

# INSPECTION REPORT

## QUILTERS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Billericay

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114801

Headteacher: Mrs J Dodd

Reporting inspector: Mr M Milton  
1723

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 193701

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Laindon Road Billericay Essex
Postcode:	CM12 9LD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Radley
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> April 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M Milton	Registered inspector	Mathematics	How high are standards?
		Geography	How well are the pupils taught?
		Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
		Information technology	
P Adenwalla	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
M Harris	Team inspector	Science	Special educational needs
		Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Religious education	
		Art	
P Morcom	Team inspector	English	How well is the school led and managed?
		History	English as an additional language
		Music	
P Kitley			

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school has 266 pupils aged 7 to 11 and is average in size for a junior school. There are more boys than girls. A small number of pupils are from ethnic minority groups. About 17% of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly average. Their needs cover a wide range of difficulties. 5% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, and this is below the national average. There are a small number of pupils learning English as an additional language and almost all have reached high levels of English language acquisition. Pupils' attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year, but is usually above average. It was well above average for the current Year 3. Most pupils transfer from the infant school on the same site. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but most are advantaged.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school with a significant number of strengths. Pupils make good progress in most aspects of their work, and particularly in mathematics and science. Good teaching and very effective leadership and management ensure that pupils aim for high standards. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is above national averages for similar schools. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are well above average in mathematics and science, and high in art and swimming.
- The good teaching helps all pupils to achieve well.
- The thorough analysis of assessment information is used to help all pupils improve their work.
- It is taking good steps to help the boys achieve higher standards, especially in English.
- The excellent out-of-school clubs and residential journeys enrich the learning of many pupils.
- The leadership and management of the school work effectively to raise the standards reached by all pupils.
- The school fosters very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships which all contribute to pupils' good learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- As the school knows, standards are not high enough in information and communication technology.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the previous inspection in April 1996, the school has made good progress. It has addressed all of the key issues. Although standards in English fell slightly in 1999, they were still above national averages and have improved this year. Standards in mathematics and science have risen at a faster rate than nationally. This is because the quality of teaching has improved and the school has taken appropriate action to raise standards. The school is well placed to continue to improve the quality of education it provides because there is a commitment to improvement by the team of staff which is very effectively led by the headteacher.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	B	D
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	B	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school has identified a weakness in pupils' writing which is the reason English results are lower than those for mathematics and science. Taking the three subjects together from 1996 to 1999, results have improved broadly in line with the national trend. The school carefully bases its targets for pupils' results in 2000 and 2001 on assessment information. The targets are sufficiently challenging. Pupils' attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. The only subject where standards are below national expectations is information technology. Pupils do not complete work to the expected standard in aspects such as modelling, control and data logging. This is partly because the computer suite has only been operating with modern computers for a few months. Standards are high in art, where pottery is particularly good, and in physical education, where swimming standards are excellent. Pupils achieve well and the results for Year 6 pupils in 1999 in mathematics and science were higher than expected from their Key Stage 1 results.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and all are keen to learn and do their best. For example, they enjoy their mathematics and information technology lessons. Pupils work in a friendly, purposeful atmosphere and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous towards visitors, and take good care of the school. There were no exclusions in the 1998-9 school year, and only one in the current school year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships amongst pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. Pupils work very well together during lessons, for example, as pairs of pupils share computers in the information technology suite. They are not afraid to experiment and make mistakes. Pupils have a very good range of opportunities to take responsibility which includes their own target setting, the class and school councils, and the family tables in the dining hall.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is above national averages and the rate of unauthorised absence is below national averages. Pupils are usually punctual.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The teaching was satisfactory or better in 97% of lessons seen, very good or better in 21%, good or better in 75% and unsatisfactory in 3%. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good, and the skills of literacy and numeracy are very effectively taught. Particular strengths of the teaching include sharing learning objectives with pupils at the start of all lessons, and reviewing progress towards them during the plenary session at the end. Good use is made of learning support assistants who work closely with teachers. Work is well matched to pupils' needs, especially in English and mathematics. Group work is effectively managed and pupils follow clear instructions independently. Teachers' expectations are particularly high for English, mathematics, science, art and physical education. Occasional weaknesses were seen in some lessons, but there was no general pattern to these. The staff work hard to meet the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Particular strengths in pupils' learning are the great interest they show in their work, for example, in swimming and art, and the very good effort they make in a wide range of tasks including creative activities in pottery, and intellectual activities in science. There are no particular weaknesses in pupils' learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and balanced, and provides good learning opportunities for pupils. However, older pupils have not been taught all of the necessary information technology. Enriched by residential visits and a range of clubs. Sex education and education about drug misuse are taught through science. Total teaching time is below the recommended minimum and the governing body should review this as the curriculum changes next September.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support is well targeted to pupils' needs both within the classroom and for small groups withdrawn from lessons. Learning support assistants are well qualified, know pupils well and work effectively with class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure that pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupils with English as an additional language are not at an early stage of English language acquisition. They make good progress because of the school's emphasis on the learning of every pupil, and its language-rich environment.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The opportunities for pupils' social development are excellent, and very good for their moral development. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through art lessons. However, opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures are more limited. Good opportunities for spiritual development through assemblies and some art and English lessons.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils. Child protection procedures are firmly in place. There are excellent systems for promoting good behaviour. Academic progress is effectively monitored and very good use is made of assessment information to set targets for individual pupils.
How well the school works	The school has sustained its good working partnership with parents, who

with parents	make an important contribution to their children's learning.
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### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff who focus on high standards for pupils' welfare and attainment. Led by the headteacher, staff reflect critically on their work and identify what they can do to improve pupils' learning. Subject co-ordinators carry out their responsibilities effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are actively involved in the life of the school, and know its strengths and weaknesses. They are very supportive and carry out their monitoring role and other responsibilities effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good monitoring of teaching which is linked to action to improve its overall quality. Also, there is very good monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress. Action is taken where weaknesses are identified generally (as in writing), and where needed for individual pupils and groups of pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school's priorities for improvement focus on raising standards and are linked closely to the school budget so that there are sufficient resources for the improvements. The school applies the principles of best value to a satisfactory extent.

The staffing and learning resources are appropriate. The school has a computer suite but it is not big enough for classes with 35 pupils and some pupils have to be taught in another room. Although some classes are very large, the two classes in each of Years 5 and 6 are divided into three sets for most of their English and mathematics lessons. The school's accommodation is good although the open-plan layout can result in the learning activities in one class disturbing the neighbouring class. However, the school is taking steps to reduce this disturbance. The indoor swimming pool is an excellent learning resource. Standards of cleanliness are high in the building, and displays create a stimulating learning environment.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• There are high expectations of the children.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• The school helps their children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Most work is set in Years 5 and 6, so there is more challenge for pupils.</li> <li>• All pupils contribute to the 'star of the week' in each class.</li> <li>• The extended visits in Years 4, 5 and 6 are excellent.</li> <li>• Pupils enjoy the play equipment and umbrellas in the playground.</li> <li>• There is a good balance between academic and social development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>



The inspection evidence supports parents' views about what they like about the school. There is an excellent range of activities outside of lessons including residential journeys for Years 4, 5 and 6, a choir, an orchestra and some clubs. The school provides parents with good information about how their children are getting on and has just improved the format of the annual reports. It seeks to work closely with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The results of the national test for English taken by Year 6 pupils in 1999 were above national averages for all schools but below national averages for similar schools. The school identified the reason why results were below average for similar schools and this was because of weaknesses in writing. For mathematics and science, the results of the national tests in 1999 were well above the national average for all and similar schools.
2. The standards of the current Year 6 pupils in English are above national averages. Pupils are developing their speaking and listening skills well. All concentrate when the teacher is introducing new work or explaining the task. In all classes, pupils are clearly making good progress in terms of their attainment and confidence in speaking, but some of the oldest pupils are not yet able to express themselves at length. By the end Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is well above what is expected nationally. Many are enthusiastic readers. They talk knowledgeably about the Narnia books and contrast them with books by J. K. Rowling. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through the effective teaching from the special educational needs staff and from class teachers. Standards are not as good for writing. There is currently a larger number of boys than girls in upper Key Stage 2 and, in line with the national situation, boys do comparatively less well than girls. The school is taking appropriate steps to improve the standards of boys' work. Higher-attainers write at length and use a range of styles for different purposes. Pupils of average attainment use a similar range of techniques, but do not yet write as fully. Pupils who have difficulties use practical guidance and subheadings to produce work of similar quality, and the lowest attainers have excellent support from the teacher and the classroom assistant to achieve the same outcome.
3. Literacy is taught appropriately across the curriculum. Good attention is paid to the teaching of technical vocabulary in mathematics, science and music. The writing of accounts in science, plans in design and technology, and responses to religious education are sound but provide areas for the development of the subject. Pupils' reference skills are developed systematically through work in several subjects. However, there have been fewer opportunities to use CD-ROMs for research, and many pupils have insufficient experience of the Internet.
4. In mathematics and science, current standards are well above national averages. In mathematics, many Year 6 pupils have good basic number skills and add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately with numbers up to 1,000. They multiply two-digit numbers by a single digit mentally. They understand exchange rates and convert sterling into other European currencies. Many pupils work confidently with ratios and, for example, work out the best value for money for an item sold in different quantities for different prices. In science, they understand about plant and human life, and learn about the harm done to the body by various drugs. Pupils know about the phases of the moon and understand what effect these have on Earth. They know about a variety of materials and can classify plant and animal life using a key. Many aspects of science are investigated and pupils know about fair testing and making hypotheses.
5. Sound use is made of pupils' good numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils collect numerical data and display it in different ways in information technology, use accurate measurement in design and technology, and employ a good range of measurement in science where results are presented in a variety of graphs and tables.

6. Pupils' standards are appropriate for their ages in design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education. In religious education, Year 6 pupils understand about different places of worship and know the rituals associated with visiting a temple. They learn about the symbolism of various cross formations and know that the eight points of a Maltese cross represent the eight blessings in the Sermon on the Mount.
7. Standards are well above national expectations in art and physical education. In art, pupils confidently use a wide variety of techniques. They work with clay, producing high-quality pottery pieces, paint using various methods, and sew simple articles. Throughout the key stage, pupils learn about the lives and work of artists, including Van Gogh, Seurat, Renoir and Monet. They use some of these artists' techniques in their own work as when they experiment with palette knives to mix paint and produce work in the style of Van Gogh. In physical education, the pupils attain very high standards in swimming and all pupils in the school can swim well. By Year 6, all are proficient in a variety of strokes and higher-attainers swim quickly over 25 metres using different strokes.
8. The only subject where standards are below those expected is information technology. This is because pupils have not reached the expected standards in control, modelling and data logging. The reasons for this are that the computer suite has only had modern computers for a few months and, although teachers' expertise has improved, some are not fully confident in all of the required aspects. During the inspection, the work seen in pupils' weekly information technology lessons often matched national expectations. For example, in one lesson, younger pupils created their own spreadsheets and inserted formulae that added the numbers in rows and columns.
9. Pupils with special education needs make good progress and many reach standards that match national expectations by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Most pupils with English as an additional language achieve standards that are well above national expectations.
10. Taking English, mathematics and science together for 1996-9, results of the national tests have improved at the average national rate of improvement. However, taken separately, results for mathematics and science have improved at a faster rate than the national rate of improvement. The school's targets for results at the end of Year 6 are based on a thorough analysis of a wide range of assessment data, and are sufficiently challenging. The pupils' progress towards these targets is carefully monitored.
11. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching, and results for Year 6 in mathematics and science are higher than expected from their Key Stage 1 results. Achievement is not as good in English but has improved during the current school year as the school has made appropriate changes in the ways that writing is taught. Pupils achieve particularly well in art and swimming.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They like school, and are keen to learn and do their best. They take pride in their work which is neatly and carefully presented. The school works hard and successfully to fully include all pupils in its activities and lessons regardless of their background or attainment. Pupils are often fully absorbed by their work as in the art lessons seen and the mental mathematics sessions at the start of each mathematics lesson. They are keen to share their ideas, as in an English lesson when they had written Haiku poems. Very occasionally, two or three pupils in a class are silly as when data was deleted from a spreadsheet during an information technology lesson.

13. Behaviour is very good. Pupils are courteous towards visitors, and take good care of the school and its resources. There were no exclusions during the last full school year and only one during the current school year. Any occasional instances of bullying are quickly resolved.
14. There are very good relationships within the school, both amongst pupils and between pupils and adults. There are more boys than girls in some classes and sets but this does not have a negative impact on any of these classes or groups. Pupils work well together during lessons, for example, as groups carry out experiments in science. When pupils move from whole-class teaching to group work during a lesson, they quickly settle to work. They are not afraid to experiment and make mistakes. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility including their own target setting, the class and school councils, and the family tables in the dining hall. There were a few instances when some pupils found it difficult to concentrate or lacked self-discipline and called out during the lesson.
15. Pupils' attendance rates are above the national averages, and the rate of unauthorised absence is below national averages. Lessons start punctually. These contribute to pupils' good progress.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 97% of lessons seen, very good or better in 21%, good or better in 75%, and unsatisfactory in only 3%. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection because of the effective monitoring and support of teaching by the headteacher and some subject co-ordinators. The teaching of mathematics and English is good, and the skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught.
17. There are many strengths to the teaching. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of all lessons, and the progress made towards these is reviewed during plenary sessions at the ends of lessons. Good use is made of well-qualified learning support assistants who work closely with teachers. Group work is effectively managed, and pupils work independently when tasks have been set so that teachers can focus on particular groups. Teachers have high but realistic expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Tasks are well matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment especially in English, mathematics and science. Almost all teachers have good levels of subject knowledge for all aspects of literacy and numeracy, and teachers had good knowledge in the information technology lessons seen. The good marking gives pupils comments about how they can improve, and in one class pupils read the teacher's comments on their work during registration.
18. In English, there is some very good teaching that promotes the learning of boys without adversely affecting the learning of girls. For example, in one Year 5 class the teacher provided checklists so that boys could work through a set of short-term objectives. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher gave support staff specific guidance on monitoring pupils' progress, particularly of boys, to ensure that they completed a reasonable amount of work in the time allowed.
19. Challenging mental mathematics is well taught at the start of each lesson. This promotes good learning as teachers frequently ask pupils to explain their answers and methods. Pupils learn from their mistakes as teachers respond sensitively to make important teaching points. Teachers have good subject knowledge and so emphasise the correct mathematical vocabulary as well as giving lucid explanations and quickly clearing up any misconceptions pupils might have.
20. Occasional weaknesses were seen in a small minority of lessons. In two lessons, it was difficult for all pupils to see the white board during the plenary session at the end of the lesson. In another lesson, the teachers instructions were not clear about using dictionaries to identify the different meanings of the same words and, in another, pupils were allowed to talk at the same time as the

teacher. In a lesson where pupils did not make enough progress, there was not enough variety in the work for one group, an aspect was not taught clearly so pupils remained confused, and the teacher did not model joined-up handwriting.

21. Pupils' learnt well in lessons. Particular strengths were the very good effort they made across a wide range of work so that they learn new knowledge , understanding and skills. They show great interest in their work, and are keen to do their best as in swimming and art. They enjoy mathematics and are keen s to share their ideas with the rest of the class during mental mathematics and plenary sessions.
22. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support both during class lessons and during specialist teaching in groups when withdrawn from their classes. Learning support assistants are well qualified and effective; some provide support for pupils of the highest quality. Consequently, pupils make good progress with their learning.
23. Pupils learning English as an additional language have a rich language environment with good opportunities for supported speaking and listening when interacting with staff. There has been no specific training for the teaching staff in the planning and teaching of lessons for pupils learning English as an additional language. Staff awareness of how to use pupils' understanding of their first language to support learning in a second language is low. However, the school pays close attention to the needs of the individual and this ensures that pupils learning English as an additional language are challenged at the appropriate level.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

24. The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities. The two teachers in each Year group plan together so that all pupils are taught the same curriculum. Also, the school is taking steps to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to boys as well as being sensitive to the needs of girls.
25. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are successfully implemented, and it is good that the Literacy Strategy is being adapted so that it gives a better match to the needs of the pupils. There is a sound system of curriculum planning although the recently completed revised schemes of work for geography and design and technology have not yet been fully taught. All of the necessary National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught although the current Year 6 pupils have not been taught all of the required aspects of information technology. However, the school is now following national guidance for information technology and this will help to ensure that all of the necessary aspects are taught. The total teaching time each week is below the minimum time recommended by the Department for Education and Employment, and the governing body should review this.
26. The curriculum is improved by the setting for English on four days each week and mathematics on three days each week in Years 5 and 6. On these days, the two classes in a year are divided into three sets on the basis of the pupils' prior attainment. This gives smaller classes and helps to match the work to the needs of all pupils so that they make good progress. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The well structured individual education plans have appropriate targets and are well used by teachers and learning support assistants.
27. The curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of extracurricular activities, including a chess club, science club, knitting and sewing club, a choir, orchestra, recorder groups, and netball and football clubs. In addition, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have very good opportunities through the

residential experiences provided in places such as Rochester and Dover. There is sound provision for sex education and education about the misuse of drugs but the school does not have a policy for personal, social and health education.

28. There are some useful curriculum links with the main secondary school to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. These links are particularly good for mathematics and special educational needs. The school shares the indoor swimming pool and the computer suite with the infants school on the same site.
29. Assemblies and acts of collective worship take place daily and meet statutory requirements. Good opportunities are provided for the development of pupils' spiritual awareness in a number of subjects, for example, as seen in a Year 3 music lesson and a Year 6 poetry session. Opportunities for pupils' moral development are very good. Staff set a good example, there is a clear moral code which is understood by the children, and moral issues are discussed openly and clearly within the day-to-day life of the school.
30. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils' social development throughout the school. Pupils are well organised in working groups and they work with a range of adults. The school council and the family lunches provide ideal forums in which pupils are able to demonstrate their ability to act in a responsible and mature way. Pupils are involved in a variety of fundraising activities, often of their own instigation, and these make a very positive contribution to their citizenship skills. The residential visits by Years 4, 5 and 6 also provide a range of social situations in which children learn new skills.
31. Provision for the appreciation of cultural traditions and diversity is satisfactory. Contributions to cultural development are from across the curriculum, particularly from art, music, displays and religious education. They also come from the recollections of people connected with the school. However, the potential for promoting the appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures is not always realised.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

32. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and all staff are aware of these. Pupil absence is well tracked and the school has a system of telephoning home on the first day of absence to ensure that all is well with pupils. During hot weather, there is always water for the pupils to drink and this is regularly replenished by monitors responsible for this. When a child cannot go out to play, there are good systems for allowing that child to remain inside with friends.
33. Academic progress is effectively monitored. Each pupil has relevant targets and has considerable responsibility in monitoring his or her own attainment. Pupils are encouraged to identify the piece of work which meets their target and this is checked by the teacher. Assessments of the whole curriculum are systematically carried out. Results of standardised tests are tracked so that progress can be monitored and those who are considered to be making too little progress receive targeted help. All of the assessments are used to inform planning. For example, after a review of the literacy strategy and the results achieved by pupils, the strategy was modified so that standards could be raised.
34. During the last few years, the school has improved its systems for promoting good behaviour. There are good systems for rewarding appropriate behaviour and few sanctions. These have all been agreed by the pupils who take responsibility for monitoring behaviour. The school council is a

strong voice within the school and has achieved much by peer pressure. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in school.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

35. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained its good working partnership with parents. The majority of parents provide good support for the school and their children's learning. The responses to a questionnaire to parents about the school devised by the headteacher were very positive. A number of parents help in school, in particular, providing additional clerical support. All parents feel welcome in the school. The majority have entered into the home school agreement.
36. There are good opportunities for parents of pupils joining the school in Year 3 to become acquainted with junior school policies and procedures.
37. Parents are pleased with most aspects of the school's work and the quality of information it provides. The school provides good statutory information for parents in the prospectus, newsletters and governors' annual report. There are three meetings a year where parents can meet with teachers to discuss their children's curriculum, progress, areas for improvement and how they as parents can help. These meetings are very well attended. Reports are of sound quality and give useful information about what children have learned, but they do not always make clear what individuals need to do to improve and how parents can help. However, a new format for the report is currently being introduced which provides for more specific information. Inspectors are of the opinion that this will address the views of a few parents who do not feel as well informed about their children's progress as the majority.
38. An active parent teacher association contributes significantly to the life of the school and to funds. This year, it supported projects, such as grounds improvements, and provided funds for sport and musical resources. The recent annual summer fete raised over £2,500.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

39. The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school. Her educational direction is excellent and she is ably supported in this aspect by the deputy. The headteacher, through decisive and conscientious leadership, motivates the staff to work with a shared vision and a commitment to continued improvement. High goals are set for pupils, and challenging targets are set for the school. Staff are confident in their co-ordinator roles and are pleased that they are able to take responsibility and show initiative. They reflect critically on what they can do to improve learning, although this process is at an early stage of development in some subjects, for example, information technology, history, geography, and design and technology. The system of appraisal and the monitoring of teaching are helping to improve the quality of teaching. Recently appointed staff feel well supported.
40. The governing body regularly reviews the performance of the school with the assistance of the headteacher and key staff. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths of the school and understand which areas are in need of development. This enables them to ensure that the right priorities are set in the long term. They perform their statutory duties well, with a sense of direction and commitment. They are working closely with the headteacher to plan the next budget. They understand and apply best-value principles.
41. The school is clearly focused on improvement. There are very good systems for monitoring progress. The monitoring of teaching is carried out according to a preplanned timescale, and is directed at improving pupil attainment through concentrating on improving specific aspects of teaching. The monitoring of teaching is rigorous, and covers all subjects. This is shown by the

improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Action is taken as a result of this monitoring, and the analysing of national test results. Action is targeted on specific groups. For example, boys' achievement in writing is a current focus and improvement is evident. This is achieved by setting, by specific teaching techniques and by the use of the Additional Literacy Strategy. Target setting, staff appraisal and school self-evaluation are firmly established with a focus on raising standards and informing the future work of the school. The school is well placed for continued improvement. There are effective induction procedures for new teachers which the headteacher intends to extend to cover newly qualified teachers and student teachers.

42. The strategic use of resources is linked to development planning and is very good. The school development plan is a comprehensive document which includes national initiatives as well as the school's priorities for improvement. There are appropriate indicators for measuring success and regular times for reviewing progress. There are good strategies for all staff and governors to be involved in the planning and evaluation, and suitable links with staff development and training. The work of the co-ordinators is directly linked to the whole-school plan. The effect of the past years' work is apparent in the improvements in the provision for physical education, the implementation of the numeracy strategy, and the improvements made when teaching literacy. These have had a direct impact on improving standards.
43. There are sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and all pupils. Careful use of setting and of classroom assistants has minimised the effects of the sometimes large classes. The in-service training programme is carefully planned to support both teachers and support staff. This is very apparent when observing the high-quality support for learning and care by most staff. The commitment of the staff to ensuring good relationships and to providing for the needs of all pupils contributes significantly to their wellbeing and their confidence as learners. The accommodation for teaching and administration is good. The buildings are in a good state of repair. Standards of cleanliness are high and the displays of work ensure that the whole school provides an attractive learning environment. The provision for outside play is good and the swimming pool is an excellent resource which provides a major contribution to high standards in physical education.
44. All areas of the curriculum are supported by appropriate books, learning resources and equipment. There are good resources for experiments in science, and for art, including a well-used kiln. Information and communication technology equipment has been recently updated but this has yet to make its full contribution to supporting investigations and control technology.
45. Strategic financial planning is carefully linked to the school's priorities, and the management of the budget is very good. The additional funding allocated for pupils with special educational needs is efficiently used. The staff concerned and the headteacher constantly review the effect of financial planning on standards achieved by individuals and groups. Governors have oversight of spending and receive detailed information to ensure finances are kept in good order. The secretary has excellent systems for managing the school accounts and makes good use of the local authority support. She and the headteacher do their best to obtain the best value for money. Day-to-day administration is effective and contributes positively to the efficient running of the school.
46. The school makes very good use of all its resources to promote learning. There have been significant improvements in the school since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and the care of pupils are good. Academic standards are improving and pupils make good progress. Taking these factors into consideration, the school gives good value for money.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. To improve the standards of work and the pupils' achievements in information technology, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- implement the development plan for this subject;
  - introduce assessment so that this information can be used to plan pupils' next steps of learning and to help evaluate the curriculum;
  - produce a portfolio of pupils' work to show the expected standards of work for each year;
  - use assessment information from the infants school as work is planned for Year 3.

[8, 25, 76-79]

*[Numbers refer to the relevant paragraphs in the body of the report.]*

48. In addition to this key issue, the governors, headteacher and staff should consider the following issues for inclusion in the action plan:

- review the total amount of teaching time and the way in which the teaching day is organised so that there is coherent provision for all subjects;

[25]

- fully teach the schemes of work for geography, and design and technology;

[25, 72, 73]

- continue to implement plans for raising attainment in extended writing;

[1, 2, 52-55]

- improve pupils' opportunities to learn about the richness and diversity of other cultures.

[31]

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	54	23	3	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	266
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	45

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	95.8
National comparative data	94.1

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	28	34	62

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	24	27
	Girls	29	31	32
	Total	49	55	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (91)	89 (91)	95 (91)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	23	25
	Girls	29	30	32
	Total	48	53	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (91)	85 (91)	92 (91)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	256
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	33

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	479,821
Total expenditure	474,364
Expenditure per pupil	1,797
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,390
Balance carried forward to next year	34,847

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	266
Number of questionnaires returned	85

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	48	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	46	13	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	61	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	56	18	1	0
The teaching is good.	44	46	4	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	52	19	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	54	10	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	47	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	20	55	22	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	44	47	6	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	55	1	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	44	25	2	7

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

49. Attainment in English is above national averages at the end of Key Stage 2. In the end of Key Stage 2 national tests, standards declined in 1999, although results were still above national averages. In comparison with similar schools, results were below average. Tests carried out by the school clearly indicate that standards of achievement are much higher in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. Test results indicate a fall in achievement in extended writing for a significant number of pupils in last year's Year 6. Differences in achievement between groups of pupils are due to differences in attainment on entry to the school. During the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning, and the standards seen in work indicate that the school is well placed to achieve an improvement in standards next year.
50. Pupils are developing their speaking and listening skills well. All pupils concentrate when the teacher is introducing new work or explaining the task. The youngest pupils listen carefully to familiar stories, and identify how a particular story they are discussing is similar to others that they have read by the same author. They read the information on the dust jacket of their partner's book and make sensible and thoughtful hypotheses about the book, which they have not yet read. Slightly older pupils read complex and challenging stories in a group, and discuss the motivation of the characters intelligently and analytically. Older pupils find similar tasks very challenging indeed and need extensive support from the teacher and support staff to achieve the same level of analysis. Year 6 pupils discuss different ways of writing poetry with interest and are happy to read their work aloud. In all classes, pupils are clearly making good progress in terms of their attainment and confidence in speaking, but some of the oldest pupils are not yet able to express themselves at length. This limits the development of some pupils' understanding of more complex ideas in science, religious education, history and geography. Good teaching is having a significant impact on the quality of speaking and listening, and progress for these older pupils is good.
51. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading is well above what is expected nationally. A significant feature is that pupils whose records indicate that they were weaker readers some months ago have improved to levels in line with what is expected for their age. This is due to careful assessment and effective teaching informed by a very good knowledge of reading strategies. The school makes great efforts to match text to pupils' abilities: all teachers monitor this aspect through the very good school assessment systems. Reference skills are developed systematically. There have been fewer opportunities to use CD-ROMs for research, and many pupils have insufficient experience of the Internet. This aspect of their learning is unsatisfactory. Pupils are regularly heard reading both at home and at school. Many are enthusiastic readers. Year 6 pupils talk knowledgeably about the Narnia books and contrast them with books by J. K. Rowling. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through the effective teaching from the special educational needs staff and from class teachers.
52. Attainment in writing is generally above national averages but, when compared with similar schools, extended writing is an area of comparative underachievement. By the end of the key stage, pupils are working above the levels expected nationally and below those for similar schools. There is currently a larger number of boys than girls in upper Key Stage 2 and, in line with the national situation, boys do comparatively less well than girls. Boys say that they do not like writing and that mathematics is much better.
53. The co-ordinator and teachers are aware of the need to raise the achievement of boys in writing.

The school has acted decisively and has developed a new and effective set of techniques for developing skills that support writing and for choosing stimuli that appeal to boys. This is done sensitively, and there is no sense that girls are being disadvantaged by the emphasis on boys. In a middle-attaining setted group composed mostly of boys, the topic discussed was the use of the playground, and the teacher carefully structured the groups so that the gender balance was not oppressive. Boys who hated football were grouped with girls who had similar feelings, for example. One girl who was particularly keen on football contributed in a very lively and helpful way in her pro-football group. At a whole-school level, adjustments have been made to the teaching of the Literacy Strategy so that there is an extra emphasis on word-level work, particularly on spelling. Tests indicate that this strategy appears to be improving pupils' skills significantly. There is a similar emphasis on sentence-level comprehension which appears to be equally successful.

54. Higher-attainers write at length and use a range of styles for different purposes. Pupils of average attainment use a similar range of techniques, but do not yet write as fully. Pupils who have difficulties use writing frames to produce work of similar quality, and the lowest attainers have excellent support from the teacher and the classroom assistant to achieve the same outcome. Class teachers have good teaching skills, and inspire and challenge their pupils, so that progress is continually improving. Overall, standards of writing seen during the inspection were above those expected nationally. However, there were examples of very good teaching bringing out the very best in pupils and resulting in standards well above those expected nationally. For example, the humour and sophisticated use of detective fiction genre in a modern retelling of Macbeth was particularly impressive.
55. The implementation of the Literacy Strategy has been effective. This entailed a significant change in the school's emphasis on extended writing during the academic year 1998-9 and led to a relative fall in standards against similar schools. Currently, the benefits are becoming apparent as the breadth of writing for different purposes is now very much greater. Teachers have effectively mastered a new range of skills, knowledge and understanding, and are now beginning to employ this confidently in the context of extended writing.
56. Handwriting is practised daily throughout the school in accordance with a clear policy and scheme of work. Presentation is attractive and pupils have sufficient practice in basic skills to develop their handwriting to levels above those expected nationally. Spelling has been a focus for some time, and good improvement is evident from pupils' work and from tests. Pupils of lower attainment still make simple mistakes and still find it difficult to identify which groups of letters represent which sound.
57. Literacy is taught appropriately across the curriculum. Good attention is paid to the teaching of technical vocabulary in mathematics, science and music. The writing of accounts in science, plans in design and technology, and responses to religious education are sound but provide areas for the development of the subject.
58. Teaching is largely good. Strengths of the teaching include setting a range of tasks matched to the abilities of the pupils. Guided reading books are chosen to stimulate, challenge and interest particular groups of pupils. Teachers monitor the day-to-day progress of individuals and know their pupils well. The use of marking is generally good and contains helpful information for pupils about how they may improve their work. This marking information is followed up during the register sessions every morning when pupils are encouraged to read through teachers' corrections of their work and act on the advice. In good lessons, teachers use marking to increase pupils' awareness of their achievements and areas of development, and use class discussions to promote pupils' understanding, and constantly challenge them. Almost all teachers have secure knowledge of the subject knowledge required by the Literacy Strategy. However, in one instance, pupils did

not make enough progress because the pace of work with one group was too slow, and weaknesses in subject knowledge meant that an explanation was not clear and precise enough for another group.

59. In very good lessons, teachers have a range of strategies to promote the learning of boys. In one Year 5 class, the teacher provided check lists so that boys could work through a set of short-term objectives. In Year 4, a teacher gave support staff specific guidance on monitoring pupils' progress, particularly of boys, to ensure that pupils completed a reasonable amount of work in the time allowed.
60. The curriculum is good. The school has begun to create its own response to the Literacy Strategy through a new scheme of work combining the National Curriculum and the Literacy Strategy, modified to meet the needs of the school and its pupils. There are specific targets for each year group in reading, handwriting, spelling, and writing, and there is helpful documentation detailing the expectations of methods to be used and work to be covered. There are few books in the library which promote the understanding of other cultures, although the school has recently acquired an interesting range of such books which form part of a display on number work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

61. Standards in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection, and are now well above national averages. The results of the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 were well above national averages for all and similar schools. For example, many Year 6 pupils have good basic number skills and add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately with numbers up to 1,000. They multiply two-digit numbers by a single digit mentally. They understand exchange rates and convert sterling into other European currencies. Many pupils work confidently with ratios and, for example, work out the best value for money for an item sold in different quantities for different prices.
62. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Because of this, pupils enjoy mathematics and achieve well. Strengths of the teaching include challenging mental mathematics at the start of each lesson. This promotes good learning as teachers frequently ask pupils to explain their answers and methods. Pupils learn from their mistakes as teachers respond sensitively to make important teaching points. Teachers have good subject knowledge and so emphasise the correct mathematical vocabulary as well as giving lucid explanations and quickly clearing up any misconceptions pupils might have. Whole-class teaching has a brisk pace and involves all pupils. In all lessons, it is good that teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils at the start of the lesson and then help the pupils assess their own learning during the plenary at the end. Homework builds on what has been learnt in lessons. Occasional weaknesses include mistiming the lesson so that the plenary is cut short, and difficulty in organising a large class so that all pupils face the teacher during the plenary.
63. There is a good assessment system that is used to plan pupils' next steps of learning. Pupils have specific targets for improvement in mathematics and these help their learning. Sound use is made of pupils' good numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils collect numerical data and display it in different ways in information technology, use accurate measurement in design and technology, and employ a good range of measurement in science where results are presented in a variety of graphs and tables.
64. Mathematics has improved in many ways since the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape and space are now as good as in the other aspects of the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy is being effectively implemented. The co-ordinator now monitors the teaching and standards throughout the school. Her management is helping to further raise standards



and improve teaching, and there is a good development plan for the subject. An important improvement that is helping to raise standards, is that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in sets for three days each week. On these three days, the two classes in a year are divided into three sets on the basis of the pupils' prior attainment in mathematics. This gives smaller classes and helps to match the work to the needs of all pupils so that they make good progress.

## **SCIENCE**

65. Pupils' results in the national tests for eleven-year-olds are well above national averages for all and similar schools. These results have remained constant over the last three years. By the end of the key stage, pupils have covered all the necessary elements of science and standards are well above national averages. They understand about plant and human life, and learn about the harm done to the body by various drugs. Pupils learn about the phases of the moon and understand what effect these have on Earth. They know about a variety of materials and can classify plant and animal life using a key. Many aspects of science are investigated and pupils know about fair testing and making hypotheses. Work is well planned so that pupils make good progress. Skills and knowledge are effectively developed during the key stage. For example, pupils learn about simple circuits in Year 3 and, by Year 5, they are able to construct more complex series and parallel circuits, incorporating a switch.
66. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, plan to meet the needs of all pupils and assess accurately and systematically. Lessons are interesting and involve all pupils in a variety of activities. The teachers set high expectations for the quality of work produced and encourage pupils to work together in a supportive way. For example, when planning an investigation, pupils had to work in pairs to decide variable factors and methods of investigation. When planning, teachers work in year-group pairs to ensure that all experience the same learning opportunities. They ensure that the work planned matches the abilities of the pupils and that tasks are sufficiently challenging for all. Teachers introduce relevant scientific vocabulary and expect pupils to use correct terminology. In Year 3, pupils are expected to refer to the planting medium as soil and not as mud when carrying out planting experiments. Marking is usually good and encourages pupils to look at their work and improve. When a section of work has been completed, the teachers carry out effective assessments that give a clear indication of what pupils have learnt during the lessons. These assessments are used to plan future work.
67. Pupils respond positively in lessons. One child had researched a subject at home and confidently shared her findings with the rest of the class. Behaviour in all lessons is good, and pupils of all ages and different genders often work together well. They are interested in activities and generally produce neat work. Pupils talk about their tasks and support each other well.
68. Science is very well managed. The co-ordinator has written a helpful scheme of work and has recently revised the science policy. She monitors the subject effectively, ensuring that colleagues are well supported, that the whole range of science is taught and that resources match need. She organises a very popular science club for Years 5 and 6 and this has a significant impact on the standards attained by the end of the key stage. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The scheme of work is now in place and monitoring is now consistent and effective. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen.

## **ART**

69. The standard of the work seen in art was well above that expected for the pupils' ages. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to confidently use a wide variety of techniques and associated vocabulary. They can work with clay, producing high-quality pottery pieces, paint using various

methods, and can sew simple articles. In Year 4, pupils make small Tudor pockets using embroidery stitches. Pottery is a particularly strong feature of the art provision. Pupils learn to make simple pots in Year 3 and, by the end, they are able to make Roman tiles, portrait frames, Greek coins and human sculptures. Throughout the key stage, pupils learn about the lives of artists, including Van Gogh, Seurat, Renoir and Monet. Pupils experiment with palette knives to mix paint and produce work in the style of Van Gogh.

70. The teaching of art is very good. Teachers plan well and are confident when teaching all aspects of art. Their very good subject knowledge enables pupils to experiment, use a wide variety of techniques, and produce high-quality work. Pupils are fully absorbed in their work and some have carried out homework assignments to complete Roman mosaics. They are able to work together on small sculptures and discuss them in a mature way.
71. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She supports her colleagues well. There are high-quality displays around the school and these are sometimes moved so that other classes may enjoy and learn from them. The strengths identified during the last inspection have been maintained. Art remains a significant strength of the school and contributes effectively to the spiritual development of the pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

72. The standard of the work seen was appropriate for the pupils' ages. For example, younger pupils made pencil boxes using a sturdy basic wooden frame, and they made jewellery in a Tudor style using glazed clay. After some research, they made coleslaw, which was evaluated at home. Older pupils made well-planned wooden frames with mitred corners for tapestries they had created, and wooden toys which worked with cams and cog wheels. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to pupils' planning skills and the subject expertise of the teachers. A new helpful, well-structured scheme of work has recently been written but it has not yet been completely taught. This scheme gives clear advice about teaching the skills of planning, making and evaluating with an appropriate range of materials including textiles, food and wood. It should help to further raise standards.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

73. The standards of work seen are appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Older pupils compare life in Billericay with a village in southern India, and have investigated different European countries. Younger pupils have some well-presented, good ideas for improving the school's environment, and have also produced a guide to Billericay. However, there are some missed opportunities for geographical work when, for example, insufficient use is made of large-scale maps. A well-structured, good scheme of work has been written this year but it has not yet all been taught. The teaching of the scheme would help to raise standards. A significant amount of pupils' work is carefully coloured and then mounted in year books, and the school should review whether the time for doing this is well spent.

## **HISTORY**

74. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection. The standards of work seen are appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Older pupils describe many of the changes within the locality and explain why these took place and with what effect. They are developing a sense of the order of time in relation to events in their own lives and over longer periods.

75. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound knowledge of historical studies, such as the Tudors and Ancient Egyptians. They use terms relating to the passing of time, including decade, century, ancient and modern. They can recall many facts about life in Ancient Egypt and in the Tudor period. However, they do not present their findings as well in their personal work, including writing, pictures, maps and diagrams, as they do orally. This is largely because too much of the work is based on work sheets. The good level of understanding shown by pupils in Year 4 when discussing different eyewitness accounts of what Queen Elizabeth I was really like was not evident in previous work. Good use is made of field trips to inspire the pupils and to extend their understanding.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

76. By the age of eleven, standards are below national expectations because pupils have not reached the expected standards in control, modelling and data logging. The reasons for this are that the computer suite has only had modern computers for a few months and, although teachers' expertise has improved, some are not fully confident in all of the required aspects. The school is implementing plans to improve teachers' subject expertise and to provide modern computers in each classroom.
77. During the inspection, the work seen in pupils' weekly information technology lessons often matched national expectations. For example, in one lesson, younger pupils created their own spreadsheets and inserted formulae which added the numbers in rows and columns. Older pupils created spreadsheets to answer 'What if' questions. In another lesson, pupils quickly learnt how to create their own branching databases. Pupils are achieving well at present but the standards of eleven-year-olds are below national expectations because they have not achieved so well earlier in the key stage.
78. The overall quality of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. Strengths of the teaching included clear, concise demonstrations of, for example, interrogating a database so that pupils were able to quickly start making their own searches. Pupils are given plenty of time during their lessons to work with computers, and they think and learn effectively for themselves. Teachers work tirelessly to monitor and help pairs of pupils as they work on tasks. At the end of lessons, plenaries are well used to review what has been learnt, and to discuss what had gone wrong and how this could be avoided in future. An occasional weakness seen in teaching was where a few pupils were set research tasks using CD-ROMs that were too difficult. Information technology is used effectively to improve pupils' learning in English, mathematics, history and geography.
79. The school is following national guidance on the teaching of information technology to juniors and this is helping to raise standards. However, there has not yet been enough time to teach the full programme to pupils in Year 6. A weakness is that there is not yet an assessment system for the subject. The information technology co-ordinator has only been in post since last January, and has already taken some important steps to raise standards. The information technology suite is a very useful resource but it is not big enough for classes with more than thirty pupils. For these classes, some pupils are taught in the resource room using a different type of computer. This is used effectively to help match the work to pupils' levels of attainment and, for example, lower-attaining pupils are taught effectively with intensive teaching and work organised in small steps. Pupils from the infant school use the suite but assessment information for information technology is not passed to the junior school when pupils transfer from Year 2 to Year 3.

## **MUSIC**

80. Pupils sing tunefully and with expression in assembly. Music is taught by all teachers on a regular basis. The school has maintained the appropriate standards found at the previous inspection.

Progress has been good, largely because of the introduction of a scheme of work that non-specialist teachers use confidently. There are instrumental lessons from visiting teachers, and recorder tuition. Pupils who attend reach high standards.

81. Pupils sing a wide range of songs from memory. They pay attention to keeping time and appropriate rhythm. Their singing is clear, with good tone and accurate attention to intervals and rests. Progress in listening and appraising is good, and in composition is satisfactory, largely because there is no longer a music room and the school is open plan. Teachers find it difficult to achieve previous high standards in composition in this environment without disrupting colleagues' lessons.
82. Year 6 pupils listened to different versions of 'Jerusalem' and carefully and critically analysed the differences in style and approach. All pupils listened attentively to Pachelbel's Canon as they entered the hall for assembly and responded sensitively to questions about its haunting nature. They perform simple accompaniments with untuned percussion whilst their friends sing the hymns in assembly.
83. There are specialist teachers for violin, flute, keyboards and drums, and pupils reach a good standard for their ages. The teaching of singing is very good, characterised by well-developed subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils' performance and clear goals. The school regularly participates in local music festivals with their choir and orchestra. Music currently makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual education. Resources for the teaching of music from other cultures are limited.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

84. Pupils attain standards in physical education that are well above age-related expectations. The pupils attain standards in swimming that are very high and all pupils in the school can swim well. By Year 6, all are proficient in a variety of strokes and higher-attainers swim quickly over 25 metres using different strokes. When planning physical education, teachers ensure that all aspects are covered. In Year 4, pupils experience dance that is related to the science topic, and athletics is taught to all classes. Pupils move confidently, learn games skills and are able to participate in athletics disciplines.
85. The teaching of physical education is very good. A wide variety of after-school clubs, run by a selection of adults, contribute significantly to the high standards. Physical education is well planned, confidently taught and matches the needs of all pupils. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan together to ensure that all pupils have equal access to activities and experiences.
86. Many pupils attend the clubs and compete at district level in football, netball and athletics. The school provides many specialist teachers to enhance the curriculum, for example, to offer rugby training, basketball and tennis. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and arranges many of these extracurricular activities. She supports her colleagues well and ensures that physical education is taught effectively throughout the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

87. Pupils attain standards in religious education that are broadly in line with those expected by the local Agreed Syllabus. By the end of the key stage, pupils have learnt about various aspects of the Christian faith, from both the Old and New Testaments. They learn about people from the Bible, including Adam and Eve, Moses and John the Baptist. The life of Jesus is explored and the

Christmas and Easter stories are studied by the pupils. The stories and traditions of Judaism and Hinduism are also discussed. Pupils in Year 3, for example, learn about the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandham and make Rakhi bracelets to commemorate this tradition. Comparisons are made with Western culture and pupils learn that there are many ways to show appreciation and express their thanks. Pupils also learn about Jewish festivals, kosher food and about a Seder meal. By Year 6, pupils understand about different places of worship and know the rituals associated with visiting a temple. They learn about the symbolism of various cross formations and know that the eight points of a Maltese cross represents the eight blessings in the Sermon on the Mount.

88. Much of the teaching of religious education is carried out through discussions. Religious education is planned well throughout the school and the co-ordinator supports her colleagues effectively. Pupils enjoy the visits by various ministers and have worked with a rabbi in the past.