

INSPECTION REPORT

**Millhouse Junior School
Basildon**

LEA area: Essex

Unique Reference Number: 114912

Headteacher: Jude Passman

Reporting inspector: Derek Smith
OIN: 3732

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707305

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Dave Davies
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Derek Smith, Rgl	Information technology Geography History	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and Management Efficiency
Brian Findley, Lay Inspector		Equal opportunities Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Special educational needs
Michael Raven, Team Inspector	Science Physical education	
Lyn Watkins, Team Inspector	English Design and Technology	Curriculum and assessment
Ann Slater, Team Inspector	Mathematics Religious education Art Music	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- This is a school which is successfully improving standards of attainment
- The results of the 1999 national tests of attainment were very high when compared with similar schools
- Pupils make good progress throughout the Key Stage
- The overall quality of teaching is good with two thirds of lessons graded good, very good or excellent
- The leadership and management of the school are very good
- The school has developed a very good ethos for learning
- Working relationships are very good
- The quality of information provided for parents is very good
- Provision for extra curricular activities is very good
- The school provides good value for money

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards in information technology do not meet the national expectations for eleven year olds
- II. The provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory

This is a good and rapidly improving school where the strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and guardians at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

This is a successful school which has made good improvement since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve still further. It is effectively meeting its targets and standards have been improving since 1995 and since the previous inspection in 1996. With the exception of an uncharacteristic drop in attainment in 1998, pupils' attainment is markedly improving. This is mainly due to improvements in the quality and use of pupils' assessment, and the improved quality of teaching. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally more effective, and resources have been improved, notably in reading and music. The governing body is fully involved in the management of the schools finances and curriculum, and helps to provide a clear educational direction for the school.

.

Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
English	A	A*	<i>below average</i>	D
Mathematics	A	A*	<i>well below average</i>	E
Science	A*	A*		

These results represent an impressive performance. When the 1999 national test are compared with other schools, pupils' standards were well above the national average in English, and mathematics, and very high in science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils reached standards which were very high. Pupils meet the expectations of the local agreed syllabus in religious education. However, pupils do not make sufficient use of information and communications technology (ICT) in other areas of the curriculum, because the available resources are inadequate. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and all pupils make good progress in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in 7 – 11 years

English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Information technology	Satisfactory
Religious education	Good
Other subjects	Good

The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved since the last inspection. Two thirds of lessons taught are good, very good or excellent and more than nine out of ten lessons are satisfactory or better. Examples of high quality teaching were observed in all year groups and in a range of different subjects. A minority of lessons; fewer than one in ten, was unsatisfactory. These were for example in mathematics where the teacher was uncertain of the subject, and in design and technology where pupils were not given enough to do.

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

•

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils develop good attitudes and behaviour, and very good working relationships.
Attendance	Attendance has improved dramatically since the last inspection and rates of attendance are consistently in line with similar schools. Most pupils have a good record of attendance and are punctual in arriving for lessons. However, unauthorised absence is too high.
Ethos*	The school has created a very positive ethos for learning in which pupils willingly participate in their lessons. Relationships are good and there is a commitment to high standards.
Leadership and management	The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. She is well supported by the governors and curriculum co-ordinators, and this has helped the school to identify and meet its priorities.
Curriculum and assessment	The curriculum is well balanced, matched to the needs of the pupils, and assessment information is used appropriately to help teachers plan their work. The extra curricular activities provided for pupils are very good and are a strength of the school.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are generally well supported in class and in groups which are sometimes withdrawn from class. They make satisfactory progress. The Reading Recovery programme helps pupils make good progress in English.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The provision for pupils' development is satisfactory overall. Spiritual, moral and social development are good, but cultural development is unsatisfactory because pupils are given too few opportunities to appreciate the richness and diversity of different cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing accommodation and learning resources are well matched to the needs of the pupils, and the demands of the curriculum. But resources for information technology are inadequate and this adversely affects standards
Value for money	The school adds significant value to pupils' education. They make good progress from a low base, and the cost of educating them is average. As a result, the school provides good value for money

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

III. Parents feel confident to approach the school with problems or suggestions

IV. Parents value the standards of pupils' work

V. Their children like school

VI. Pupils are involved in more than just daily lessons

VII. Parents value the care, consideration and support the school provides for pupils with disabilities and personal difficulties.

What some parents are not happy about

VIII. Some parents feel that they do not have enough information about their children's progress

IX. Some parents do not feel encouraged to play an active part in school life

The positive views expressed by parents at the meeting prior to the inspection are confirmed by inspection evidence. The parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school. However, a few parents felt that they are not provided with sufficient information about their children's progress.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve what is already a good quality education, the governors, headteacher and staff should address two further issues.

1. Raise standards of attainment in Information and Communications Technology by;

- Improving the quality and quantity of ICT resources for both teachers and pupils to use
- Ensuring that ICT makes an appropriate contribution to pupil's learning in other subjects.

paragraphs 9, 20, 23, 52, 72, 80, 82.

1. Raise pupils' awareness of how their local community and wider society is enriched by other cultural traditions.

paragraphs 18, 33, 34, 40, 51, 65

2.

In addition to the key issues above, the governors should consider the inclusion of the following less significant weaknesses in paragraphs, **10, 11, 15, 17, 55, 85, 99** in the action plan.

2.

2. INTRODUCTION

2. Characteristics of the school

2. Millhouse Junior School is located in Laindon, which is on the outskirts of Basildon in Essex. It is in a pleasant enclosed site which is shared with the Infants School. The school was originally opened in 1968 and has two additional demountable classrooms, and a further demountable room which is used to support pupils with special educational needs. Almost all pupils are from a white European background, and four are from homes where English is not the first language. Twenty pupils are on the higher assessment stages of special educational need. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The overall socio-economic profile and pupils' attainment at their time of admission is below average.

3. In 1997 the school lost two experienced Year 6 teachers, and found difficulty in finding suitable replacements. The quality of teaching suffered during this period and this had a significant effect on the decline in pupils' achievements in the 1998 national tests of attainment. The school now has a stable staff and standards have risen.

4. Since the last inspection of 1996 the school has set clear targets for improvement which include ;

- Increased parental involvement in the school

- Increased consistency of homework tasks

- Improving library resources and resources for music

- Increased governor responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's overall performance.

- Inspection evidence confirms that these targets have been successfully met.

3.

3. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year: 1999	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	33	30	63

3. National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	26(21)	25(22)	31(24)
	Girls	27(23)	25(13)	29(16)
	Total	53(44)	50(35)	60(40)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84(58)	79(46)	95(53)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

3. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	19(29)	24(27)	23(27)
	Girls	25(26)	24(20)	24(22)
	Total	44(55)	48(47)	47(49)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	70(73)	76(63)	75(66)
	National	65(63)	65(64)	72(69)

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

3. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	4.2
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	1.3
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

3.

3. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year: 1998		Number
	Fixed period	1
	Permanent	0

3. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	20
	Satisfactory or better	91
	Less than satisfactory	9

3. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

3. Attainment and progress

5. Pupils' attainment and progress have generally been on an upward trend since 1995, and although there has been some fluctuation between year groups, they are currently average in Year 6. However, the 1998 results in English, mathematics and science showed an uncharacteristically large drop in attainment. The most significant reason for the interruption of the school's overall trend was key staff changes which affected pupils' progress in that year. The 1999 test results have continued the upward trend of the school, and improved sharply since 1998. This is due to good quality teaching, effective targeting of priority areas such as literacy, numeracy and science, and the clear educational direction provided by the headteacher.
6. At the end of the key stage, the 1999 national test results in English were well above average but were very high when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher level was above average, and when compared with similar schools it was well above average. Over the last four years, pupils' performance in reading and writing has been similar to the national average, although the 1998 results showed an uncharacteristic drop. There has been a steady improvement overall and whilst evidence from the inspection indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are broadly average, other year groups are on course to reach standards which are above average. The previous inspection reported that standards in reading were too low. Since then the school has significantly raised pupils' attainment in reading by improving the quality of reading material and a stronger focus on teaching pupils to understand what they read. Taking into account the pupils' prior attainment standards are now sufficiently high.
7. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in mathematics is currently average, but standards have been rising rapidly over the past four years. However there was a sharp drop in attainment in 1998, due to the same staff changes which affected the rate of pupils' progress in English. From levels in 1995 which were well below average, pupils' reached levels of attainment 1999 which were well above average when compared with all schools, and very high when compared with similar schools. When the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level of attainment is compared with similar schools, their attainment is very high, and in comparison with all schools it is average. At the time of the last inspection attainment was below average. The improvement in attainment is characteristic of the school as a whole. It is due to the very successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, a high proportion of very good and good teaching, rigorous half-termly assessment of pupils' attainment, and the effective analysis of individual learning needs.
8. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in science is average, but standards have been rising over the past four years faster than the national trend. There was a marked decrease in attainment in 1998, due to instability caused by changes of senior staff which affected pupils' progress. However, results of the 1999 national tests show a dramatic improvement from the low base in 1998. In comparison with all schools and schools with a similar profile, pupils reached very high levels of attainment. When the percentage of pupils who reached the higher level of attainment is compared with

similar schools, their attainment was very high. When compared with all schools the percentage of pupils who reached the higher level of attainment was average. At the time of the last inspection it was judged that attainment was broadly average.

9. Pupils generally make good progress in all aspects of English, and their literacy skills enable them to make good progress in other subjects of the curriculum. In most mathematics and science lessons, for example, they describe what they have done and explain the procedures they have used. Pupils make good progress in acquiring mathematical and scientific knowledge, skills and understanding. They use their numeracy skills well and develop good strategies for mental calculation. They become confident in the results of their work when explaining their methods to others, for example, when estimating decimal numbers.
10. Pupils' standards in information and communications technology (ICT), are below the national expectations of 11-year-olds, and fall below their standards in English, mathematics and science. They make insufficient progress in ICT because it is not sufficiently embedded into the curriculum and pupils do not make enough use of these skills in other subjects. In religious education pupils' follow the local agreed syllabus and their attainment meets the expectations in terms of the development of skills and knowledge. In the other subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils make good progress.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans, both in class lessons and in small groups when they are withdrawn from classes. There are some examples of good progress, particularly in the Reading Recovery classes and where pupils are well supported by teaching assistants in classes. But too little progress is made when pupils are withdrawn from class to read with a teacher, when there is no direct teaching of reading skills, and when reading books are not well matched to their needs.
10. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
12. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour remain generally good and are often very good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Relationships are very good and pupils develop well during their time at the school. As a result pupils in most lessons listen carefully, follow instructions and concentrate well on their work. In many lessons pupils show a high degree of enthusiasm for work and are keen to be involved, for example, in literacy and numeracy lessons where they are challenged to do well. Pupils also persevere when finding work difficult as observed in a music lesson in Year 3. The majority of pupils adapt well to opportunities to work independently, however, a few examples of silliness are to be seen where activities are unsuitable, or pupils are poorly managed, as for example in a Year 3 design and technology lesson. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their lessons. They concentrate and behave well, particularly where the teaching is well paced and stimulating, as seen, for instance, in the Reading Recovery lessons.
13. Pupils behave well in the classroom and around the school. They have a shared understanding, know the difference between right and wrong, and accept school rules and routines. Pupils respond positively to guidance, with little need for sanctions of any severity. They are usually respectful towards each other and are courteous with adults. Pupils are also careful with equipment and furniture and generally look after

their school well.

14. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good and creates an atmosphere in which pupils learn effectively. Pupils co-operate very well together in their work, and they relate well to teachers and other adults. There are few tensions and no evidence of aggressive behaviour and exclusions are rare.
15. Pupils develop good social skills during their time in the school. Most pupils acquire positive values and a personal moral code for behaviour. They participate effectively in the life of the school, such as, through the school council in Year 6, and in fund raising activities for charity. Pupils also appreciate and respond sensibly to opportunities for self-organisation that are provided, for example, in their participation in clubs, including a first aid club. An editorial team of pupils publishes the school 'Millhouse Magazine', which is sold in support of school funds.

14.

14. **Attendance**

16. Attendance has improved dramatically since the last inspection and average rates are consistently above ninety per cent and broadly in line with similar schools. This has had a positive impact on raising standards. Most pupils have a good record of attendance and are punctual in arriving for lessons. Unauthorised absence is presently too high, because a minority of parents choose to take their holidays in school time, and this has a detrimental effect on the pupils affected.

15. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

15. **Teaching**

17. The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved since the last inspection. Two thirds of lessons are good, very good or excellent and more than nine out of ten lessons are satisfactory or better. Examples of high quality teaching were observed in all year groups and in a range of different subjects. A minority of lessons; fewer than one in ten, were unsatisfactory or poor. These were not concentrated in any particular subject or year group, and were a result of weak classroom management and limited subject knowledge.
18. The overall good quality teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. From standards which are below average at their time of admission for most pupils, good teaching enables them to reach levels which are broadly average by the time they leave school at the age of eleven. Evidence from pupils' previous work indicates that good teaching made a significant contribution to pupils' high standards of achievement in the 1999 national curriculum tests of attainment. In the main, teaching is characterised by very good planning, considerable professionalism and expectations that pupils can improve. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good overall, and for all other subjects of the National Curriculum, except ICT and religious education where it is satisfactory. Some lessons are very good or excellent. For example, in an art lesson the teacher showed an excellent demonstration of painting techniques, and in a mathematics lesson on estimating with decimals, the teacher's questioning challenged pupils to draw new conclusions. In the lessons

which were unsatisfactory, for example, in a design and technology and a mathematics lesson, the teachers were uncertain of the subject, and classroom management was ineffective.

19. Teachers are successful in encouraging pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, and social awareness through, for example, geography, history and religious education lessons. However, teachers pay too little attention to developing pupils' awareness of other cultures, and pupils are insufficiently prepared for life in a multi cultural society.
20. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of lesson introductions to explain what is to be done, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and this enables pupils to evaluate their own learning and ask questions where necessary. At the end of lessons, teachers are effective in using discussion to focus the themes of lessons and to reinforce the important learning points. Teachers ensure that learning moves at a brisk pace, and in the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to be active participants, by for example, in the their shared reading of the poem 'Sulk' in Year 3.
21. Teachers make good use of resources, particularly in geography and history, to help the pupils to understand what they are doing. The use of a World War II gas mask and ration book are good examples. However, teachers make too little use of information technology to support their work in other subjects because resources are inadequate. The teachers usually correct the pupils' work, and marking is generally used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to help the pupils to improve. Where it is provided, for example in English and mathematics, homework makes a very good contribution to pupils' progress and parents value this.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are some examples of good skilled teaching, which gives pupils good support and equality of opportunity to the whole curriculum. This is seen, for example, in Reading Recovery lessons and where good support is provided to help them meet their individual targets. But the teaching of the younger pupils in withdrawal groups for reading only is unsatisfactory, because there is no systematic programme of teaching, and reading books used are of poor quality and not always well matched to the needs of pupils. In these groups there is no planning for the smooth development of pupils' learning. Skills are taught, if at all, on an 'ad hoc' basis. More could be done to improve the effectiveness of support for the younger pupils by giving them support in class rather than in withdrawal groups. There are good individual education plans which set clear and precise targets for pupils' learning. There are good examples of work being well matched to pupils' needs, in English, mathematics and science lessons. Resources are appropriate for pupils with special educational needs, including some good information technology programs to support pupils' learning.

21.

The curriculum and assessment

23. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils and it makes a strong contribution to the standards they attain. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education are taught. The school meets the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship.
24. The curriculum is broad and balanced; subjects are well organised and receive good

coverage. English, mathematics and science are particularly well organised but information technology is unsatisfactory. The scheme of work for ICT is good but the curriculum is impaired by lack of resources and pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their ICT skills. The school, however, is aware that more needs to be done to put its ICT policy into practice and has plans to do so.

25. There is a clear framework for the curriculum that sets out the programme to be taught in each year group in every subject. There are satisfactory policies and detailed schemes of work for all subjects and they provide an appropriate structure for teachers' planning. The science scheme is particularly well organised and clear. Since the last inspection the school has been successful in improving its systems to achieve progression in the curriculum from year to year.
26. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented and the school has used them very effectively to raise standards in English and mathematics. Planning for literacy and numeracy lessons is thorough and detailed and takes account of pupils' different levels of attainment. Setting arrangements for mathematics enable work to be matched to pupils' different needs. Time allocated for these areas is used well and the school has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum includes a helpful balance of the subjects.
27. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the curriculum and the school has a range of strategies to ensure that their needs are well met. The school is characterised by its acceptance of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and parents value this. Teaching assistants help teachers ensure that all pupils make gains in lessons. In literacy lessons, for example, support staff gave special attention to pupils who needed help to follow the class text. Pupils with statements of special educational need are very well supported and as a result participate fully in the curriculum. The recently introduced reading recovery scheme has provided a systematic programme of help for pupils whose reading skills are weak, and this is beginning to have a good impact on progress.
28. Personal, social and health education is effectively taught and the programme includes sex education and awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. The school makes good use of outside agencies in this aspect of curricular provision. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory and those parents who responded expressed the view that the school sets enough homework and that it helps their children make progress.
29. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is a significant strength. At lunchtimes and after school a range of activities is on offer to the pupils. The wildlife club and playground games provided by the site supervisor make a very strong contribution to the life of the school. In the wildlife club, for example, pupils have constructed areas for attracting birds and minibeasts and they learn about conservation. The choir, attended and enjoyed by both girls and boys, is taught by a visiting specialist and makes a very good contribution to the pupils' skills and pleasure in singing. The range of clubs includes, for example, art, drama, sports and games, including competitive team games and participation in local sports tournaments. Extra classes are provided for English, mathematics and science. All pupils have access to extra-curricular activities, though they may have to wait till a free place is available or take turns to participate. The school succeeds in providing very well for all the children who want to take part, and this has a very positive effect on the quality of the curriculum.

30. The school has been working on its assessment policy and practice for some time. The procedures now in place, as a result of careful review, are effective. The results of assessment are recorded at the end of units of work completed by each pupil. The main emphasis, rightly, is on English and mathematics, but teachers assess pupils' progress in all subjects. At the end of lessons and at the end of units of work pupils are encouraged to think about what they have learned. The school uses optional annual tests for Years 4 and 5 as well as the tests at the end of the key stage. The school makes good use of the results of tests and assessments to track pupils' progress. There was some variation in the accuracy of teacher assessment but these have been improved by the further monitoring of pupils' standards. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

29.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

31. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and is a strength of the school. Central to the school's ethos is respect for each other's feelings and this has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. This is strongly reflected in assemblies and through the conduct of all adults in the school. Spiritual awareness is explored effectively through assemblies and collective worship, where faith and belief are presented in a meaningful and interesting way. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect on important issues and by using their literacy skills. The religious education two year cyclical scheme of work promotes good opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect on fundamental questions, and to use their literacy skills. An awareness of awe and wonder is fostered. Assemblies are well planned and are followed up by all classes. Arrangements for collective worship meet statutory requirements.

32. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and are always encouraged to think about the consequences of their actions as well as taking personal responsibility. There is strong emphasis on reward and responsibility. School rules are agreed and understood by pupils. All staff have high expectations of pupils and as a result they are extremely polite as well as being honest and trustworthy. Good behaviour is rewarded and celebrated throughout the school, and pupils develop a real sense of responsibility. The School Council further encourages pupils' responsibility by, for example ordering books for the library that have been chosen by other pupils.

33. Relationships are good throughout the school and the majority of adults are excellent role models and promote social development very well. The ethos of the school is highly supportive and caring and this has had a very positive effect on pupils' social development. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities run by both teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupils are given opportunities to support organisations working on behalf of people in need. They have very well developed social skills which are fostered by organised co-operative work, for example, lunchtime parachute games. Teachers make good use of local visits and to places further afield, and these are used to support pupil's learning. There is a full programme of visitors who contribute to the curriculum and other aspects of school life. A high priority is the development of pupils' self esteem. This permeates all aspects of school life and whilst it is subtle, it is highly successful.

34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory and does not meet the specific needs of pupils in the school. The school does not pay sufficient attention to developing pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultural traditions. There is insufficient awareness on the part of teachers and pupils, and opportunities are missed to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultural traditions. Pupils develop a knowledge of western European cultures but do not learn enough about other cultures through lessons and curriculum related activities. There are some resources reflecting a range of cultures, for example in art and music, but in the main they are not fully integrated into the work of all classes.

33.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

35. The school provides good levels of support and guidance that contribute positively to the progress pupils make. The provision is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Teachers get to know their pupils well and information is shared through weekly year group meetings and regular evaluations of pupils' progress. This enhances the levels of academic guidance and support for personal development that teachers are able to give. Behaviour and attendance are generally monitored well and this leads to effective target setting for improvement for individual pupils. Although behaviour is good, procedures for monitoring some aspects of behaviour are unclear, for example in the uncharacteristic examples of name calling which sometimes allude to pupils' ethnic origin.

36. The promotion of discipline and behaviour is effective for the vast majority of pupils, who are motivated by the positive measures of encouragement. There are shared expectations of behaviour between pupils, and staff who are generally consistent in implementing school policy. Most teachers present excellent role models for their pupils. Pupils are also motivated by a successful system of rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for unsatisfactory behaviour. Members of staff deal promptly with bullying or intimidating behaviour. Arrangements for lunchtime supervision are effective and dining sessions and lunchtime play are socially rewarding times for pupils. The planning of activities and the provision of play and climbing equipment has a very positive impact on the way pupils behave with each other.

37. Safety and welfare arrangements are good, and pupils are cared for by members of staff, who are committed to their well being. A trained designated teacher who oversees practice in the school implements child protection measures. There are effective arrangements to support pupils in the event of illness and injury. Health and safety procedures are efficient, and the school is a safe place for children.

38. There are good systems to identify pupils with special educational needs before they transfer from the infants' school. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is kept under review and the school helpfully employs an external moderator to evaluate the progress of these pupils at regular intervals. This evaluation of progress represents a good response to concerns raised by the previous inspection about the effectiveness of provision. There is good involvement and co-operation with external agencies, such as the educational psychologist.

37. **Partnership with parents and the community**

39. There has been significant improvement in the partnership with parents, and good links with the community have been sustained since the previous inspection. The quality of information provided by the school is very good. Formal publications, such as the school prospectus are of a very high quality, and regular newsletters keep parents fully informed about the life of the school. Annual written reports on pupil progress are good, with detailed information about progress and individual targets for improvement. Comments or complaints are effectively dealt with and this valued by most parents. There are very effective arrangements in place for parents to discuss the progress of their children through formal open meetings or weekly surgeries.
40. Parents respond well to opportunities for involvement in their children's work. There are a large number of helpers in the classroom, many of whom attend regularly. This enables teachers to plan the help they give. Parents attend to monitor their children at work, for example in literacy, and are welcome to stay with insecure new pupils until they have settled in school. Work at home is well supported and there is an effective dialogue between parents and school through the use of homework and reading diaries. Information about what is being taught results in parents and the community making contributions to the learning resources of the school, for example, the literacy strategy and the provision of wartime materials about the evacuation of children. Pupils benefit from valuable specialist help, for example in after school clubs, and a father who demonstrates Indian cookery.
41. The school has established a broad range of useful contacts within the community, which provide a rich basis for pupils' development. However, there are insufficient to raise pupils' awareness of the contributions which other cultures make. Links with other schools are especially beneficial, for example, through joint activities such as shared assemblies with the infant school and role-play events with the secondary school and other primary schools. There are also strong links with the church, and the local team's ministry takes assemblies. Local people connected with the arts also visit to speak to pupils during Book Week. Arrangements with agencies and other organisations work well, for example, during 'Crucial Crew' Week with the emergency services.
42. Parents are kept well informed of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. They are invited in to school to see what work their children are doing and they are encouraged to follow up the work at home by for example using a number of educational games at home. Parents are invited to regular meetings at which their children's progress is reviewed, and they are encouraged to contribute to these reviews.
- 41.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

41. Leadership and management

43. The leadership and management of the school are very good and this represents further improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has a very assured leadership style which provides clear educational direction for the school and promotes the commitment of both teachers and pupils. Within the support of an effective team, teachers are given responsibilities, and the expectations of them are high. As a result, the school has developed a culture in which teachers expect the pupils to do well, and

this is an important factor in the school's success in ensuring that pupils make good progress. The headteacher is well supported by able senior teachers, and less experienced teachers who have been attracted to the school by its successful implementation of the National literacy and numeracy strategies. As a result the teachers are confident, and the quality of their teaching is good.

44. The school currently shares a governing body with the adjacent infants' school. This proves very effective ensuring an overview of standards as pupils progress through both schools, and accelerates the decision making process over issues of joint concern, such as security and perimeter fencing. Governors have a reasoned and sensible approach to their work with the school, for example when dealing complaints. They share clear vision of future development of the school and are supported in their role through an appropriate committee structure. This is most apparent in raising standards, but significantly in team building which is very effective in encouraging all who work in the school. Teaching and non-teaching staff are provided with a clear guidance about their responsibilities and conduct, for example if they occasionally use non-standard English to address the pupils. The success of the school's leadership and management means that the school is well placed to continue to improve on the quality of education offered and the standards attained by pupils.
45. Planning for school development is good and appropriately reflects the needs of the pupils. The development plan has clear aims and priorities. It is well costed, with clear responsibilities and appropriate timescales to guide implementation. Teachers share their expertise in planning, particularly in literacy and numeracy and work with classroom assistants who give good support to pupils and teachers. Curriculum co-ordinators identify targets and drive their subjects forward. This is well supported by the headteacher's monitoring of curriculum development and the quality of teaching.
46. The school has a very positive ethos. This is appreciated by parents, who feel that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children's development. Relationships and behaviour in the school are managed very well, and staff have worked hard to ensure that there is a whole-school commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. There are active governors which oversee the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The headteacher monitors the work of teachers well and provides appropriate guidance where teachers have weaknesses. The headteacher and governing body have established an appropriate policy for special educational needs. The policy has been considered and approved by the curriculum committee of governors. There is at present no governor with particular responsibility for special educational needs, although there are knowledgeable governors who have had oversight of this role in the past. Support from external agencies, such as the educational psychologist, is well managed.

45.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

47. The school has a suitable number of well-qualified teaching staff for the number of pupils on roll and there is a good balance between experienced teachers and those relatively new to the profession. Subject expertise and enthusiasm positively contribute to collaborative planning as well as teaching. These factors together have a good effect on the overall quality of education provided.

48. Non-teaching staff have a very strong commitment to the school and work very effectively with teachers. The school employs an above average number of classroom and teaching assistants. The majority make a good contribution to raising pupil's attainment and enhance equality of opportunity to the curriculum. The site manager runs a daily wildlife club where pupils, for example make bird boxes and progress to making picnic tables. The site manager has undertaken professional development on site management and health and safety, and this contributes the school's sense of well being and security.
49. There is a well-established staff appraisal system, which is used effectively to identify and inform teachers' professional development needs. The headteacher monitors all staff and all teachers have job descriptions where their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. A strength is the support given to co-ordinators, some of whom work together in pairs. This enables them to carry out their role effectively, by working alongside, or monitoring the work of colleagues. The school is currently without a music co-ordinator.
50. There is an appropriate induction system for staff which are new to the school. Staff are generally keen to undertake inservice training and to develop their expertise. There are opportunities for both school based and off-site inservice training. Staff development is usually informed by school development plan priorities. Recent whole school training has included the guidance on the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy as well as courses on ICT. Inservice training for Teaching Assistants includes raising self-esteem, ICT, reading strategies, display and curriculum workshops. Midday supervisors have well planned training in behaviour management and organising playground games. The school makes good use of county advisory staff and the school's own expertise for effective staff development.
51. The site is shared with the Infant school and accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. The building is generally in a good state of repair and is very well maintained by the site supervisor. There are three temporary classrooms; one of these is used for special educational needs. The school now belongs to the Landon Consortium, which employs a consortium manager who has expertise in all aspects of premises management. This means that the school is well aware of its priorities in terms of on-going maintenance of the school buildings.
52. The outdoor areas have been well developed, and this includes a wildlife area with a hide made by the children, as well as the adventure playground equipment. The outdoor area is well used and contributes very effectively to the learning environment. The staff have been imaginative in making the best possible use of the space inside the building to deliver and enhance the curriculum. Classrooms and the hall are used well. Corridors, resource areas and the library are well used and have imaginative displays which provide exciting learning environments. However, there are too few displays which encourage pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures within society. Equipment is accessible, and sensible adaptations have been recently made to accommodate children with disability.
53. Resources for learning are satisfactory for most curriculum areas. However, resources for information technology are insufficient to ensure that ICT makes the contribution which it should to other subjects of the curriculum. Library and literacy resources are good and there are plans for an information technology suite. The school uses

external resources effectively with visits to airfields, a heritage centre and churches, as well as visits from a variety of experts to support and enhance all aspects of the curriculum.

52.

52. The efficiency of the school

54. The school makes good use of its staffing, resources, and accommodation, and this has a positive impact on pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of education. The budget is used sensibly to support the developments identified within the school development plan, for example the additional funds allocated for the implementation of the school's literacy and numeracy programmes. This has had a positive effect on raising pupils' standards. The school has effectively identified its weaknesses, and has for example, well advanced plans for the improvement of information technology in the near future. These include improving the quality of the school's information and communications technology resources and further training for teachers. The funding for pupils' special educational needs, including those with statements, is used appropriately to support their learning. However, the use of part-time staff simply to hear the younger pupils read does not make the best use these resources.

55. The school governors are well informed through their finance committee and consider all items of expenditure. They receive regular budget summaries, consider the value for money implications of their decisions, and make decisions about the timescales for major expenditure. The school belongs to the Laindon Consortium which employs a premises manager who has helped the school to formulate a very good management plan for the maintenance and refurbishment of the school buildings. The governors make good use of funds, for example, since the last inspection there have been a number of successful improvements to the school environment, for example the introduction of closed circuit television to safeguard the school from vandalism. In response to a key issue of the previous inspection the school has addressed the deficiencies in reading materials and musical instruments, and this has helped to improve standards in both subjects. The school has made good use of its funds to support the introduction of the school's literacy and numeracy initiatives.

56. One of the contributory factors towards the efficient running of the school is the effective partnership between the headteacher and all who work in the school. There is an atmosphere of shared commitment whereby teachers take their curriculum responsibilities seriously. Teachers and governors alike share common values of conduct, behaviour, and mutual respect. This helps the school to pull together and is valued by the parents. However a minority of parents fail to contribute to the school's overall efficiency by allowing their children to take time off school for holidays within the school term. This reduces the rate of progress for these pupils.

57. Teachers share their expertise in planning, particularly in literacy and numeracy and work with classroom assistants who give good support to pupils and teachers. Curriculum co-ordinators identify targets and drive their subjects forward. This is well supported by the headteacher's monitoring of curriculum development and the quality of teaching. The accommodation and environmental resources are used well.

58. The last financial audit confirmed that all financial procedures are secure. The school carried forward over six per cent of the budget from the previous year to plan for

contingencies such as renewal of the boundary fence which is shared with the infants' school. However, the reserve has recently been increased by funds made available by the local education authority for the school to assume responsibility for the maintenance of the exterior of the building. As the school is of 1960s construction and has flat roof, governors sensibly plan to use these funds to ensure that the accommodation is maintained to a satisfactory standard.

59. In relation to the below average attainment on entry to the school, the good progress made, the average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of the key stage, the good attitude of pupils and the good quality of teaching; the school continues to provide good value for money as it did at the time of the last inspection.

58. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

58. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

58. **English**

60. At the end of the key stage, the most recent national test results in English were well above average. They were, however, very high when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher level was above average, and when compared with similar schools it was well above average. Over the last four years, pupils' performance in reading and writing has been similar to the national average, although the 1998 results showed an uncharacteristic drop. There has been a steady improvement overall. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are broadly average, and the school has maintained an improving position. The previous inspection reported that standards in reading were too low; since then the school has significantly raised pupils' attainment in reading. The quality of reading material has been greatly improved and there is a stronger focus on teaching pupils to understand what they read.
61. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively to each other and to adults. At the beginning of the key stage, many pupils have limited oral language skills but by its end most have reached the expected level and some have exceeded it. Lower-attaining pupils do not reach the expected level, and they find it hard to express their ideas. Most, however, have the skills to contribute effectively in class discussions. They have a wide vocabulary and this enhances their communication skills. Progress is good for pupils of all levels of attainment because teachers give high priority to helping them develop their spoken language skills. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that they demonstrate high standards when giving explanations and instructions. They introduce their pupils to new vocabulary, including technical terms. In literacy lessons, for example, a very wide range of such terms was taught in most classes and at the end of the key stage the higher attaining pupils confidently used such terms to talk about their work. One expressed a preference for writing 'character sketches' for example', and gave a good explanation of the difference between similes and metaphors illustrated with a range of examples of each.
62. Reading standards are broadly average. At the end of the key stage, higher-attaining pupils read with good levels of understanding, fluency and expression. Many are established voluntary readers of fiction and non-fiction. They are reflective readers who benefit from access to a wide range of reading materials. They are on course to attain the above average level. The small number of lower attainers, often do not read enough to develop skills well. They have a limited vocabulary and often find reading difficult because they meet too many unfamiliar words and expressions. Though their reading is reasonably fluent it often lacks expression. The school has implemented a good range of strategies to help all pupils, but particularly the lowest attainers, to improve their reading. These include; systematic teaching in the literacy hour, the recently introduced reading recovery project, the use of teaching assistants both in class and in withdrawal sessions, and encouragement to read at home. Rates of progress are good for all pupils.
63. Standards in writing are average. Most pupils, by the end of the key stage, draft and

edit writing to a satisfactory level, although they have insufficient opportunity to use computers to help them. They compose different kinds of writing, including stories, letters and poems. They work at a good pace and get their ideas down on paper quickly. They use aids such as thesauruses to help them improve the content of their work. Their spelling is satisfactory and their handwriting is neat and well formed with letters properly joined. All pupils make good progress in writing. One of the Year 3 classes makes very good progress as a result of the excellent teaching they receive. Poems written by this class are of high quality and contain lively and well chosen vocabulary. The lower attainers, throughout the school however, lack the good vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation skills needed to help them reach the average level. Pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills enable them to make good progress in other subjects of the curriculum. In most mathematics and science lessons, for example, they describe what they have done and explain the procedures they have used. In a small number of instances, only among the youngest pupils, this was not the case. In a Year 3 science lesson for example, though pupils succeeded in making and testing electrical circuits, many could not describe what they had done. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their individual targets.

64. Good teaching ensures that pupils have positive attitudes to English. They enjoy stories and poems, get involved in their work and participate fully in lessons. Only in lessons where teaching had weaknesses were less positive attitudes seen, but such cases were rare. Except in these few lessons, pupils gave full attention to teachers and concentrated well. In whole class reading and writing sessions, most were keen to contribute ideas and answer questions. When individual tasks were given, the vast majority settled quickly to work and completed tasks with good levels of independence. Behaviour in lessons was never less than satisfactory and in about half of the lessons it was extremely good. Relationships are very positive and pupils listen carefully to others and respect their views. The positive atmosphere resulted in good levels of progress. In the reading recovery lessons, pupils work hard and behave extremely well.
65. Teaching of English is good and about half of the teaching seen was very good; in one of the Year 3 lessons, teaching was excellent. Strengths in the teaching are: the good subject knowledge of the teachers, good use of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS); very productive working relationships; direct teaching of the rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation; very good class management and sensitivity to the needs of individuals and groups. In the excellent lesson, the teacher demonstrated expressive reading, and modeled speaking and listening extremely well to help pupils deepen their understanding. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, but in a few cases lessons proceeded at too slow a pace, and in one lesson time was lost in maintaining a satisfactory standard of behaviour. In the best lessons, pupils identified as needing extra help were well supported by teaching assistants. In several lessons, this support was very well provided where the teacher was teaching the whole class. In one case, a small group of pupils whose concentration skills were weak, were helped to focus their attention on the text and to listen carefully to the teacher.
66. The curriculum for English is good. The school's approach to the NLS is consistent from year group to year group and skills and knowledge are developed progressively. Spelling has been identified as weak and a new policy introduced. This is effective in providing practice and reinforcement at the right level for the pupils. Another strength is the range and quality of texts used; prose and poetry, biography and autobiography, fiction and non-fiction are introduced and discussed. Year 6 pupils' study of biography

is well linked to the context in which Ann Frank, for example, lived. Pupils had many opportunities to value her work and empathise with her. The contribution made by writers from other than European cultures, however, is not always celebrated sufficiently. Though Maya Angelou's work was used in one year group, no mention was made of the fact that she is a living, American black woman writer of note. Though the curriculum offers opportunities to extend the pupils' cultural horizons they are not sufficiently exploited. Parents value that homework is set and used to reinforce what has been learned in lessons.

67. Teachers assess pupils' work and use the results of assessment to help them plan teaching strategies or modify the tasks for particular individuals or groups. The quality of assessment is satisfactory and the work planned is matched to meet the needs of different groups in the class. Pupils who are not making enough progress in reading are identified at an early stage and in the main given appropriate help.

66. **Mathematics**

68. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 6 is broadly average, but standards have been rising rapidly over the past four years. However there was a sharp drop in attainment in 1998, due to staff changes that had a significant effect on the rate of pupils' progress. From levels in 1995 which were well below average, pupils' reached levels of attainment 1999 which were well above average when compared with all schools, and very high when compared with similar schools. When the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level of attainment is compared similar schools, their attainment is very high, and in comparison with all schools it is average. At the time of the last inspection it was attainment was below average. The improvement in attainment is characteristic of the school as a whole and is due to a number of factors. These include the very successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, a high proportion of very good and good teaching, rigorous half-termly assessment of pupils' attainment, and the effective analysis of individual learning needs.

69. Pupils make good progress in acquiring mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in all aspects of numeracy. They have good strategies for mental calculation and are confident when explaining their methods to others. Pupils observed made the best progress in their use and understanding of the number system. For example, more able pupils in Year 6 use their understanding of place value effectively when multiplying and dividing. They have a good understanding of place value, including decimals in Years 5 and 6, and use their knowledge to solve problems. They recognise vulgar and decimal fractions and know that they are equivalent. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

70. Pupils like mathematics, and are keen to succeed. They behave well and respond very positively when taught well. They concentrate and help each other effectively and their work is presented neatly. Pupils respect achievement and encourage each other. They enjoy explaining their work and show good understanding. Relationships are positive and pupils share resources well.

71. The quality of teaching in mathematics ranges from very good to, in a small number of lessons seen, unsatisfactory. However, it is good overall. In the best lessons teaching the quality interaction between teachers and pupils ensures that the pupils stay on

task and are well motivated. These pupils know the learning objectives, teacher subject knowledge is good, expectations are high and questioning extends thinking. These lessons are well planned, pacing is good and activities are well informed by assessment. Teaching is well matched to the pupils' learning needs. Pupils make very good progress, as great care is taken to match work to their previous knowledge. Where teachers' subject knowledge is not secure, for example in a Year 3 lesson observed, mathematical language is inaccurate and planning is minimal, lessons lose focus and pupils do not make sufficient progress.

72. Mathematics is effectively led and managed. The mathematics co-ordinator provides good support for teachers. He has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and monitors progress in mathematics across the school. Most teachers provide an accurate view of pupils' learning needs in mathematics using the assessment arrangements in place. This approach is not however used consistently across the school and marking does not always enable them to make sufficient progress and learn from their mistakes.
73. Resources for learning are good with the exception of ICT resources to support pupils' learning. Classrooms are well equipped for mathematics and resources are used effectively in teaching including key examples of mathematical language. In most lessons pupils are managed very well and time is used effectively.

72. **Science**

74. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average, but standards have been rising over the past four years faster than the national trend. There was a marked decrease in attainment in 1998, due to staff changes that affected pupils' progress. However, results of the 1999 national tests show a dramatic improvement from the low base in 1998. In comparison with all schools and schools with a similar profile, pupils reached very high levels of attainment. When the percentage of pupils who reached the higher level of attainment is compared with similar schools, their attainment was very high. When compared with all schools, the percentage of pupils who reached the higher level of attainment was average. At the time of the last inspection it was judged that attainment was broadly average. Although pupils have appropriate opportunities to investigate aspects of science, too few opportunities are given for pupils to design, carry out and record their own investigations by using computers. This applies particularly, but not solely, to older and higher attaining pupils. For example, the investigation of evaporation seen in a Year 6 class was too teacher-directed and left too little scope for pupils to exercise independence in their learning.
75. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know that sound travels by vibration. They know that vibrations can travel from objects, such as a drum, to our ears. Pupils know about some of the aspects of healthy living, such as eating good food and taking exercise. They know about the need for carbohydrates, fats, minerals, proteins, fibre, vitamins and water as components of a balanced diet. Pupils are aware of the threat to health posed by solvent abuse and drug and alcohol abuse. They know the functions of the main organs of the human body, such as the heart, the lungs and the kidneys, and the structure and functions of the skeleton. They know what a food chain is and about and understand the role of producers and consumers in a food chain. They know that machines help us do a job more easily and about the use of levers, wheels and pulleys. They know that the Newton is a measure of force. Pupils construct complex

electrical circuits. They know that matter can take the form of solids, liquids or gas and they investigate dissolving, solutions and evaporation. Pupils are familiar with the anatomy and physiology of a flowering plant.

76. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of the science curriculum throughout their time in school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and helped to have full access to the science curriculum. They make good progress. Pupils in their first year in the school construct simple electrical circuits. They correctly identify which components are missing in a circuit, causing it not to work and know that some materials conduct electricity and others do not. They build well on this learning in Year 5 when they learn about switches in electrical circuits. They know that there are a number of different switches in every day use and how a switch operates in a circuit. In Year 6 they build well on their previous learning about electricity, when they construct more complex circuits. Pupils in Year 4 investigate soluble and insoluble materials, such as washing powder, salt and sand. They know that some substances dissolve in water and that others do not. They know that a dissolved material and the water in which it dissolved form a solution and that an insoluble material in liquid forms a mixture. They know the meaning of the terms soluble, insoluble, solution, mixture and sediment. Pupils build well on this learning in Year 6, when they consider reversible and irreversible changes to materials. They know what reversible and irreversible changes are and can give examples, for example the changing of water into ice and back again. They know that melting, freezing, evaporation and condensation are all reversible changes.
77. Pupils enjoy their work in science and are fascinated by much of what they learn, for example as they learn about conductors and insulators and experiment with soluble and insoluble materials. They behave well and pay close attention to teachers' explanations and to their own work. The good opportunities for pupils to co-operate together, for example as they make and test electrical circuits and dissolve materials in water, make a positive contribution to their social development. They learn to share and take turns and relationships between pupils and staff are good
78. The teaching of science is good and this helps pupils make good progress. Lessons are well planned and clear learning intentions are identified. Good use is made of the time available for lessons, and the brisk pace ensures that pupils are stimulated and work hard. Lively and imaginative explanations and demonstrations excite pupils' interest, for example in a lesson seen in Year 6, where very good use was made of boiling an egg to illustrate the difference between a reversible and irreversible change. Class control is confident; teachers have good relationships with pupils and maintain high standards of discipline. Teachers build learning well on what has gone before by revising what has been learned in previous lessons. The new scheme of work gives very good guidance to teachers on what they should teach, how and in what order, and gives very good guidance on assessing pupils' progress at regular intervals. This scheme contributes positively to the good progress pupils make and to the raising of standards. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are promoted well by the scheme of work. They make good use of questioning to ensure that pupils have understood their work and to challenge them with further questions. Care is taken to encourage the use of correct scientific language and this language enrichment makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

77. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

77. Information technology

79. Pupils' standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are below the national expectations of 11-year-olds, and fall below their standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because ICT is not sufficiently embedded into the curriculum, pupils do not make sufficient use of these skills in other areas of the curriculum. As a consequence the subject has little impact on pupils' learning. Their rate of progress is unsatisfactory, and ICT contributes too little to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. At the time of the last inspection pupils' standards were also below average, but since then standards have started to improve and, due an improvement in the quality of teaching, pupils are beginning to use a wider range of skills. However, standards are not high enough.
80. The youngest pupils work in pairs to edit written text from Goldilocks and the Three Bears. These pupils use their skills appropriately to punctuate the text using capital letters, full stops and spaces. However, the remainder of the class edit the text on paper, and although they recognise where capital letters, full stops and spaces should be placed they do not develop their communication skills by using the technology.
81. By the end of the key stage, pupils are generally competent in using computers for processing their writing. For example, they use the edit, and cut and paste functions confidently to support some of their history work about World War II, and others narrate their science work about evaporation. They use paint and draw programs adequately and learn how to minimise their work on the computer screen. Evidence of pupils' work confirms that they develop some skills of data handling, and similarly, pupils sometimes use computers to model and control external events. However, all pupils including those with special educational needs do not make sufficient progress in the development of their ICT skills because they spend too little time using computers to support their work in other subjects.
82. Pupils have positive attitudes ICT. They are attentive, well behaved and generally interested in their work, even when they have to exercise considerable patience when waiting for their turn at the computer. Most pupils are keen to show what they can do. However, a minority comment they rarely get to use the computer so why should they bother?
83. The quality of ICT teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are interested, appropriately qualified and receptive to the use of ICT in different subjects. However, they do not have sufficient computer resources to support their work. As a result they are forced to teach ICT skills without the benefit pupils immediately practicing their skills, and opportunities are missed to use computers to support pupils' work in other subject areas. The new co-ordinator has imminent plans to improve the quality of the subject throughout the school by developing a well resourced ICT suite.

82. Religious education

84. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in religious education. The two year topic cycle scheme of work stems from the Essex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, and

statutory requirements are met. An exemplification book includes level descriptors and future targets. Themes inform assemblies and form the basis of collective worship as well as the starting points for further work in religious education lessons.

85. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in understanding that different peoples' beliefs are built upon very different views of the world. By the end of the key stage pupils develop appropriate knowledge of key events in the calendar of different religions. They develop an understanding of who they are and the unique contribution they can make by reflecting on what is expected of them in different circumstances. Where insufficient resources are used and planning is unfocused, for example in a Year 6 lesson, pupils make unsatisfactory progress.
86. Teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. In the main teaching enables pupils to develop their own values and beliefs. The best teaching is well planned, well resourced and knowledgeable, with ample opportunity for pupils to develop discussion and collaborative skills, as well as self-knowledge. Lessons have good pace and pupils are challenged to think about judgements which are either right or wrong depending on how they are interpreted. In the best practice, pupils reflect on what they learn and demonstrate their growth in self-knowledge in their behaviour and respect for others, for example when listening to the story of Kam's mirror. In one lesson teaching was unsatisfactory, where the teacher had weak subject knowledge and used inappropriate teaching methods which required little more than copying or completing the blank spaces in a text.
87. Pupils generally have good attitudes to religious education. They listen and behave well, work well together in groups or as individuals as different tasks require. They are caring and thoughtful and able to discuss and reflect on qualities, and this supports their personal development well. Whole school and class assemblies are very effectively led by staff and children and are an excellent example of learning about different aspects of religious education.
88. Resources are good but in some classrooms they are insufficiently visible to have an impact on pupils' learning. The accommodation is appropriately used and pupils are given the opportunity to develop their awareness of the subject by visiting the local church and responding to the schools' team ministry visits when they lead acts of collective worship.

87.

Art

89. Pupils attain standards above national age related expectations in art. They also make good progress. Pupils demonstrate good techniques in a wide variety of media including paint, pastels, print, pen and ink, charcoal and three-dimensional work. They use a variety of art tools appropriately. They are familiar with the work of a range of artists and use a wide repertoire of appropriate vocabulary when discussing their own and others' work.
90. Pupils' response to art lessons is good and in some cases very good. The majority of pupils really enjoy this subject, sustain concentration and are fully engrossed in the activities. Pupils approach their work with confidence, persevere when tasks are difficult and value the qualities of each other's work. Pupils recognise and discuss the intentions of artists.

91. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic in their teaching. Some teachers are particularly talented in this subject. Pupils are well managed, techniques are clearly explained and teachers foster confidence very effectively. Time is well used to enable pupils to work creatively and carefully. Good artistic guidance is given to pupils. There is a scheme of work and activities ensure that progress in art is good and match the two year topic cycle of planning.
92. Art is an important subject in the school and there are some excellent displays using a variety of media. Resources for learning are generally good although insufficient use is made of examples of the work of artists from different cultures.

91. **Design and Technology**

93. It was only possible to observe three lessons during the inspection, but a good range of work was available and this provided a basis for judging that it is of good quality for pupils of this age. Pupils make good progress in learning new skills through opportunities to design and make many different kinds of products. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils last year designed and made simple items of clothing. They considered various practical and aesthetic issues before creating and making their final designs. These were well made and finished and fit for their purpose. The present Year 3 and 4 class has evaluated a range of commercially produced sandwiches and planned how to make their own. They know that a balance of kinds of foods is necessary for health and that the appearance and texture of foods affect people's preferences. They know what they are making and why and most make realistic suggestions in response to the tasks set. Pupils in Year 5 investigated the use of a pulley and drive belt in creating motion. They make good progress in applying the principles they learn to their own models.
94. The teachers have good levels of knowledge and understanding of the subject and make very good use of the good scheme of work the school has adopted. In two of the three lessons seen, teaching was good. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and transmit their enjoyment to the pupils. They ensure that pupils design, make and test out products and directly teach skills. In one lesson with a Year 3 class, however, the pupils were not given enough to do and the purpose of the activity was not made clear. As a result they made little progress in the lesson.

93.

Geography and History

95. At the time of the last inspection pupils' attained standards which were above national expectations and made good progress throughout the key stage. This continues to be the case, and both subjects contribute significantly to pupils' understanding of the forces which have shaped their environment and society.
96. Pupils confidently use the points of the compass and know that Basildon is east of London. They develop good geographical skills by, for example, drawing their own conclusions from maps and aerial photographs of the characteristics of New Towns, and reasons why they were developed outside Greater London. Pupils link their understanding of geography with their work in history when they study World War II

and develop a clear understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources of information. They understand some of the causes of the war and deduce what it must have been like for society to cope with particular forms of hardship such as air raids.

97. Pupils show a keen interest in geography and history. This was especially emphasised by the willing response to questions about why families often found it difficult to relocate from London, and questioning whether the Ancient Greeks really did leave some infant girls outdoors to die! Pupils show genuine interest to share the results of their own research with the class, by for example commenting that some Ancient Greek girls got married at twelve years of age.
98. The teaching of geography and history is exciting and mostly good and sometimes very good. Teachers show a great deal of interest in the subjects, convey this well and as a result all pupils, including those with special educational needs make good and often very good progress. They use routine question and answer very effectively to establish pupils' understanding. With the exception of ICT teachers make very good use of resources to enliven the subjects, such as tape of local elderly resident describing her childhood experiences of the evacuation, which captivated pupils' interest and attention. The subjects are well led and co-ordinated and the school has sufficient resources for both teachers and pupils.

97. **Music**

99. Pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations, and they make good progress. They listen attentively and demonstrate appropriate knowledge of pitch and rhythm. Singing in class and in assemblies is of a good standard and makes a positive contribution towards pupils' progress. Pupils remember and sing a range of songs enthusiastically and confidently, both in unison and with harmonies. They demonstrate good control of dynamics, phrasing and tempo. There is both a beginner and advanced recorder club, and recorder players perform in assemblies. This helps pupils make good progress in the development of their performing skills.
100. Pupils respond very well to music lessons which are focused and challenging. They sustain concentration and are mutually supportive in evaluating each other's performance. They are enthusiastic about participating in activities and performing. However, pupils have too little opportunity to compose, by choosing and combining instruments.
101. The quality of teaching is good overall. Subject knowledge is generally secure with most teachers having a good understanding of how to teach music skills. In most lessons planning is clear, pupils are well managed and time and resources are used effectively. Teachers reinforce pupil's confidence very effectively, encourage their contributions and seek to make activities enjoyable. Where lessons are less successful, teachers lack subject knowledge, and planning is limited.
102. There is a good music policy and a detailed scheme of work with clear guidance on what is to be taught each year. Methods for assessing pupils' progress are included in the scheme of work. Music plays an important part in the life of the school, for example a visiting music specialist runs the choir which takes part in local music festivals.

Resources are used in class, assemblies and the hall. The school has a good selection of musical instruments and uses them well.

101. Physical education

103. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in physical education is appropriate for pupils of this age. Pupils in Year 6 practice and refine some of the skills necessary to play traditional team games, such as netball. They learn and practice attacking and defending skills. Pupils also refine their ball handling skills appropriate to a range of games such as football, hockey, netball and rugby. They have a good understanding of the techniques involved in sending and receiving a ball. In dance lessons pupils learn, practice, refine and perform a simple dance from different times and places, such as The Twist, and this provides a good link to work in history.
104. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the key stage. In Year 3, pupils start to develop some of the skills appropriate to the playing of traditional team games, such as netball. They learn ball control skills and how to send and receive a ball. They travel with a large ball and pass under- arm, sideways, one-handed and from the shoulder. This learning is built on well in later years, so that pupils' skills are secure by the end of Year 6.
105. Pupils enjoy their work in physical education lessons. They work well together and good opportunities to work with partners and in small teams make a positive contribution to their social development. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils concentrate well and try hard to do their best. They enjoy watching each others' performance and older pupils are good at constructively criticising one another and giving advice on how performance could be improved, for example in a dance lesson in Year 6.
106. The teaching of physical education is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, and this is evidenced by the lesson planning and content. Some good use is made of visitors to enrich the teaching, for instance the Rock 'n' Roll dancers make a very good contribution to the teaching of dance in Year 6. Good use is made of time, and lessons proceed at a brisk pace, encouraging pupils to work hard. Teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate their performance to the class, so encouraging the others to try harder and improve their performance. Some sensitive use is made of pupils' evaluation of one another's performance. There are good relationships with pupils and class control is secure but unobtrusive.

105. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

105. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

107. A team of five inspectors carried out the inspection over a total period of nineteen inspection days. 67 lessons or parts of lessons were observed during 51 hours of direct classroom observation. Inspectors also examined a representative sample of pupils' work from each year group. These samples included work produced by high, average and low attaining pupils. The inspectors listened to a representative sample of pupils read. The attendance registers, records kept on pupils, individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs and teachers' planning files were scrutinised. The school development plan and other documents were analysed. The inspectors attended registration sessions and assemblies. Meetings were held with teachers, other staff, governors, and parents and with pupils to discuss their work. Before the inspection a questionnaire was sent to all families and a meeting was held with parents. Nine parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. There were seventy responses to the questionnaire, which represents almost a third of the parents.

106. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

106. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
106. Y3- Y6	303	3	103	75

106. **Teachers and classes**

106. **Qualified teachers (Y3 – Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	25:1

106. **Education support staff (Y3 – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	230

Average class size:	30
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106. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	488,030
Total Expenditure	456,201
Expenditure per pupil	1,557
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,328
Balance carried forward to next year	68,157

106. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 233
 Number of questionnaires returned: 70

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	11	64	16	6	3
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	40	53	4	1	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	16	54	23	7	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	19	57	19	6	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23	49	17	11	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	19	70	7	4	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	19	64	11	6	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	16	71	7	6	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	26	50	21	3	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	13	61	20	6	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	41	43	9	6	1

106. Other issues raised by parents

The comments raised by parents were overwhelmingly positive. This most forcibly expressed through parents' appreciation of the schools values which particularly support all pupils with special educational needs and disability.