effectively together striving towards school improvement and trying their hardest to offer the best provision possible for the pupils of this school. His very clear vision of what needs to be done very effectively supports ongoing development and the continual drive towards high standards. **Management is excellent** and the monitoring of teaching and learning is very strong. The governors organise their work effectively and make a very good contribution to school improvement. **Overall governance is very good.**

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents hold the school in high regard and are very appreciative of what the school does for their children. The pupils greatly enjoy school and feel that they are valued and well supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

While being a very effective school, the things it should do to improve further are:

- Increase the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Continue to develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Develop a more creative and innovative curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), history, religious education and physical education are above those expected for their age and pupils' achievement is good. In art and design and design technology standards match those expected for pupils' ages and achievement is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards or achievement in geography or music.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6 has been very good over the last five years.
- More able pupils have been challenged well in reading, mathematics and science. *However, the numbers of pupils attaining the higher level is better in reading than in writing.*
- Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills.
- Improved ICT provision has resulted in better standards in ICT than at the last inspection. Standards have also improved in religious education.
- Standards above those expected for pupils' ages have been maintained since the previous inspection in history and physical education.

Commentary

- 1 Children start school in the Foundation Stage (reception) with levels of attainment above those expected for their age. The majority attain the early learning goals expected for the end of reception and a significant number of children exceed them. Achievement is satisfactory because teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory in this class.
- 2 By Year 2 pupils have made good progress and the good teaching in Years 1 and 2 results in their achieving well. The table below shows how all pupils in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 have attained at least the expected level. When compared with both national averages and the average of schools in similar contexts results were very high and in the top five per cent of all school and of similar schools. In 2003 results continued to be very good with a high percentage of pupils attaining above the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessment shows that a high percentage of pupils attained the higher level in science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	19.7 (19.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.7 (17.2)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	19.3 (19.5)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils continue to achieve well. The pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science was very good. Results were well above the national average being in the top five per cent of all schools nationally in mathematics. This is because a high percentage of pupils attained the higher level in this subject.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.2 (30.2)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	31.4 (31.6)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.8 (31.0)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 4 In 2003 pupils' performance was again very good but as in previous years they did not do as well in writing as they did in reading at the higher level. The school's thorough analysis of assessment data over time has rightly identified this as an area for school improvement. The school is beginning to implement useful strategies to narrow the gap between reading and writing attainment.
- 5 Speaking and listening skills are very good throughout the school. Pupils are articulate and contribute well to the many opportunities given to them to discuss ideas and answer questions. Teachers encourage pupils to speak in extended sentences using technical vocabulary as appropriate. The pupils' very good attitudes towards learning and their willingness to listen to teachers and to each other, impact positively on the standards they attain and their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of their work being specifically tailored to their needs and because teaching assistants are used very well to support their learning.
- 6 In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are above those expected for pupils in Year 6. Achievement is good. The obvious improvement since the previous inspection is a result of the now excellent resources, good teaching and good learning opportunities. Staff use ICT resources confidently and the teachers use their good subject knowledge to support all pupils well. Standards have improved in religious education and are now above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong as pupils are becoming very caring and thoughtful individuals. Good quality teaching and learning experiences ensure that in physical education the school has maintained its good position with pupils attaining standards above those expected for their age and their achievement is good. In history also standards above those expected for their age have been maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school is very successful at developing very good attitudes and values in pupils from the time they start school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good resulting in a very happy respectful atmosphere. Attendance is well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes and values have a positive impact on their learning and achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is very good.
- Induction procedures for reception age children are excellent.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There is a growing emphasis on the importance of learning about what it means to live in a multi cultural society.
- A very strong Christian ethos underpins the school's work.

Commentary

- 7 Pupils enjoy school. Parents respond well to the school's procedures by ensuring their children's very good attendance and punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.3	School data :	0.0
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.

- 8 Pupils concentrate very well on their lessons. They play very well together at break times and lunch times in a relaxed atmosphere effectively responding to the friendly and encouraging manner of all staff in the school. Pupils say that the school is a happy and safe place to be and bullying doesn't happen in this school. Behaviour is very good and there have been no exclusions.
- 9 The induction procedures for the reception children are excellent. As a result, these young children settle very quickly into school life. Three weeks into their first year, they already have positive attitudes to school. They are well supported by Year 6 pupils, who look after them and help them with their learning throughout the year.
- 10 As pupils get older they receive more opportunity to take on responsibility. They are very pleased and proud to serve on the school council, voice an opinion on improvements which could be made to school and be responsible for various tasks and areas of classroom organisation. Pupils respond very well to the Christian values embedded in the school's ethos and have a strong sense of what is the right way to behave. They are very aware of the difficulties faced by other groups living in the area, such as the asylum seekers. Most respond well to the widening of their horizons to include consideration of other groups of people in the vicinity and the world. Charity projects are undertaken with enthusiasm, with pupils assuming responsibility for a lot of the fundraising. The excellent ethos within the school and the close relationship with the church ensure that all pupils benefit from the rich and stimulating Christian environment, make good progress and develop very positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities to experience outdoor activities and social clubs and many play musical instruments which they learn in school, further enhancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. The quality of the curriculum is also good. Care, guidance and support are excellent and the partnership with parents, other schools and the community is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and excellent teaching occurs in Year 2 and Years 4 to 6 particularly in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and physical education.
- The teachers carefully plan lessons that are appropriate for the ability of the pupils. More able pupils are very well challenged.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs.
- Pupils want to learn because teachers motivate them very well by making lessons interesting.
- Good teaching occurs in the personal, social and emotional area of learning in reception although overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in that age group.
- The results of assessments are used well to inform future planning. *However written marking does not identify clearly enough how pupils might improve their work.*

Commentary

- 11 As can be seen in the table below there were no unsatisfactory lessons and the majority of lessons were good or better. In Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) and in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) teaching was mainly good. Although teaching was mainly satisfactory in the reception class, it was good in the personal, social and emotional area of learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	16	6	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- 12 English, mathematics and science are taught very well. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use them well to plan suitably challenging work for all pupils. The interesting activities planned also take account of the full the range of abilities, and teachers skillfully use questioning to meet the needs of all pupils. Teaching assistants are used very well to support pupils with special educational needs. In Years 1 to 6 more challenging activities are given to the more able pupils. However, more able children in reception are not always as successfully challenged by the activity or by the teacher's questioning and interventions.
- 13 Teachers effectively share their lesson targets with the pupils and usually these targets are clearly displayed as a reminder to pupils. This ensures that pupils know and understand what is expected of them and are immediately interested and eager to learn. Pupils learn well because teachers have high expectations and challenge all of them, to extend their learning in a range of interesting practical and investigative activities. This was well illustrated in a very good Year 4 ICT lesson exploring how ICT can be used to re-organise text. Instructions were given clearly and precisely and therefore pupils used their developing skills confidently. In an excellent Year 5 design and technology lesson, pupils successfully designed and made a range of musical instruments. Excitement came from working in a busy creative learning environment, choosing the equipment and working with a whole range of tools.
- 14 Teachers use a range of strategies including ICT very well to promote learning. The 'whiteboards' found in most classrooms are an excellent teaching resource and are used very effectively to engage pupils and provide a very useful stimulus. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is good throughout the school. However, although staff mark books conscientiously they do not always inform pupils about the aspects of their work that are good

and show them how they can improve. Homework is set regularly and used well to extend what is learned in school.

The curriculum

The school provides a good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that meets statutory requirements and the needs of all pupils well. The breadth of curricular opportunities is good with very good opportunities for further enrichment. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources are very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very inclusive school and provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent
- The support for learning outside of the school day is very good. Opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting activities are excellent.
- Curriculum development including innovation is very good. *However the school is exploring how it might be more creative in the teaching of art and design, design technology, history, geography and music.*
- The curriculum is very well resourced overall. *However in the Foundation Stage of Learning there is not enough equipment for outdoor play.*
- Although ICT resources are excellent with an ICT suite and projectors and white boards in all classrooms, *pupils are not using ICT sufficiently in lessons other than those in the ICT suite.*

Commentary

- 15 Although the breadth of curricular opportunities is good and good programmes of work are in place to ensure that learning is continuous throughout the school, the school is rightly considering how it might be more creative in its delivery of the curriculum. The reception curriculum is satisfactory. The adults working in the class, including the co-ordinator are considering ways of improving the curriculum by planning for more outdoor activities now that the outdoor area has been established. The absence of secure storage means that there is currently a shortage of large play equipment and wheeled toys. However, this does not restrict the children's physical development because the teachers use the hall well for this type of activity. The inclusive nature of the school is excellent with all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- 16 The provision for pupils' personal social and health education is excellent. Acts of worship enhance provision well as was seen in a very good assembly led by the Headteacher which included reception children for the first time. All were successfully involved promoting a sense of belonging to the school. In another very good assembly led by the deputy headteacher, relationships were a strength, behaviour was excellent and pupils responded very well. It was a time of celebration and all pupils were encouraged to sing with a smile. The school provides many opportunities for pupils' personal and social development in and outside of the normal school day for example, the weekly after school social clubs, competitive sports, visiting musicians, theatre groups and theatre visits. Visitors to the school such as the community policemen and a drugs advisory teacher also support pupils' personal development very well. There are effective links with a local secondary school and sports links in particular are excellent. The school prepares the pupils well for the later stages of education and there is smooth transition between the two schools.
- 17 The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The support staff are well qualified, well respected by the pupils and an integral part of the learning process. The staff are hard working and enthusiastic. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The premises

are very clean, well maintained and in good state of repair with suitable facilities to meet the needs of the disabled. All available space is fully utilised and provides an attractive environment for learning with bright, interesting and informative displays. The school has extensive playing fields that support physical education activities, and resources overall for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are very good. ICT resources are excellent but as yet pupils are not maximising the use of these resources in the classroom and across other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support for the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils' care welfare health and safety are excellent.
- Very good support, advice and guidance are available to pupils.
- Pupils' opinions are listened to carefully and acted upon in this school.

Commentary:

- 18 The care of pupils in this school is excellent. All appropriate policies are in place and all safety procedures are followed closely. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award' for the seventh successive year, which is a great achievement. Pupils have a very good rapport with staff who demonstrate very caring and supportive approaches to all pupils. Very harmonious relationships are evident throughout the school. As a result pupils are very confident and demonstrate a positive attitude towards their teachers.
- 19 Pupils have very good access to well-informed support advice and guidance. Each term there are individual interviews with parents and teachers where progress towards pupils' targets for learning is discussed and new targets set. Very good procedures for informing parents of their children's educational achievements are fully in place, and merits are awarded for academic and social success. The system is used consistently by all members of staff and valued by pupils and their parents. . The school is continuing with great success to improve monitoring and targeting procedures and the tracking of pupils to generate an even better analysis of data in order to inform planning and raise standards in teaching and learning. The very good support, advice and guidance offered to pupils are the result of the teachers' consistent and systematic use of the agreed and well-managed assessment procedures.
- 20 There are strong links with a nearby primary school, which houses the nursery from which the school receives most of its reception children. A series of excellently planned induction procedures for reception children are in place which include pre-admission visits, pre school visits and home visits. Year 6 pupils partner individual reception children during their first year in school with great success. The school council meets regularly and is encouraged to participate in decision making about issues that involve them. There are exciting plans for 2004-2005 for Global Citizenship, an initiative that will link with other schools abroad.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's work with parents is very good. The school's very good links with the local community, including other local schools, are very good. This contributes very well to a commonality of purpose.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel welcome to talk to teachers on a formal or informal level, and are confident that they can talk to the headteacher when they wish.
- Parents make sure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- There is very good information about progress and parents are made part of the target setting process at intervals during the year.

- The very good links with other schools and the community enhance curricular opportunities for pupils.

Commentary

- 21 The parents at the pre inspection meeting and those who responded to the questionnaire were very supportive of the school and its methods. This was also borne out by talking to parents during the inspection. They particularly like the approachability of staff. The regular target-setting meetings held with parents during the year ensure that the parents are fully involved at an early stage if their child has difficulties. The school makes very good efforts to gauge parents' views regularly both formally and informally, and takes steps to deal with any issues identified. The majority of families raise funds for school which results in improved resources and are involved in various ways to help pupils learn at home and in the classroom.
- 22 The school is an integral part of the local Christian community and draws its values from it. Some church members help in school and there are regular family services in church so that pupils become familiar with the church and the people who work there. The school seeks to promote a wider understanding of multicultural issues and is drawing from local circumstances to provide an impetus for lessons and discussions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The leadership skills of the headteacher are excellent. Management systems are very securely established, and very securely based on raising achievement. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has an excellent vision and sets a very strong sense of purpose for the work of the school.
- The key members of staff are inspired by the headteacher and very ably support school development.
- The excellent school development plan is very securely based in what has gone on before and what needs to be done to sustain school improvement.
- All staff in the school are firmly committed to enabling all pupils to take part in all school activities. Inclusion is excellent.
- The continuing professional development of staff is given a very high priority.
- The governing body is very clear about its roles and responsibilities and challenges and supports the leadership of the school very well.
- Financial management is excellent.

Commentary

- 23 The headteacher is an excellent leader and his very clear vision is shared by all staff and governors. There is a very strong commitment to the maintenance and improvement of the already high standards. Inclusion issues are high on the agenda. The staff very successfully endeavour to cultivate and maximize the personal development of every pupil within a caring community with emphasis placed upon the importance of respect for each individual. Quality is always a priority in everything that is done. The school is very well organised and the administrative officer is very effective. Financial management is excellent and spending decisions are monitored very carefully in terms of best value. A healthy carry over figure is in place in order to deal with any unforeseen occurrences, for example, the failure of the school boiler at the start of the term.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	424011	Balance from previous year	34891
Total expenditure	375155	Balance carried forward to the next	48856
Expenditure per pupil	1821.14		

- 24 The governing body is very supportive and takes its responsibilities very seriously. They give freely of their expertise and are fully involved in shaping the direction of the school. They hold the headteacher and staff to account through the setting of performance targets, derived appropriately from the school improvement plan. This plan is an excellent document that focuses on priorities and appropriately identifies responsibilities for actions and the resources needed to fulfill these.
- 25 Senior staff work closely with the headteacher in developing the school. The deputy headteacher and members of the senior management team meet regularly and set a very good model for others in their teaching, in leading subjects and in encouraging the involvement of parents. Subject leadership is mostly good and it is very good in literacy and numeracy. All staff, led by the headteacher, have suitable opportunities to monitor their areas of responsibility on an annual basis, and occasionally in more depth, in line with the priorities in the school improvement plan. The close tracking of pupils' progress helps to identify effectively the impact of provision and specific initiatives on standards.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 26 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (in this school the reception class) is satisfactory overall. All children have had nursery experience and the majority start at the school with skills that are above those expected for their age in most areas of learning. By the end of their reception year All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and the vast majority achieve at least the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. The school has worked very hard to improve the outdoor learning opportunities offered to reception children since the last inspection. However, there is still work to be done in terms of developing secure outside storage and purchasing more outdoor equipment. The co-ordinator leads the work of this age group very effectively. She is working closely with the teacher to improve planning documentation and to develop an effective programme of work to develop meaningful play opportunities in the outside area.
- 27 Children had attended school part-time in the three weeks prior to the inspection. Although they are now attending full-time it was not possible to judge teaching in all the six areas of learning as the teacher was mainly introducing children to classroom routines and carrying out computerized assessments of children's knowledge, understanding and skills. Resources are good and the indoor learning environment is organized satisfactorily to promote choice and independent learning. Medium-term planning documentation shows that the curriculum is based on the national guidance for this age group. Areas of learning are linked together well through themes such as "All about me".

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children have skills that are generally above those expected for their age in this area of learning, and achieve very well.
- The children's attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good

Commentary

- 28 Children successfully acquire self-esteem and independence through independent activities and sensitive support from staff. They come happily into school and take leave of their parent or carer without fuss or upset. This is the result of the excellent induction procedures that prepare them very well for attending school. Children are praised for personal effort and achievement and encouraged to praise each other. They confidently use the indoor and outdoor environments, choosing activities, and selecting their own equipment and resources with a high degree of independence. Staff continually encourage children to develop good social habits and attend to their own personal hygiene, and most do so successfully. Most children are able to undress and dress for physical activities without adult help. Children who

find this difficult are encouraged by patient staff to persevere, and are rewarded with praise from staff and other children when they succeed. Staff have high expectations of behaviour, with clear boundaries which are known to all children. Behaviour is consistently very good throughout the Foundation Stage. For example, reception children walk through the school sensibly and in silence to the hall to attend their first assembly. They sit very quietly during the assembly, listen attentively, try to join in the singing enthusiastically and pray reverently. At snack time, children are very well behaved and polite, saying "Please" and "Thank you" when they are given their snack. Adults provide good role models for the children in terms of mutual respect and courtesy and take time to explain to children why they should behave as they do.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vast majority of children have skills that are generally above those expected for their age in this area of learning.
- Children enjoy listening to stories and answer questions enthusiastically.

Commentary

29 The children reach the standard expected in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year, and many attain higher levels than this, especially in speaking, listening and reading. The children enter reception with a good vocabulary, confidence, an ability to communicate clearly and handle books sensibly and carefully. Satisfactory use is made of learning opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and speaking skills so that they make satisfactory progress in this area. Children speak clearly and listen attentively to others during registration when they tell the teacher if they are having a school or packed lunch. They enjoy books and many sit both inside or outside looking at books interestedly and quietly. They also enjoy role play activities inspired by the story of the 'Three little Pigs'. They don masks and act out the story enthusiastically. Although the interaction between the teacher and the children is satisfactory, questions do not challenge children's thinking well enough. Writing skills are less well developed but children are keen to have a go at 'writing' their names, a small number successfully writing initial letters of words. The teaching assistant supports children well in this area of learning, for example, sensitively assisting any child who has difficulty holding the pencil correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children have skills that are generally above those expected for their age in this area of learning.
- Children enjoy mathematical activities and answer questions enthusiastically.
- *Lack of challenging activities for more able children.*

Commentary

30 The children reach the standard expected in mathematical development by the end of the reception year, and a significant number of children attain higher levels than this. The children enter reception with a good knowledge of number. They enjoy singing number rhymes and count accurately objects to five and then to ten. They enthusiastically sort and recognize different colours using bean bags, hoops and numbers. During patterning activities the majority showed good ability to copy and continue a simple pattern and more able children produced quite complex patterns. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the teacher is not providing sufficiently challenging activities for more able children.

There was insufficient evidence to make a judgment on attainment, achievement and teaching and learning in knowledge and understanding of the world, or in creative or physical development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 has been very good over the last five years. *However, more pupils reach the higher levels in reading than in writing.*
- Pupils greatly enjoy their English lessons and their attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Speaking and listening skills are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good overall.
- Teaching assistants are used very well to support pupils with special educational needs.
- The newly established subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management.
- The recently introduced system for analysing data and setting relevant targets is a thorough and constructive way of tracking pupils' progress and achievement in reading and writing.
- *Marking although satisfactory is not well enough focused on raising standards and improving achievement in writing.*
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support pupils' developing language and literacy skills.

Commentary

- 31 The standards that the pupils attain in the National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 are particularly impressive and achievement is good. The number of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading indicates that more able pupils are challenged well in this aspect of English. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are attaining similar standards and their achievement is good. Speaking and listening skills are also well developed. Pupils are articulate and can discuss and explain ideas well.
- 32 The very good subject co-ordinator has identified that although the pupils attain well in reading throughout the school, and in writing in Years 1 and 2, more able pupils in particular, do not achieve as well as they should in writing. This identification has resulted in a very good improvement plan being formulated. Action has already begun with staff carrying out a detailed analysis of end-of-year reading and writing tests and tasks and using the resulting information to set focused targets for learning.
- 33 Teaching and learning are good. A particular strength is the way that teaching assistants are used to support the pupils with special educational needs. Provision for these pupils is very good. Detailed written planning identifies well thought out activities which encourage these pupils to work hard and to think carefully about their learning. They have very positive attitudes towards their work and work well independently and collaboratively. They share the very good resources effectively and enjoy using ICT to support their learning. There is good use of ICT in this subject. Day-to-day assessment is used effectively to identify what pupils know and understand. However, the comments made on pupils' written work are not always helpful in informing pupils about aspects that are good and what they need to do to improve.

Literacy across the curriculum

34. Pupils are successfully encouraged to use their developing language and literacy skills in all subjects. For example, in science in Year 2 pupils have made information booklets about how to care for different animals. In Year 6, pupils have used their skills in persuasive writing to encourage people to take a holiday on a cruise liner and to write letters to a councillor with suggestions about how to improve facilities in the town of Whickham. Speaking skills are also developed well as, for example, Year 5 pupils perform 'Oliver' at the end of the school year.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests in 2003 was well above the national average and the average for similar schools.
- Pupils learn well because their attitudes to the subject are very positive.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is promoted very well through this subject.
- Teaching and learning are good and teaching assistants are used very well to support the learning of pupils, in particular those with special educational needs.
- While written marking *satisfactorily identifies if the objectives for learning have been met the comments only occasionally challenge the pupils' thinking as to how to improve their work.*
- *Occasionally there is a lack of pace during the mental and oral starter.*
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

35. The standards that the pupils attain in the National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 are high and their achievement is good. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining similar standards. Pupils are given the appropriate amount of challenge and work shows progression, acquisition of skills and independent thinking. Assessment is thorough and is used well to respond to individual needs. The high number of pupils working at the higher levels shows that more able pupils receive appropriately challenging work.
36. The quality of teaching and learning is good with many strengths. The teachers' subject knowledge, their use of praise, effectiveness of planning and choice of activities are very good. These strengths impact positively on pupils' application, productivity and their capacity to work both independently and collaboratively. The subjects impacts very well on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well. Although the pace of most lessons is brisk there are times when the mental and oral starter at the start of the lesson is rather slow and does not have the impact it should on pupils' learning. Written marking, although thorough, does not clearly identify how pupils could improve their work. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend learning.
37. The subject co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She is knowledgeable about strengths and areas for development, and provides a very good role model for other staff and pupils. The very good action plan shows that the subject co-ordinator has a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development. ICT is used efficiently and resources overall are very good.

Numeracy across the curriculum

38. Numeracy skills are successfully promoted in other subjects and this consolidates pupils' learning well. For example, in a Year 2 art and design lesson the pupils used their knowledge

of number and two dimensional shapes very effectively to discern the properties of architectural designs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's results are well above the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The well-organised, good quality resources make a good contribution to teaching and learning.
- Although teachers make effective use of ICT as an aid to promoting pupils' scientific understanding, *ICT is not yet used well enough by pupils to support their learning in lessons.*
- *Pupils do not have enough opportunities to share their ideas about how to set up experiments or to devise their own ways of recording their ideas and findings.*

Commentary

39. Standards and achievement are good in all age groups. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 6 show that more able pupils are particularly well challenged. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good because of interesting and motivating teaching. They work very well together and share ideas and resources very willingly. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, helping them to achieve well in relation to their specific learning targets.
40. Teaching and learning are good but as was seen in a lesson about the circulatory system, Year 6 pupils were not involved closely enough in the setting up of investigative work or in developing their own systems for recording scientific observations and findings. In the two lessons seen, teachers made very good use was made of ICT equipment, to explain how an electric circuit needs to be complete to work. Also how the body's circulation system works. However, the use of ICT by pupils in science lessons is not yet a regular feature.
41. Leadership and management in science are satisfactory and an improvement plan appropriately identifies the need to check teaching and learning throughout school. The school is in the early stages of setting targets for individual pupils. It has made a very good start on doing so by analysing the results of national tests to check the performance of difference groups of pupils and identify areas for further development. Written work is thoroughly and positively marked but only sometimes challenges pupils' thinking and shows them how to improve. Good resources are efficiently managed and used well to impact on pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and often very good teaching is supported by a good quality programme of work that ensures progression in learning. This has resulted in pupils' attaining standards above those expected for their age and achievement is good.

- The subject co-ordinator demonstrates excellent vision, a clear sense of purpose and has high aspirations, providing an excellent role model for other staff and pupils.
- Resources are excellent: there is a high quality, very well resourced ICT suite, computers in classrooms, and some classrooms have the latest technological teaching aids
- Although the school has acquired a good range of software to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, *the use of ICT by pupils in classrooms is still patchy.*
- Positive and enthusiastic responses by staff, pupils and parents to this exciting technology all contribute well to pupils' acquisition of skills

Commentary:

42. Since the previous inspection very good improvements have been made in ICT provision that have had a very beneficial effect on pupils' progress and achievement, which are good. Resources are now excellent and the majority of staff make the very best use of the new technology to promote effective learning in and outside of the ICT suite. As a result, pupils reach standards that are above those expected for their age. However, whilst the teaching of ICT skills is often closely linked with learning in other areas, for example, to create a personalised piece of writing paper for use in literacy, not enough opportunities are being offered to pupils to use their good ICT skills in other subjects when they are not in the ICT suite. Nevertheless, teaching is good, and pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. Pupils, excited by the opportunities they have to work with the new technology, respond very positively in lessons, as was observed in the Year 4 class where pupils successfully learned how to reorganise a football league table. Pupils are very supportive of each other. Promoting the school's caring ethos, Year 6 pupils, using a multi-media program, have successfully developed a series of alphabet letter slides with recorded sounds as a learning aid for reception children.

43. Parents support the work of the school well, ensuring that where possible, pupils have computers and Internet access at home. Some parents send digital pictures of school visits or events by e-mail, responding positively to the work the school does in providing high levels of skills for its pupils. The school operates an agreed Internet Safety policy with parents and pupils. Very good leadership and very effective management ensure that ICT is very well led and managed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

44. Pupils' use of ICT as a tool to support learning in other subjects is underdeveloped because opportunities to use ICT as a regular tool in the classroom are limited. There are good examples of work seen where mainly older pupils use the Internet or an information package to download science and history facts, or use a graphics package to design project front covers in design and technology lessons. No ICT work outside the ICT suite was seen during the inspection. Although a Year 2 numeracy lesson had a computer set up and running in the classroom with extension work for the more able pupils, no pupil was seen to use it. However, teachers do make very good use of ICT when teaching across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY:

Provision in geography is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A knowledgeable subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject.
- Visits are used well to enhance curriculum provision.
- The newly introduced programme of work is good and ensures that learning is continuous throughout the school.

- *ICT is not used effectively enough as a tool for learning in this subject.'*

Commentary

45. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards, achievement and teaching and learning in this subject. Although provision is satisfactory, the well informed newly established subject co-ordinator has already produced a good action plan for further improvement in the subject. A new programme of work has been recently introduced and this is helping teachers *to plan better*. Some gaps in resources were noted which the co-ordinator has now purchased. Resources are now good. Creativity and the use of ICT to support geographical learning are being explored in order to improve provision and to support the new learning programme. Outside visits are used well by teachers to motivate pupils and to engage them with their work. For example, younger pupils went to Whitley Bay to find out more about a contrasting place to Whickham and older pupils visited an outdoor centre and carried out a river study. Pupils comment upon how useful they found these visits to support their development of knowledge and skills. Literacy skills are promoted effectively, for example, as Year 5 pupils wrote letters to the local council suggesting ways of improving facilities in Whickham.

HISTORY

Provision in history is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good and pupils throughout the school achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy history and are enthusiastic when discussing it. They are knowledgeable and articulate showing a good understanding of events that happened in the past.
- The subject is well led and managed and there are good procedures for checking teaching and learning.

Commentary:

46. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning in history as only one lesson was seen during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' work and from talking to them enables a secure judgement to be made about standards and achievement both of which are good. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to use their developing literacy skills in this subject. For example, in the Year 3 class when pupils study the Vikings, they look at different forms and styles of writing such as runic writing and discuss Viking saga stories. Pupils are enthused when talking about historical periods and are clearly interested in the subject. This was seen in the very good lesson for Year 5 pupils, when they enthusiastically discussed the work and life of Dr. Barnardo and how he changed aspects of Victorian society. This lesson contributed well to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. History is well led and managed and the resources are good. Very good monitoring procedures developed by the subject coordinator enable pupils' history work to be formally assessed every year and the information is used well to evaluate pupils' developing skills. Teachers use ICT at least satisfactorily, using the digital camera for example, to record historical visits. Recently purchased CD Rom databases and the Internet are used alongside the more traditional means of research books to support historical enquiry.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The standards pupils attain are above the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- The contribution of religious education to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good throughout the school. However although *marking is used to reinforce learning it does not help to move learning forward or challenge pupils' thinking.*

Commentary:

47. Achievement is good and the standards pupils attain are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the Christian faith and comparative religions. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subject, are enthusiastic, relationships are very good and mutual respect is evident in all lessons observed. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are becoming very caring, sensitive, reflective individuals.
48. Teaching and learning are good and teachers' subject knowledge, questioning skills' and planning are effective with an appropriate amount of challenge and choice of activities. Pupils consequently learn well and make good progress. There is very effective use of teaching assistants particularly with pupils who have special educational needs who are included well in all lessons. Learning is enhanced by the use of ICT including the Internet for research. For example, in Year 6, programs such as clip art and word processing skills are used well by the pupils studying Hinduism. Although teachers mark work conscientiously they do not clearly identify why work is good or what pupils need to do to improve. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are good and visits to places such as the local church effectively enhance curricular provision. A wide range of topics are covered and pupils' literacy skills are promoted well. Work is neatly presented showing how well pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their work. Leadership and management are good and resources to support the curriculum are good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The contribution of art and design to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- *The use of ICT is underused in this subject.*

Commentary

49. The standards that pupils attain matches those expected for their age and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching and learning, in the two good lessons seen, the teachers' subject knowledge was a strength and all pupils were well included in the activities. As a result, the pupils greatly enjoyed their work and their behaviour was very good. The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, as pupils learn about the work of different artists and collaborate together on group tasks such as the impressive 'Millennium banners' on display in the school hall. Art and design work is evident in all classrooms making the school environment a bright and interesting place to be. The subject co-ordinator has been recently appointed and leadership and management are satisfactory. The good action plan shows she already knows the strengths and areas for development. Resources are very good although pupils do not yet use ICT well enough to enrich their learning in this subject.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Excellent teaching in Year 5 inspires pupils to work hard and produce work of a high quality.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards this subject.

Commentary:

50. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 school match the expectation for their age and pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. However in an excellent Year 5 lesson, pupils achieved very well because the teacher's excellent classroom management and very thorough preparation resulted in pupils being very well motivated and engrossed in their task of making musical instruments. Pupils articulated their ideas very clearly as they demonstrated, evaluated and tested their own products. The finished products were of a pleasing standard. A creative approach to the curriculum was evident in this lesson as good links were made with science, ICT and music. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and resources are good. The useful action plan rightly identifies the need to develop a subject portfolio and to enhance teachers' subject knowledge.

Example of outstanding practice

An excellent Year 5 design and technology lesson.

The teacher introduced the lesson with 'today we will experiment with and learn how materials can be combined to create useful properties for a ...MUSICAL INSTRUMENT! Chaos? In this instance no, because of the excellent classroom management and risk taking by allowing the pupils to be creative. Tables were covered with an array of exciting resources including funnels, string, film canisters, rice, gravel, biscuit tins, cardboard tubes, dowel rods and plastic bottles ready to make scrapers, shakers, drums and string instruments. Not a lesson for the faint hearted! The results were excellent with pupils sharing ideas and working collaboratively to produce a variety of weird and wonderful working instruments of which they were justifiably proud and keen to demonstrate. Expectations were high and teaching was stimulating and fun. The teacher herself attempted to make an instrument from a piece of garden hose, a funnel and a mouth piece from a brass instrument. She was interrupted politely by an exuberant pupil 'Miss, Miss, you're blowing it wrong.' She replied 'tell me how to improve my technique'. The pupil, making best use of his musical knowledge, described in detail the correct method of blowing to get the loudest noise. Immediate success! 'You're an excellent teacher!' she exclaimed! That makes two of them!

MUSIC

Provision in music is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Knowledgeable subject co-ordinator who clearly knows the strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards music and they particularly enjoy singing and performing. *The school is exploring how it can use this enthusiasm to be more creative in the delivery of the curriculum.*
- The recently introduced programme of work effectively supports the teachers who lack confidence in this subject.
- *Pupils' use of ICT to support learning is under developed.*

Commentary

51. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards, achievement, teaching or learning in music as insufficient lessons were seen. However, discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy their music lessons and Year 6 pupils speak enthusiastically about their performance of 'Oliver' last year. This is one way that the school is trying to be more

innovative with the curriculum as pupils studied the Victorians in history, used their developing literacy skills to write their own play scripts and used musical activities well to make the curriculum come alive. All Year 6 pupils are looking forward to another production later in the year. Visitors such as a choir and the local education authority music service increase pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and enhance their learning. The quality of singing is good and contributes positively to the Christian ethos that is very evident in the act of worship. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator is supporting staff well, adapting the programme of work making it more accessible for teachers who have insecure subject knowledge in this subject. Resources overall are good but the school does not use ICT well in this subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in physical education are above the expectations for pupils by Year 2 and by Year 6.
- Physical education continues to have a strong influence on the work of the school. A good range of weekly curricular and extra curricular activities are offered to pupils
- Residential visits by older pupils make a significant contribution to the social and physical development and well being of pupils.
- Very good links are made to the Healthy Schools Initiative with teachers having high expectations of their pupils.

Commentary

52. Standards are above the expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is good throughout the school. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good range of physical challenges that the school offers and develop a good sense of team spirit and fair play that is central to the school's ethos. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning in physical education as only two lessons were seen. The good use of pupil demonstrations in the Year 4 lesson increased pupils' confidence and improved their personal skill levels. Teachers dress appropriately for physical activities providing excellent role models for their pupils and they have high expectations with regard to safety issues. Physical education is satisfactorily led and managed. The subject co-ordinator is part of the local 'School Sport Programme' organised by a neighbouring sports college and is well placed to ensure that staff development in this area continues. Resources are good. Small games equipment are well organised and are as accessible as possible given the schools lack of extensive storage space. The school has a multi-purpose hall that is well equipped for gymnastics, and outdoor playing surfaces used for games have recently been resurfaced. These, along with a well-maintained large playing field are all put to good use and support teaching and learning very well.

PART D: MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS*Inspection judgement**Grade*

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	1

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