

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120225

Headteacher: Miss J Christy

Lead inspector: Mr G Bancroft

Dates of inspection: 31 January – 2 February 2005

Inspection number: 267046

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	181.5 (fte)
School address:	Stonesby Avenue Leicester Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE2 6TY
Telephone number:	0116 283 3135
Fax number:	0116 2223615
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr J McCay
Date of previous	25 January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school provides education for children of the communicants of the Catholic faith in the south of Leicester. Some of the school's pupils are not Catholics and come from nearby housing estates. Many of the community face social and economic challenges and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school in each year is higher than usually found. The attainment of children when they begin at the school is well below average and in some aspects of their learning it is very low. Most pupils are of White-British heritage. The school also provides education for members of the Irish Traveller community. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who come from other cultures has risen significantly in recent years and is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need are below average. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2003. It is part of

the national Sure Start and the Primary Leadership Programmes. The school also benefits from the Small Schools Fund.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3687	G Bancroft	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education English as an additional language
9736	J Brasier	Lay inspector	
32136	L Brookes	Team inspector	Science Geography History Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
22831	C Lewis	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 & 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Holy Cross Catholic Primary is a good school in which pupils of all abilities are valued and achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The leadership and management of the school are good. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and receive a good start to their education.
- Pupils achieve very well in English and they achieve well in mathematics, science and information and communication technology. However, current standards in mathematics are below those in English.
- The teaching of English is very good and teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and achievement.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. Attendance is improving steadily, but is still below average.
- Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good.
- The schools' links with parents, the community and other schools are good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. The improvement in provision for information and communication technology is very good. The quality of lesson planning and the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are now good. The improvement in the quality of the work of senior staff is also very good. In recent years the school has overcome many difficulties. There have been changes of senior management and many changes of teaching staff. Until recently it has proved difficult to attract staff. The attainment of pupils when they start at the school has fallen significantly. There is clear evidence to show that, as a result of good teaching, standards are improving.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 also achieve well. In the most recent national tests for the end of Year 2 (2004), standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average. Standards, in these tests, were average when compared with similar schools. Current standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The 2004 tests for the end of Year 6 showed that English was well below average and mathematics and science were below average. When compared with similar schools, on the basis of pupils' prior attainment, standards in English, mathematics and science were above average. Currently standards in English and science are average and standards in mathematics are below

average. Standards from year to year have varied, mainly because of differences in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the number of pupils who join or leave the school in each year. Standards in English are higher than those in mathematics because of the success of the school's scheme for teaching reading and writing, which meets pupils' needs very well. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, but attendance is below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching meets the needs of pupils of differing abilities well. English is taught very well. The contribution of teaching assistants to pupils' learning is very good and helps pupils to do their best. Arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good. The curriculum is good and the range of activities provided to enrich pupils' learning is very good. Pupils are cared for well in an atmosphere that is free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment. The school's partnership with parents is good. Links with the community are good. Good links with partner schools help pupils to move on smoothly to their next school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Governors fulfil their duties well. They are very supportive and are well informed about the strengths of the school and what it needs to do to improve. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and has helped the school to successfully overcome the difficulties it has faced in recent years. The school now has an effective and stable staff that is successfully promoting improvements in standards. Other members of staff with additional responsibilities, such as subject leadership, undertake their duties well. Governors and the headteacher form an effective partnership to ensure that available funds are spent wisely.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents, with few exceptions, think the school is good and appreciate the quality of education provided for their children. Pupils think their school is very good. They enjoy the range of activities provided for their learning and all have good and trusting relationships with one or more adults on the staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics to match that for English.
- Maintain the trend that is leading to improved attendance and work closely with parents to ensure their children attend.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well. By the end of Year 2 standards are below average, but they are average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and receive a good start to their education.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve very well in English.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Standards in mathematics currently lower than standards in English.

Commentary

- 1 Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development and in communication language and literacy. They achieve well in all other areas of their learning. When they start at school their attainment in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy is very low. Attainment on entry for mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is well below average, and below average in physical development. By the time children leave the Foundation Stage, they are unlikely to attain the early goals and are below average in all areas of their learning with the exception of their physical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (14.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (13.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.6 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 In the most recent national tests for the end of Year 2 (2004) standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average. Standards, in these tests, were average when compared with similar schools. Currently standards are above average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The main reason for this significant improvement in reading and writing is the success of the school's scheme for teaching reading and writing which is proving to be very effective. In mathematics the progress of some lower attaining pupils is restricted by their low starting point in mental and oral work.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	25.5 (24.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.0 (25.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.8 (27.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 The 2004 tests for the end of Year 6 showed that English was well below average and mathematics and science were below average. When compared with similar schools, on the basis of pupils' prior attainment, standards in English, mathematics and science were above average. Currently standards in English and science are average and standards in mathematics are below average. Once again, standards in English have improved because of the emphasis placed on teaching the subject and the effectiveness of the school's scheme for developing pupils' learning in the subject. Currently, although there is some variation from year-to-year, standards in mathematics lag behind those for English. This is mainly because some lower attaining pupils are slow to acquire the mental and oral skills of mathematics. However, the school recognises this and has good plans in place to address and improve standards in mathematics.
- 4 The table below shows the inspection findings for attainment and achievement by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Subject	Standards and achievement by the end of Year 2	Standards and achievement by the end of Year 6
Reading	Standards are above average and pupils achieve very well	Standards are average and pupils achieve very well
Writing	Standards are above average and pupils achieve very well	Standards are average and pupils achieve very well
English	n/a	Standards are average and pupils achieve very well
Mathematics	Standards are below average and pupils achieve well	Standards are below average and pupils achieve well
Science	Standards are below average and pupils achieve well	Standards are below average and pupils achieve well
Information and communication technology	Standards are average and pupils achieve well	Standards are average and pupils achieve well

- 5 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 inspection findings indicate that standards are average and that pupils achieve well in history, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Pupils achieve well in their personal, social and health education. They also achieve well in geography, although standards in this subject are below average.
- 6 Over the last five years standards have varied from year to year. This is mainly because of differences in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the number of pupils who start or leave the school in each year. The number of pupils attending the school who speak English as an additional language has also risen significantly. Standards in English are higher than those in mathematics and have improved because of the very good teaching and the success of the school's scheme for encouraging pupils to speak correctly and for the teaching of reading and

writing. Standards in information and communication technology have improved very well since the last inspection. This is due to teachers making effective use of the school's very good computer suite and teaching the basic skills well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are regarded as being gifted and talented achieve well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from minority groups, such as the Traveller community, also achieve well. Pupils who join the school, other than at the expected times, are supported well and achieve well. The school sets suitably realistic and challenging targets for pupils' attainment and progress. The targets set for pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 indicate that the improvement in standards is likely to be maintained. Inspectors agree with outcomes suggested by these targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are good, but attendance is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond and behave well.
- Pupils are very supportive and helpful towards each other.
- The school is working effectively to improve attendance.

Commentary

- 7 Teachers have high expectations of how well pupils will behave and pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupils are very aware of and value the school's systems of rewards and sanctions regarding their behaviour. In the past the behaviour of some pupils has been unsatisfactory. The school has worked effectively to improve behaviour and it is now good. Sometimes the behaviour of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is unsatisfactory. At such times teachers, teaching assistants and other pupils respond calmly and consistently. This invariably means that the pupils concerned quickly regain their composure and are soon working well. In the last full year for which records are kept, no pupils were excluded.
- 8 The majority of pupils participate with enthusiasm in all aspects of their learning. They are also keen to attend the school's very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate well in lessons. They listen carefully when required and are keen to answer questions and to join in discussions. Pupils respond very well to the efforts of the school to create and maintain good relationships. This means they are able to work in an atmosphere which is free from bullying, racial tension and other forms of harassment. Pupils are eager to take responsibility and do so well. For example, older pupils organise and maintain the games equipment used at lunchtimes. Younger pupils are very proud when it is their turn to do jobs such as taking the class register to the school office.
- 9 Pupils are respectful of the values, beliefs and feelings of others. They appreciate the opportunities the school provides for their learning in the creative and aesthetic aspects of the curriculum, such as art and design and music. Pupils are also developing an increasing awareness of the responsibilities that come with being part of a community and are aware of the challenges faced by those less fortunate than

themselves. The school works effectively to help pupils to gain insights to the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils are also knowledgeable about the beliefs and traditions of people from other cultures, but are less aware of the traditions and history of their own culture. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. However, many are unlikely to attain the early goals for this area of their learning before they begin in Year 1.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- 10 Attendance is one per cent below the national average and the school is doing all it can to bring about improvement. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer and awards certificates for good and improved attendance. There is also a weekly competition to reward the best class attendance. However, there are a small number of parents who do not do enough to ensure their children attend regularly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is good and the range of activities provided to enrich pupils’ learning is very good. Arrangements to ensure pupils’ care, welfare, health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is also good. The school is good at involving pupils through, seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

The school’s partnership with parents is good. Links with the community are good and links with partner schools are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Arrangements to assess pupils’ attainment and progress are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching meets the needs of pupils of differing abilities well.
- English is taught very well.
- The contribution of teaching assistants to pupils’ learning is very good and helps pupils to do their best.
- The marking of pupils’ work is thorough and helpful.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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1	5	11	11	0	0	0
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- 11 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers challenge higher attaining pupils well and the needs of those pupils identified as being gifted and talented are met well. Pupils who join the school in each year, other than at the usual starting times, also learn well. The needs of these pupils are quickly recognised and they soon become familiar with the expectations and approaches to teaching used by the school.
- 12 English is taught very well. As a result standards in English are improving, allowing pupils to make good use of the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Teachers and teaching assistants apply the school's chosen scheme for teaching reading and writing very well. This encourages pupils to learn successfully and achieve very well in English. The quality of this teaching also ensures that pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve very well. This is because the scheme focuses very effectively on enabling pupils to recognise the sounds made by letters and the combinations of letters. Teachers also take great care to ensure that when pupils read text they have opportunities to write down what they have read. Therefore, pupils are enabled to understand the important links between reading and writing.
- 13 Teachers and teaching assistants establish very good working relationships with pupils. They motivate pupils well. Consequently, pupils learn well. With few exceptions, pupils work hard and apply themselves well. They listen carefully, are eager to answer questions and participate well in discussions. The work of teaching assistants is very effective. These members of staff liaise very well with teachers and understand fully the needs of the pupils they support, enabling these pupils to learn well. The work of teaching assistants has benefited greatly from access to very good training opportunities. This is very evident when they lead groups using materials that are part of the school's scheme for teaching English. Consequently, pupils learn very well.
- 14 Teachers are good at keeping pupils informed about how well they are getting on and about what they need to do to improve. The marking of pupils' work is very good and is typified by supportive comments about what pupils have done well and advice about improvement. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and use the information they gain from assessments well to influence the planning of subsequent learning opportunities. Teachers set individual and class targets for improvement. Pupils are well informed about their targets. They often know what National Curriculum level they have achieved and what they need to do to attain the next level.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and the range of activities provided to enrich pupils' learning is very good. The accommodation and resources to support learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Significant improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection.

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school provides good resources to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

- 15 The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities and gives good coverage of all subjects. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education, including, where appropriate, sex and drugs awareness education. It also includes the teaching of French and Italian to pupils in Year 6. The organisation of the curriculum ensures very well that pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities have access to the full range of opportunities that it provides. The school's approaches to teaching and to applying literacy and mathematics across the curriculum are successful. There is also ample evidence of the school's willingness to adopt strategies to improve the curriculum and to make it interesting and exciting for pupils. For example, the recent adoption of a published scheme for the systematic development of pupils' reading and writing skills is leading to improved standards.
- 16 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are supported well by class teachers and experienced teaching assistants. Support for pupils with statements of special educational need is very good. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has overseen significant changes to the provision since the previous inspection and has a good overview of special needs within the school. The positive atmosphere and 'ethos' of the school promotes the effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of the school's life. Pupils who are identified as under-achieving regularly visit the study support centre at Leicestershire County Cricket Club. Good provision is also made to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils. These pupils are involved in city wide art workshops and, at the end of Year 6, Take part in the City Council Summer Schools for the Gifted and Talented.
- 17 The school provides pupils with a very good range of interesting, relevant and well-attended extra-curricular activities. A very good variety of sporting and cultural visits linked to the curriculum is organised to extend pupils' learning experiences effectively. Visitors to the school also make a valued and valuable contribution to pupils' learning. This is a significant improvement in provision since the last inspection, which judged the school's extra-curricular provision to be 'less than that found in many primary schools'.
- 18 There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum. Teaching assistants and administrative staff also make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and to the smooth running of the school. However, there are currently insufficient additional adults to provide the children in the Foundation Stage with all the support they need. The school's accommodation is good and is maintained very well by the premises officer. The school has the distinct advantage of a number of spare classrooms which provide flexibility in grouping, and additional specialist rooms for music and for art and design. There is a well-resourced ICT Suite and a spacious and attractive library. Resources for information and communication technology and physical education are very good. The resources to support learning in other subjects are good.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is also good. The school is good at involving pupils through, seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good, trusting and caring relationships with teachers and teaching assistants.
- The academic support and guidance provided support pupils' learning well.
- The school's health and safety and child protection procedures are good.
- The school council involves pupils well in decision making and influencing improvements that pupils would like to see.

Commentary

- 19 Pupils are cared for well in an atmosphere that is free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment. Pupils told inspectors how happy they are in the school and parents confirmed this. This is clearly a very good foundation for pupils to learn in school and exemplifies the quality of the pastoral guidance they receive, helping them to become increasingly mature and responsible. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and take care to encourage and successfully raise their self-esteem. Pupils receive good support and guidance for their academic development. This ensures that they are well informed about how well they are getting on and about what they need to do to improve. The guidance is accompanied by targets that also help pupils to be clear about how to improve.
- 20 Health and Safety have a high profile in the school. Risk assessments are carefully made for all activities and are examined closely by the headteacher and an appointed governor. Good child protection procedures are in place and the school is well aware of any difficulties that children may be experiencing. The member of staff responsible for child protection is well trained and ensures that other staff are fully aware of developments and are in a position to apply good practice.
- 21 The school council is a good innovation that consults with pupils and involves them well in making decisions about the school. Pupils greatly appreciate their involvement in the council. Formed only four months ago, it has enthusiastically set about its task, concentrating on cloakroom facilities. It has caused the speeding up of some decoration and made improvements to washbasins and cubicle doors.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided for parents about how well their children are doing is good.
- Some parents are very supportive of the school, but many show little interest in their children's education or in the life of the school.
- There are good transfer arrangements to the main senior school and strong curriculum links with a range of other schools.
- The school's links with the local community enhance the curriculum well.

Commentary

- 22 Parents have high opinions of the school, as do the pupils. The school provides some good information to parents. The prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report are good and there are good newsletters. Good end-of-year reports contain clear accounts of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, targets for improvement and information on attainment of the National Curriculum levels. A small group of parents lead fund-raising activities. Other parents help in school, for instance with reading. Few parents attended the meeting with inspectors and only one sixth of parents returned inspection questionnaires. However, the vast majority of the questionnaires were entirely positive, a situation that confirms the outcomes of a recent questionnaire for parents conducted by the school. Parents are welcome in school and the school is inclusive in providing information to separated parents. Matters of concern are handled sensitively and well. Effective plans are made in partnership with parents to tackle attendance or behaviour problems. There are two consultation evenings and an open evening each year, and good information is provided for parents about what their children are going to learn.
- 23 The school is involved very well with the Catholic community and meetings are held with members of the three local parishes to discuss items of mutual interest. Sponsorship has been received from a major bank and a large utility company. Pupils have also enjoyed activities provided by the police about being 'Young Detectives' and by the insurance industry about managing personal finances. Members of staff from a local company also visit the school to help pupils with their reading. Sporting links with local clubs, such as Leicester City Football Club and Leicester Tigers Rugby Club, are strong.
- 24 There are very close links with the Catholic secondary school that takes the majority of pupils. These links include the provision of good induction procedures, use of teaching resources and close collaboration on curriculum development, especially for pupils involved in the performing arts and those who are gifted and talented. There are also good links with a sports college and the headteacher ensures that pupils leaving for other schools are included in their induction activities. A good partnership with Leicester University supports teachers during their training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governance of the school is good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership and management of other key staff are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are very supportive and are well informed about the strengths of the school and what it needs to do to improve.
- The leadership of the headteacher has helped the school to successfully overcome the difficulties it has faced in recent years.
- Other members of staff with additional responsibilities, such as subject leadership, undertake their duties well.
- Governors and the headteacher form an effective partnership to ensure the available funding is spent wisely.

Commentary

- 25 Governors fulfil their duties well. They are very supportive, and are well informed about the strengths of the school and what it needs to do to improve. Governors have played a central role in planning and putting in place measures that have led to the issues identified by the last inspection being addressed successfully. The commitment of the governing body and of senior managers to the principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity helps to ensure that everyone at the school feels valued and has a valuable contribution to make to the life of the school. Many governors are frequent visitors to the school. Two governors lead a very successful and well-attended chess club for pupils.
- 26 The headteacher's very good leadership has, in partnership with governors, helped the school to successfully overcome the difficulties it has faced in recent years. There have been significant and disruptive changes to staffing at all levels. The levels of children's attainment when they enter the school have fallen markedly in recent years and an increasing number of pupils leave and arrive at the school within each year. Throughout this turmoil the headteacher has remained calm, and has gradually built a stable, effective and highly committed group of staff. This is resulting in improving standards. The headteacher has a very clear vision about which areas of the school need to improve and what should be done to bring about improvements. Her sense of purpose and high aspirations, combined with the very good support and guidance she provides for the staff, are helping to bring these improvements about successfully.
- 27 Other members of staff with additional responsibilities, such as subject leadership, undertake their duties well. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection and improvement since then is very good. The deputy-headteacher makes an effective contribution to the school's management and to its improvement. The work of the special educational needs co-ordinator is effective. Subject leaders provide good support and guidance for their colleagues and ensure that resources are purchased and used wisely. The leadership and management of English are very good and are contributing very well to rapid improvements in this subject. The school recognises that similarly effective action is needed to improve standards in mathematics and has plans in place to ensure this happens.
- 28 Governors and the headteacher form an effective partnership to ensure that available funds are spent wisely. The day-to-day organisation of the school and financial management are good. Staffing levels to provide administrative support are relatively high, but office staff undertake their duties efficiently and effectively, enabling the school to run smoothly. The school gives good value for money.

Spending is clearly linked, in the school's improvement plan, to educational priorities and to improving standards. Governors apply the principles of best value well to purchase of services and resources. They also evaluate the school's success in achieving the priorities identified for its development and improvement. The school has accumulated a budget surplus that is higher than would usually be expected. This is because in recent years it has proved to be impossible to fill some key posts and teaching jobs. This led to money being saved. However, governors have detailed plans in place to spend this money wisely. They intend to use it to maintain staffing levels and particularly the number of teaching assistants at a time when the number of pupils on roll is falling.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	540,702	Balance from previous year	22,976
Total expenditure	453,548	Balance carried forward to the next	87,154
Expenditure per pupil	2,302		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

The children in the Reception classes receive a good start to their education. The majority of children start school with standards that are well below average. There are particular problems with their speech and language and with their general social skills. In many cases these areas of children's learning are assessed as being very low. During their time in the Foundation Stage the children's achievement is good. Teachers' planning and arrangements to assess children's attainment and progress are satisfactory. Planning clarifies the links between the activities and the goals set for each area of learning. Assessment procedures include brief notes about children's responses to the activities offered each day. The Foundation Stage is managed and led satisfactorily by a staff team who work well together. Teaching assistants contribute very well to children's learning. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing their levels of personal independence well.
- Children behave well.
- Children are maintaining their concentration for longer periods.

Commentary

29 Children's development in this area of their learning is promoted very well. The quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the Foundation Curriculum. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, children's attainment is likely to be below average, but they achieve very well. The majority of the children are developing their confidence and establishing good relationships with one another, and with teachers and other adults. Children's behaviour is good and all the staff encourage children, with considerable success, to be considerate of others. Children's interest and attention are captured well through adults' enthusiasm, and the use of varied resources supports learning effectively. However, lower attaining children sometimes wander aimlessly and cannot concentrate for sufficient periods of time. Some of these children do not socialise as well as they might because of poor communication skills. Even so, teaching and learning are very good and the strong focus on this area means that most children learn very well. Through a range of tasks and activities, concentration is generally fostered, and maintained, well. All the children receive plenty of praise and encouragement and those with special needs are supported well. Children's personal independence is promoted effectively, and they are beginning to cope well with daily events such as changing for physical education.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's speaking and listening skills are fostered effectively.
- The children's early writing skills are promoted very well.
- Early reading skills are also encouraged well.

Commentary

30 Attainment is below that expected for children of this age. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage many children will not have achieved the early learning goals. However, from a very low starting point children achieve very well and make very good progress. Teaching is good and plenty of good opportunities are provided for children to extend their speaking skills through all areas of learning. The communication skills of some children are very basic, but the development of these skills is promoted very well through a range of activities in all areas of the early years' curriculum. Sensitive support from adults encourages children to talk with increasing success about what they are doing, for example describing the pictures they have drawn of what they did at the weekend. Teaching is good, which results in good learning. However, because of children's low starting point their speech and language are underdeveloped for their age. Questioning is used effectively as the staff encourage the children to develop words and short phrases into sentences. Adults are patient and give the children time to think about what they want to say, and help them to express their thoughts with increasing confidence. The children enjoy listening to stories and the classrooms have a good range of fiction and non-fiction picture books, to which children have frequent access. Early writing is encouraged effectively, often through role play. However, many children are unable to write with clarity or to explain what they have written.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children are beginning to count early numbers with confidence.
- Their mathematical vocabulary is developing satisfactorily.

Commentary

31 Children achieve well and make good progress. Even so, by the time they leave the Foundation Stage many children will not have achieved the early learning goals and attainment is below average. Good progress is evident in children's early understanding of number, shape and measure, but the mental and oral skills of many lower attaining children are often slow to develop from their very low starting point. There is a good range of games and puzzles, specifically designed to support early understanding of number, which are used well. The staff use games and activities effectively to support number work, such as playing games with dice to promote simple addition. The children are enthusiastic about their learning. They learn to recognise and sort coins and talk about the numerals on the coins. Teaching is good and children are learning well. Their use of simple mathematical vocabulary, such as 'bigger' or 'smaller' is fostered well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the world around them.
- Children's skills in the use of technology are fostered effectively.

Commentary

32 By the time they leave the Foundation Stage many children will not have achieved the early learning goals, and attainment is below average. However, teaching and learning are good and children achieve well in this area of the curriculum from a much lower than average starting point. The children's breadth of experience when they start school is often very narrow. Teachers address this problem effectively through careful planning and provide children with a broad range of effective learning experiences. Most children show good levels of interest in their work and make suitable gains in their learning. Expeditions around the school, and to local shops and the church, make them aware of the wider world. The children learn more about their world by handling and discussing a variety of objects. Having made gingerbread men, the ingredients and tools are displayed for children to examine. Such experiences are used well to extend vocabulary and encourage children to describe what they have seen and experienced. Children have daily access to computers in the classrooms and are developing satisfactory control of the mouse. Many can control the mouse well enough to click, drag and drop objects. The older children have regular, planned opportunities to use the computer suite and many do so with confidence.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision results in children's good progress in the use of pencils, scissors and other small tools.
- Good planning and teaching develop physical skills well.

Commentary

33 Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well. They are on course to attain average standards and are likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. They have frequent opportunities to play in an outdoor area adjacent to their classroom. In the winter it is used mainly for recreational play, supplied with a variety of wheeled toys. While it is used more often in good weather, the range of resources available is limited and there is no large climbing or exercise equipment. Physical development is planned and organised as an integral part of the overall curriculum in a variety of ways. The children use the school hall for music and movement and simple gymnastics, and to practise their skills in rolling, throwing

and kicking balls. Fine motor movements are developed well through the use of pencils, brushes, scissors, and small equipment and construction apparatus. The majority of children are becoming increasingly competent in their use of such skills and implements.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy listening to rhymes and singing songs.
- There are good opportunities for children to learn through role-play.

Commentary

- 34 By the time they leave the Foundation Stage many children will not have achieved the early learning goals, and attainment is below average. However, teaching and learning are good. Planning for children's creative development provides children with a good range of artistic experiences and their creative expression is fostered well. The children use a variety of pencils, paints, chalks and collage with increasing skill and care to create images. Examples of children's work, such as self-portraits, are on display, although some of this work is below the level expected for their ages. Children learn and sing a number of songs and rhymes. They enjoy these experiences which also support the development of their speaking and listening skills. Children also have good opportunities to listen to music as well as playing percussion instruments. They have good opportunities to use their imagination through role-play and enjoy using the classroom's 'Three Bears Cottage'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening abilities.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes.
- The school's scheme for teaching English meets pupils' learning needs very well.
- The marking of pupils' work is very good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

- 35 Many pupils arrive at the school with very low attainment in English. This includes pupils who join the school other than at the usual starting times. However, throughout the school pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve very well in English. This is mainly because the quality of teaching is very good and work provided for pupils is matched very well to their abilities. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading and writing are likely to be above average and standards in Year 6 are average. After the last inspection standards in English fell. This was mainly caused by significant disruptions to staffing and a large number of pupils leaving the school to be replaced by others. However, standards are now improving rapidly. This is because the school's scheme for teaching the subject meets pupils' learning needs very well.
- 36 Teachers provide pupils with many very good opportunities in all lessons to develop their speaking and listening. Some of the lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not speak clearly. However, teachers work effectively to ensure that these pupils gradually acquire the ability to speak clearly and correctly. Pupils, as part of learning to read, are taught to say the correct sounds of letters and combinations of letters. These processes are particularly effective in helping pupils who speak English as an additional language to improve their speaking. Higher attaining older pupils, in Years 5 and 6, speak clearly, correctly and thoughtfully in discussions and when answering

questions. Teachers enable pupils who join the school, other than at the start of a year, to achieve very well. These pupils are supported very well and adapt quickly to the school's approach to teaching English.

- 37 Standards in reading are improving rapidly. This is especially so for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school has adopted a scheme that allows pupils to learn to read very well. Teachers apply this scheme very effectively. They ensure that pupils are supported very well in their learning and that the work they set is well matched to the levels that pupils have reached. Because of this many pupils, including lower attaining pupils, are becoming increasingly successful readers and enjoy reading. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 read fluently and they talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and books.
- 38 The same programme that benefits pupils' reading so effectively is also helping them to write well. Because pupils are taught the sounds represented by letters and combinations of letters, they learn to spell most words correctly. This gives them confidence to write well. All teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to write for a range of purposes. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 write poetry, lists of instructions and historical accounts. These pupils also write lengthy stories independently, bringing their writing alive through the use of correct sentence structure and the inclusion of exciting adjectives.
- 39 Arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good. Teachers use the information they gain from assessments well to help their planning of the next stages of pupils' learning. Teachers are also good at keeping pupils informed about how well they are doing. The marking of pupils' work is very good. It tells pupils clearly what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader, in partnership with the headteacher, has managed the successful introduction of the school's scheme for teaching English and ensured that teachers and teaching assistants are prepared well to teach the scheme.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 40 Pupils apply the skills of language and literacy well across the curriculum. Teachers ensure that there are good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen and to read and write in many subjects. Teachers consistently require pupils to express themselves clearly in subjects such as science. Opportunities for older pupils to write independently and for a range of purposes are used well in subjects such as science, history and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well from a very low level of attainment on entry to the school.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

- 41 Standards in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below average. However, given the very low level of attainment of a significant number of pupils on entry to the school and the high level of pupil mobility, pupils are achieving well. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The subject leader, in partnership with the headteacher, has formulated plans that show clearly the intention to improve standards.
- 42 Teaching in mathematics is good. Mental and oral mathematics is taught well but, because of the low starting point of many pupils, the progress of some lower attaining pupils is slow. This also applies to the attainment of many pupils who join the school other than at the usual times. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have good classroom and behaviour-management skills. They also match tasks well to pupils' abilities and learning needs. Teachers are skilled at phrasing and targeting questions to challenge pupils, including higher attaining pupils. At the same time they ensure that lower attaining pupils also enjoy learning successfully. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils refined their recording methods for column addition. The very good relationships and the teacher's skill in motivating the pupils led to pupils of all abilities trying hard and making good progress. Work for pupils with special educational needs is well planned. These pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are supported well by classroom assistants and make good progress.
- 43 The subject leader has a good overview of standards and the quality of teaching in the subject. Test results are analysed in detail by the headteacher and subject leader. Arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good. In addition to the detailed analysis of test results and trends over time, pupils are tracked individually as they move through the school and are given half-termly targets for learning. Older pupils, particularly, have good knowledge of what they have to do to improve. Recently, good progress has been made in resourcing the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers use resources well, particularly CD-Rom resources linked to the Numeracy Strategy. This was demonstrated particularly well in a Year 3 lesson where pupils explored the relationship between grams and kilograms. The related skills of reading scales were illustrated very well on screen with animated diagrams (add a weight and the scale moves). This motivated pupils well and helped them to make good links with their learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 44 Pupils make satisfactory use of their mathematic skills in subjects such as science and design technology to make graphs and collate data. They make good use of information and communication technology to present data and to record the outcomes of mathematical investigations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy good opportunities for practical work.
- There is a good emphasis on developing their investigative and experimental skills.
- Teachers engage and interest pupils well.

- Pupils present their work well, and work hard in lessons. However, younger pupils need significant help to record their work methodically.

Commentary

- 45 By the end of Year 2, standards are below average. By the end of Year 6, standards are average. Standards are improving and are now higher than shown by the 2004 national tests for the end of Year 6. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well and make good progress. The work in pupils' books shows clear evidence of improving standards which, following a dip after the last inspection, are now similar to the standards found at that time (January 1999).
- 46 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 undertake a good range of experimental work, but their ability to complete the work methodically, independently and logically is limited without adult support. By the end of Year 6, most pupils make sensible predictions and understand the basic concept of a fair test. Pupils throughout the school take part in a good range of science activities, and have a secure knowledge and understanding of the topics they cover. However, their knowledge lacks depth, and pupils' learning is sometimes adversely affected by their lack of experience outside school. Whilst higher attaining pupils, in all year groups, have a satisfactory recall of what they have learned, lower attaining pupils often have difficulty in recalling their learning and applying it to new situations. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning, for example to produce a range of charts and tables to record the results of their experiments.
- 47 The quality of teaching and learning is good and is leading to improvements in pupils' attainment and achievement. Teachers use questions well to reinforce learning. Learning objectives are explained clearly to pupils so they know what their teachers' expect them to learn. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss their tasks in pairs and in small groups. When this happens pupils respond enthusiastically and are keen to share their ideas. Frequent opportunities for group and paired work promote pupils' personal and social development well. Lessons are well planned and often place good emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills. Older pupils enjoy taking part in practical tasks, but younger pupils sometimes lack concentration. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers, teaching assistants and often from their classmates.
- 48 Leadership and management are good. Good assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress support teaching and learning well. The subject leader maintains a good overview of science and knows what needs to be done to raise standards. Planning is reviewed regularly and pupils' work is monitored and then discussed by staff. The information gained from these activities is used well to support planning and to identify areas for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well from a level that is well below average when they start at the school.

- There has been very good improvement in provision and standards since the last inspection.
- The resources to support pupils' learning are very good and teachers use them well.

Commentary

49 The improvement in provision for ICT since the time of the last inspection is very good. At that time provision was judged to be unsatisfactory and was a 'key issue' for the school. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The school has a very well-resourced and spacious computer suite which is used regularly and well by teachers and pupils. During the inspection standards in a Year 1 lesson were well below the expected levels, confirming the pupils' well below average attainment on entry to the school. Pupils' work in Year 2 suggests standards that are likely to be below average by the end of the year. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, making good progress from their low starting point.

50 At the end of Year 6 standards are above average in pupils' ability to develop and use multi-media presentations effectively. Pupils were observed confidently and independently searching the internet for images. They downloaded and pasted the images into multi-media presentations on 'The Beatles', and included the use of 'slide transitions' and sound. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate that standards in other strands of the ICT curriculum are average. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good. Teachers have a good level of confidence and subject-knowledge, which is an outcome of good in-service training and support. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher showed very good subject knowledge, using the data projector very well to demonstrate the objectives for the lesson and making very good links to pupils' previous learning in history. The expectations for work and behaviour were made very clear and, as a result, the lesson was distinguished by the very good attitudes of the pupils and the good pace of learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

51 Pupils apply their skills in ICT satisfactorily. The cross-curricular use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory and teachers make good use of the data projectors recently installed in classrooms to interest and motivate pupils effectively. This aspect of the provision is part of the school's thoughtful investment in resources to support pupils' learning in the subject.

HUMANITIES

Insufficient work was seen to make an overall judgement about provision in history and geography. Two history lessons were seen. Pupils' work, displays and teachers' planning were sampled and discussions held with the subject leaders. Across the school, teachers develop pupils' reasoning and deduction skills satisfactorily, which contributes to their overall personal and social development.

An examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning in **history** indicates that pupils study a satisfactory range of historical periods. Pupils in Year 2 are currently learning about the Great Fire of London. In Year 6 pupils have produced a good volume of work on the Second World War and have had many opportunities to practise their literacy skills. For example, pupils wrote good quality, independent reports following a presentation from a visitor who told them what it was like to be a child during the war. The work in pupils' books

indicates that standards are in line with expectations. However pupils' understanding of the chronology of different topics is much less secure, despite regular work on time lines.

In **geography**, satisfactory curricular plans outline which themes pupils are to explore from class to class. These plans set out clearly the skills to be developed in each class. No lessons were observed, but discussions with pupils and the work in their books show that they are using the Internet and the school library well for research. This work indicates that, although pupils achieve well, standards are below average across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in art and design and no lessons in design and technology. Consequently no judgement is made about provision in these subjects. Inspection findings are based on the sampling of pupils' work and on discussions with teachers and pupils. Two lessons were seen in music and no lessons in physical education. No judgement is made about the overall quality of teaching and learning in these subjects.

Art and design and Design and technology

The work in pupils' sketch books in Years 1 and 2 shows some very immature drawing skills. This indicates the low level of many pupils' skills when they enter the school. Pupils have too few opportunities to do observational drawing and they do not receive enough guidance on how to use their sketch books for planning and improving their work. However, some good examples of work are on display around the school, in particular studies based on the painting 'Nichol's Canyon' by David Hockney, done by Year 6 pupils. The standard of this work is in line with that expected for pupils of this age and indicates that they achieve well. A whole-school scheme of work for art and design, based on nationally recommended guidance, has been adopted by the school. This scheme provides secure continuity in learning as pupils' progress through the school. The teaching of art and design and design and technology is provided in half-term units of work. The school's scheme of work for **design and technology** ensures that pupils undertake a satisfactory range of activities. Standards are average and they achieve well. Resources to support teaching and learning for both of these subjects are satisfactory.

Music

Standards are in line with those expected for pupils' ages and pupils achieve well. The teaching in lessons in Years 1 and 2 is good. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to compose and evaluate their music. Pupils are encouraged to say how various types of music make them feel and to listen to music from a variety of cultures. Pupils are also provided with good insights into early ways of recording musical notation and into differences in pitch, pace and rhythm when they sing. Pupils in years 3 to 6 attend the school choir. The choir is led with skill and enthusiasm by the subject leader, who plays the piano, and other teachers who lead the singing and play the flute to accompany pupils. The singing by members of the choir of songs, such as 'The Leaving of Liverpool' and 'Blowing in the Wind', and singing by pupils during the daily act of collective worship is of the standard expected for pupils of this age. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has introduced a scheme of work that helps teachers to teach class-based music lessons with confidence. The resources to support teaching and learning are good.

Physical education

Standards are in line with those expected for pupils' ages and pupils achieve well. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities to support pupils' learning in the subject. An after-school sports club for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is well attended and focuses on skills, such as co-operative 'parachute' games, that support pupils' physical development well. During the inspection the football skills of pupils in Years 3 and 4 developed well under the guidance of a coach from Leicester City Football Club, whilst other pupils from Years 5 and 6 participated with great enthusiasm in a cross-country running club, led by a teacher. Pupils identify physical education as one of the subjects that they enjoy. Resources for the subject are good. The school has recently installed new climbing equipment in the hall, and a good range of equipment supports the teaching and learning of games.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

It was not possible to see any lessons taught during the inspection. However, discussions with teachers and pupils and displays around the school indicate an effective programme in which pupils achieve well. Many classrooms have displays that help to make pupils aware of their community and of the wider world. For example, pupils in Year 2 discuss the qualities needed to be part of caring community. The school's rules to ensure good relationships and to help pupils to work hard are displayed prominently around the building and are understood well by pupils. Pupils' awareness is also raised about the importance of eating the right foods and the dangers posed by the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Again, pupils are very knowledgeable about these features of their development. During the inspection a team from the school became very proud winners of the annual Leicester City Schools' Road Safety Quiz.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).