

# INSPECTION REPORT

**The Edith Borthwick School**  
Braintree

LEA area: Essex

Unique Reference Number: 115464  
Inspection Number: 194571

Headteacher: Mr M Jelly

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Reporting inspector: Mr I R Naylor  
20906

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708342

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fennes Road Church Street Bocking. Braintree Essex CM7 5LA
Telephone number:	01376 326436
Fax number:	01376 326436
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Mead
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Naylor (Registered Inspector)	Physical education.	Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management.
Marion Cumbers (Lay Inspector)	Work Experience; College Links.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Partnership with parents.
Mary Geddes (Team Member)	Modern foreign languages; Art; Special educational needs inclusion.	Support, guidance and pupils welfare.
Geoff Kitchen (Team Member)	Autistic classes; Early Years/Under Fives.	Curriculum.
Roger Pleace (Team Member)	Science; History; Music.	Staffing.
David Walker (Team Member)	Mathematics; Religious education; Geography; Personal and social education.	Efficiency.
Gill Lawson (Team Member)	English; English as an additional language.	Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development; Assessment.
Rowland Hull (Team Member)	Design and technology; Information communication technology; Equal opportunities; Further education/Sixth Form.	Accommodation, learning resources.

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants  
Old Garden House  
The Lanterns  
Bridge Lane  
London  
SW11 3AD  
0171 924 1093*

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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

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

- Lessons are based on very good assessment of pupils' needs and provide pupils with appropriate challenges and learning opportunities that promote generally good and sometimes exceptional progress.
- There is an excellent climate for learning which fosters very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- The school has extended its links with the local community and schools to provide excellent opportunities for pupils' integration
- Parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress and their views form part of an ongoing review of what works best for pupils in school.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- There is very good leadership by the headteacher, senior staff and governors.

### **Where the school has weaknesses**

- I. The provision for autistic pupils between 11 and 14, opened in September 1999, is currently unsatisfactory.
- II. Many aspects of accommodation remain poor, affecting pupils' access to the curriculum and compromising the safety of pupils.
- III. Work identified in the school development plan to improve health and safety in the school has not yet been completed.

**The weaknesses of the school are few and are far outweighed by what the school does well but they will form the basis of the governors action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

The school has made very good improvements in most areas since the previous report. There is a very good capacity for improvement. In particular there has been improvement in teaching; in the progress of pupils; in the curriculum and assessment; in financial administration and control; in the school development plans; in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been significant improvement in most of the subjects, particularly in numeracy, literacy, and information and communications technology.



• **Whether pupils are making enough progress**

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	By 16	By 19	Key
					<i>very good</i> A
					<i>good</i> B
					<i>satisfactory</i> C
					<i>unsatisfactory</i> D
					<i>poor</i>
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	•
English: listening and speaking	A	A	B	B	•
reading	A	A	B	B	•
writing	A	B	C	C	•
Mathematics	A	B	B	B	•
Science	A	B	B	B	•
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A	A	A	•

*\*IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs*

Progress over time is good and for some pupils it is outstanding. There is good or better progress in three-quarters of all lessons. It is very good in Early Years. Progress in English is good. It is very good in speaking and listening and reading by 11 years old and good elsewhere. Progress is good in writing by 11 years old and satisfactory elsewhere. In mathematics and science progress is good at each age group. Progress is very good overall in art, music and history. Progress is good overall in religious education, information technology, physical education, French, personal and social education, and in design and technology. Progress is satisfactory overall in geography.

• **Quality of teaching**

	<b>Overall quality</b>	<b>Most effective in:</b>	<b>Least effective in:</b>
Up to 5 years	Very good	Communication; Art, Music	
5 - 11 years	Good	Communication, Art, Music	
11 - 16 years	Good	Preparation for work and college	Key Stage 3 autistic class
Post-16	Good	Preparation for work and college`	
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		
Science	Good		
Personal, social and health education	Good		

(PSHE)

Teaching is excellent or very good in 50 per cent of all lessons, and good in a further 25 per cent, with most of the rest being satisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in only a few lessons in the Autistic Base Key Stage 3 class. Teaching is very good in the Early Years, history, art, and music. It is good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, physical education, French and in the Further Education Unit. It is satisfactory in religious education and geography.

*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**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good in school and whilst taking part in activities in the local community.
Attendance	Very good.
Ethos*	Excellent.
Leadership and management	The headteacher, senior staff and governing body provide very good leadership and management
Curriculum	The curriculum is now good, meeting the diverse needs of the majority of its pupils well, with particular strengths in the Early Years and Post 16.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good opportunities for pupils' moral and social development. Spiritual and cultural development is good.
Support and guidance	Excellent support for pupils in their learning, behaviour and personal development helps develop their self-confidence and progress. Some aspects of pupils's safety are not sufficiently safeguarded.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staff are well qualified and experienced and seek continually to improve their skills through professional development. Despite some improvements, parts of the accommodation remain poor.
Value for money	Very good.

*\*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**

- IV. School instils a sense of worth that helps children make progress.
- V. Independence skills are well promoted.
- VI. Parents are made to feel welcome in school.
- VII. Staff take time to talk to parents, to explain and re-assure.
- VIII. Pupils are taught morals and how to behave properly, and they have good attitudes.
- IX. Staff are caring and compassionate.
- X. School provides good information for new parents.

**What some parents are not happy about**

- XI. Some uncertainty amongst parents about the effectiveness or relevance.
- XII. A small but significant number of parents s could be improved.

Inspectors agree with parents on most of the above points. They judge that the school does have appropriate procedures for the handling of complaints.

• **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

Staff and governors in conjunction with the local education authority should:

XIII. Take immediate steps to improve the curriculum and provide a safe environment for autistic pupils at Key Stage 3;

*(Paragraph: 16, 46, 127)*

XIV. Complete work identified in the school development plan to improve health and safety in the school;

*(Paragraph: 31, 41, 48)*

XV. Improve accommodation for the school library, the teaching of science, music and art, and create access for pupils of whatever disability to all areas. Provide appropriate recreational and leisure areas for students at Key Stage 4 and Post 16.

*(Paragraph: 49)*

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs:

- \*. Continue to work towards a consistent approach to the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy at Key Stages 1 and 2;  
*(Paragraph: 17, 86)*
- \*. Complete the policy and procedures for homework, continuing to work in conjunction with parents;  
*(Paragraph: 13, 20)*
- \*. Develop assessment of pupils in information and communications technology;  
*(Paragraph: 87)*
- \*. Use the data collected on pupils' attainments to inform future curriculum planning;  
*(Paragraph: 40)*
- \*. Improve the way registers are completed;  
*(Paragraph: 10, 29)*
- \*. Provide a regular written summary to give an overall picture of what has been achieved by the school development plan that would assist staff, governors and parents to know whether it is successful.  
*(Paragraph: 39)*

\* **INTRODUCTION**

\* **Characteristics of the school**

1. Edith Borthwick is an Essex County maintained special school for 156 boys and girls aged three to nineteen who have moderate, or severe learning difficulties, or autism. The school is situated in the north of Braintree, but has a wide geographical area of intake including the whole of Essex. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities. The local education authority's policy of increased inclusion has brought a change to the intake since the previous inspection and pupils on admission now have more complex learning needs. There are 40 pupils with severe learning difficulties; 81 with moderate learning difficulties, and 12 pupils in the Autistic Resource Provision. Twenty three pupils are in the Post 16 provision. A number of pupils, at Key Stage 3, attend a local secondary school full-time as part of an inclusion program supported by Edith Borthwick staff. Several pupils have full or partial integration into local primary and secondary schools. Several pupils have full or partial integration into local primary schools. There is a close association between the school and the local college of further education.

1.

1.

1. The school's aims are:

\*. To help pupils:

\*. Gain self-respect and self-confidence;

\*. Acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to adult life;

\*. Show care, consideration and respect for moral and social values;

\*. Enjoy and celebrate learning and achievement;

\*. Develop independence and self-motivation;

1. School Mission Statement:

'At the Edith Borthwick School we value each individual, encourage effort and foster mutual consideration and respect. All are given the opportunity to enjoy success and we celebrate achievements, as individuals grow in confidence and self-esteem.'

## 2. Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

1999 10 pupils.

#### 4. Teacher assessment: Percentage at each level

	Working towards Level 1	Level 1
English	100	
Speaking and listening	100	
Reading	80	20
Writing	100	
Mathematics	100	
Science	100	

#### 4. Task and test results: Percentage at each level

	Working towards Level 1	Level 1
Reading Task	80	20
Writing Task	100	
Mathematics	100	

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

8 pupils.

No pupil achieved Level 4 or above in English, mathematics or science. (too few pupils to publish).

### Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>3</sup>

15 pupils.

#### 4. Teacher assessment: Percentage at each level

	Working towards Level 1 (W)	L1	L2	L3
English	33	27	27	13
Mathematics	33	27	27	13
Science	20	0	40	33

Test Results:

No pupil took the Key Stage 3 Tests in English, mathematics, or science.

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<sup>3</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attainment at Key Stage 4 and 5<sup>4</sup>

*Student results 1998/9 All pupil participate in national accredited examinations.*

End of Key Stages 4 and 5 Accredited Programmes

Student Results 1998/99

*All students within Key Stages 4 and 5 are working to a range of accredited programmes appropriate to their individual needs and abilities. 100 per cent pass rate from all students entered*

### Accredited Award Key Stage 4

### Student Outcomes

GCSE Art	5 passes grades E -G
Certificate of Achievement Mathematics	8 passes: 2 Gold, 3 Silver, 3 Bronze.
ASDAN Youth Awards	4 pass Bronze
AEB Achievement Test Numeracy	14 passes
St John Ambulance Young Lifesaver 4 students	4 passes
Project Trident Work Experience Cert	2 passes
English Speaking Board Oral Skills	3 students passes Stages 1 - 2

### Key Stage 5

ASDAN Workright Certificate 3 students	3 passes
English Speaking Board Oral Skills	2 passes
Patterns for Living	2 passes
OCR All * 6 students	6 passes Levels 1 - 5
Project Trident Work Experience	3 passes
Certificate of Achievement Mathematics	1 student passes Levels 1 - 2
City and Guilds Foundation Award Catering 4.	1 student passes
AEB Achievement Test Numeracy	1 student passes

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<sup>4</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

*\*Modules include Communication, Numeracy information technology, The Community, the Environment, Home Management, Leisure, Personal Skills, World of Work*



#### 4. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

			%
Authorised	School		2.6
Absence	National comparative data		8
Unauthorised	School		1.6
Absence	National comparative data		3

4.

#### 4. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

		Number
Fixed period		2
Permanent		1

#### 4. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	50
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

#### **4. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

##### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **4. Attainment and progress**

3.The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge attainments against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do.

Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and in annual reviews.

4.Progress over time is good and for some pupils it is outstanding. There is good or better progress in three-quarters of all lessons. It is very good in Early Years. Since the previous report there has been significant improvement in progress in the three main subjects of English, mathematics and science, with particular improvement in speaking and listening skills, which are now good or better across the school. There are improvements also in most of the other subjects. Spectacular progress is made by some pupils, who start at the school with very low levels of achievement but relatively quickly gain in skills, confidence and self esteem, to the extent that they are able to participate very successfully in integration lessons in mainstream primary or secondary schools. In particular, six Key Stage 3 pupils have now exceeded all expectation of them by achieving full time integration, with appropriate support, into a local secondary school. Significant also is the progress made by the majority of pupils by Key Stage 4 or at Post 16. They have gained the social skills, self -confidence and life skills necessary to be able to sustain work experience placements, attend college link courses and take advantage of work and life-skills related college courses. More pupils are now making progress in nationally recognised courses of study than at the previous inspection. Generally, there is a huge increase in the level of social skills and in the personal development of pupils. The relative progress of higher and lower attaining pupils is broadly similar across the school.

5.Progress in English is good. It is very good in speaking and listening, and reading at Key Stages 1 and 2, and good in all of these at the other key stages. Progress is good in writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory at the other key stages. In mathematics and science, progress is good at each key stage. Progress is very good overall in art, music and history. Progress is good overall in religious education, information technology, physical education, French, personal and social education, and in design and technology. Progress is satisfactory overall in geography.

#### **7. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

6.Since the previous report, the standard of behaviour at the school has continued to be one of its strengths, providing a fertile environment for learning. Relationships throughout the school are warm and mutually supportive, with all staff working as a team. The atmosphere

is calm and purposeful, with no raised voices or shouting. Pupils relate well to each other and to staff and are encouraged to be considerate of the needs of others. Children in the Early Years have good attitudes and behaviour. At each of the key stages pupils' attitude and behaviour toward each other in the classrooms is very good. Older pupils set a good example to younger ones. Pupil's behaviour outside the school is excellent, whether it is on school visits or on integration visits. Sanctions, where necessary, are appropriate and explained carefully. Student self-esteem flourishes in a climate of consistent praise for whatever they are doing well. Pupils are proud of their work, and eager to show it to visitors, whether displayed on the walls or in their folders. They are also proud that there is no graffiti around the school, and they take care of the equipment they use.

7.The incidence of absence and exclusion is low; most students attend school regularly and with enthusiasm, working with as much concentration as they can, and evident enjoyment. Parents are impressed with the standards of behaviour that the school encourages, and are treated as full partners in the setting and meeting of any necessary targets for modification of behaviour.

8.Pupils develop good social skills. Rarely do they forget please and thank you; they will hold doors open for other pupils and staff to pass, and show consideration for all. Attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships are consistently very good, both in lessons and in the more relaxed atmosphere on the playground and at dinner time. Even young pupils confidently carry out small responsibilities and older pupils carry messages accurately. Pupils readily offer to show a visitor the way around school if one looks perplexed.

## 10. **Attendance**

9.Attendance is very good, and better than that of other similar schools. Pupils are delivered to school promptly by their transport, and most attend regularly with few absences. A few pupils have medical problems that necessitate frequent or prolonged absence. Absences have fallen since the previous report, and the time keeping of transport has improved. The effectiveness of the registration periods has improved, and the school day now usually starts more promptly. However, registers are still not kept consistently, or with sufficient accuracy for monitoring attendance.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 11. **Teaching**

10.Teaching is excellent or very good in 50 per cent of all lessons, and good in a further 25 per cent, with most of the rest being satisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in only a few lessons in the Autistic Base Key Stage 3 class. Teaching is very good in the Early Years, history, art, and music. It is good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, physical education, French and in the Further Education Unit. It is satisfactory in religious education and geography.

11.Teaching presents a better picture overall than in the previous report. Then, there was

only half of teaching that was good or better. There have been some improvements in teaching in English, which is now good overall rather than sound. There are now very good features, in Early Years and in speaking and listening and communication skills generally across the school. This is attributable to the success of the Literacy Hour and the school's new communications policy, and also to the close work of teachers and learning support assistants with speech therapists. In mathematics there has been similar improvement in the quality of teaching overall, and teaching is now consistently good or better. Teaching in science has maintained its high quality, despite difficulty with resources and accommodation. Teaching is also generally better supported by lesson planning and by schemes of work across most subjects. This is a significant improvement since the previous report. Excellent use is made of the local community facilities, and also of the wider community for day trips and residential visits, to give pupils first hand experiences and to bring lessons alive.

12. Although several teachers are new to the school and temporary, teaching overall is supportive of pupils' learning and progress. It possesses many very good qualities. The general strengths of teaching are the good planning and the good organisation that include a range of activities to motivate pupils' interest and to challenge. There is also good management of behaviour. Good use is made of questioning to check pupils' understanding and knowledge. Praise and encouragement are widely used to reinforce learning, and there is high expectation of pupil participation, performance and behaviour. Teachers and learning support staff work very well together. Staff give clear and precise instructions. They know the abilities of pupils well and provide good opportunities for extending learning activities to match individual pupil needs. A strong feature across the school is the use of Makaton signing with younger non-verbal pupils and older pupils with communication difficulties. Very good use is made of pupils' individual education plans to guide teaching, and the recording of progress from day-to-day is good. Teaching is well informed by careful assessment of pupils. Classrooms are made welcoming, with attractive displays of pupils' work that celebrate their achievements and raise self-esteem. The use of homework, at each key stage, is generally good and supports pupils' progress, however, there is some variation from teacher to teacher in the amount that is set and the role that homework plays, for example in English and mathematics. Teachers and learning support assistants have very good relationships with pupils and give excellent support to pupil's personal needs. Monitoring of teaching by the senior managers has led to a more consistent approach to the planning of teaching, and to an improvement in teaching methods. This in turn has also helped to promote pupils' progress.

13. There is close collaboration between teachers from the school and teachers in the mainstream schools which pupils attend for integration lessons, and also with lecturers at the college of further education where students attend for links courses. As a result, the quality of teaching that is available to these pupils and students is consistently high.

14. Where teaching is least successful, it is often the result of weaker planning or insecure subject knowledge. Unsatisfactory teaching also resulted from an inappropriate approach to the curriculum of autistic pupils at Key Stage 3, from weak planning and inadequate accommodation. Not all teachers approach homework in the way set out in the draft policy.

## 16. The curriculum and assessment

15. The school has made very good progress in developing its curriculum since the last inspection. For the majority of pupils, the curriculum is broad, relevant and appropriately balanced. It strives to meet the declared aims of the school. At Key Stage 3, some pupils with difficulties on the Autistic Spectrum of Disorders are not able to benefit yet from an appropriately broad, balanced or relevant curriculum. The school is very good at promoting the personal and social skills of pupils. Appropriate policies and provision for areas such as health education, sex education, drug misuse and citizenship are contributing well to the very good personal development of pupils.

16. At the end of their time in school, students have their achievements accredited through a range of appropriate and challenging, nationally recognised accreditation schemes. Teachers have set realistic targets in relation to accreditation. Some very good progress has been made since the last inspection. GCSE art is now taught. Information for students about further education is good. A careers database has been very recently set up. The further education programme and transition from school to adult life are very well planned, and include excellent college links and a very good programme of work experience. Staff work hard to ensure the success of these high quality activities. Opportunities at Key Stage 4 for work-related learning have been embraced imaginatively and clearly to the benefit of pupils. The school received a curriculum award in 1997, which reflects the very good development that has taken place. Appropriate schemes of work for all subjects provide good access to the National Curriculum and to the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This has been a complex task, taking into account the age and ability range of the school, and it has been achieved well. Similarly the school's approach to the Literacy Hour is very good and already has had an impact upon pupils' progress. The school has recently begun implementation of a Numeracy Strategy, although it is, as yet, at an early stage in its development.

17. Senior managers succeed in their aim to make curriculum development an area of continuous focus and improvement. The processes for monitoring the impact of the curriculum on pupil progress have been established, with some useful work already completed. This self-evaluative exercise is very good and a strength of the current curriculum. It contributes to the good planning and content of the curriculum overall, and to the good progress the vast majority of pupils make. Pupils under five are given a very good range of early experiences. Very good progress has been made in developing a curriculum which reflects accurately current statutory guidance for Early Years. The curriculum planning for pupils as they move through the school is very good. The honest evaluation of pupils' responses through monitoring by the senior management team has contributed greatly to this.

18. The fact that pupils must travel into school from a very wide area of Essex inhibits opportunity for extra-curricular activities. To compensate for this an extensive range of school journeys take place, including day-trips and residential visits. Whilst on these visits, pupils participate in an extensive programme of activities which enrich many subjects taught in the school. Grants from a national bank support clubs and dinner time activities. Business links have also enriched the extra-curricular provision. The school participates in local sports and music competitions that provide good enrichment to the curriculum.

19. An appropriate draft policy on homework and a widely consulted home-school agreement are in place. Most parents have returned signed copies. The approach to homework is not yet consistent across the school and further improvements are suitably planned for in the school development plan.

20. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the school's systems for assessment. Assessment is now very good at all key stages and is used very effectively to inform planning. The school uses the local education authority's baseline assessment for pupils on entry. Nationally standardised assessments and accredited schemes are used where possible, and Key Stage 4 pupils are entered for a range of accredited courses including, amongst others, GCSE, Certificate of Achievement and the City and Guilds Diploma in Vocational Education.

21. The school has a comprehensive assessment and recording policy, which gives very clear guidelines to teachers. It includes policies on marking and annotating pupils' work. The annual review process is thorough and much appreciated by parents. They are provided with detailed information on progress towards targets set at the annual review. The school has worked hard to strengthen target setting and to ensure that individual education plans (IEPs) influence the work pupils follow. Individual education plans now contain priority targets in core subjects related directly to the National Curriculum. Targets are specific and measurable and each pupil's progress towards them is carefully tracked. Teachers' planning is informed by the progress pupils make towards their individual targets and lessons are modified accordingly. Staff have excellent awareness of what pupils should be learning next, which enables pupils to make good or very good progress. Records of achievement are thoughtful and well presented collections of work. Pupils are closely involved in the compilation of these records and value them greatly. At the end of Key Stage 4 or at age 19, all pupils are issued with a National Record of Achievement that records and celebrates notable personal achievement throughout their school career.

### **23. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

22. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and shows a strong improvement since the last inspection.

23. Pupils' spiritual development is good. The school now has a planned programme for daily assemblies and collective worship and complies with statutory requirements. Parents value the contribution the school makes to the development of pupils' belief in themselves and feel it has a strong influence on their good progress. Assemblies are thought provoking and appropriate, and provide good opportunities for personal reflection. The focus for assembly is often on moral themes that give good recognition to achievement and value the individual. The local rector leads several assemblies each term and works in the classrooms to develop pupils' understanding about beliefs and values. Pupils say prayers before meals. Some classes, particularly in the primary department, write and read their own prayers for assembly. Pupils learn to listen to music in assembly and sing hymns with joyful enthusiasm. Different religions are celebrated well in displays, assemblies and lessons, and in the daily life of the school.

24. Pupils' moral awareness is very good. Pupils learn to understand what is right and what is wrong by direct teaching of values in lessons, assemblies and circle-time, and in personal and social development lessons. They are taught to understand the consequences of actions and are encouraged to value each other and respect property. Pupils know the school rules and generally obey them. The staff consistently praise the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Parents appreciate the very good opportunities the school provides for pupils' moral development and for them to learn how to behave well. They find the information the school gives them on behaviour management particularly useful in helping them to support their child's good behaviour. There are particularly good opportunities for pupils to understand and reflect on feelings and values in literacy lessons, where stories often have a moral message.

25. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school has clear aims, which promote self-respect and self-confidence, tolerance and independence amongst pupils. In many lessons, teachers give pupils good opportunities to work in a group or in pairs. Pupils are co-operative and generous with each other and work sensibly together. Lunch-times and break-times are pleasant, social occasions where pupils follow well understood routines, make sensible choices and get to know each other in a social setting. Personal and social education provides good opportunities for pupils to prepare for each stage in their school life. Pupils stage a Christmas show and a harvest festival celebration that are attended by local senior citizens, friends in the community, ex-students and local primary school pupils. Through the school council, pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of democratic principles. Pupils have good opportunities to develop team work and leadership skills in sports fixtures and orienteering activities, and they take part in fundraising projects for a variety of charities, including Children in Need.

26. The strong belief of the school in acknowledging and welcoming difference is reflected in the good provision for pupils' cultural awareness. A variety of festivals is celebrated in assemblies, in religious education lessons and in good displays of pupils' work around the school. Different faiths and customs are taught through topic work and in a variety of subjects. A wide variety of different types of music from around the world is played in music lessons and in assemblies. In art, pupils study the different styles and approaches to painting and colour of other cultures. For example, when making Hindu masks, pupils talked about some of the beliefs, customs and life styles of the Hindu religion. Attractive displays in classrooms reflect cultural diversity. In English, stories are used from a range of cultures. Older pupils study Shakespeare and other classic texts. Representatives from different cultural and ethnic groups come into the school to run workshops. Pupils visit museums, theatres, art galleries and concerts as well as performing in drama productions and concerts in

school. Residential visits abroad, and to other parts of England, add to pupils' cultural experiences.

28. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

27.Procedures to support pupils' learning and personal development in school have been very effectively developed since the last inspection. These are a strength of the school and now provide an excellent basis for staff to monitor pupils' progress. A firm foundation for pupils' progress is made by the very good procedures for the induction of new pupils to the school. Pupils are involved, wherever possible, in agreeing targets for their annual reviews and individual education plans. Staff also provide excellent informal support for pupils' development, as they know pupils' abilities well and use every opportunity to encourage appropriate behaviour. Staff use circle-time (for younger pupils) and reviews with tutors (for older students), to promote progress in personal development. Pupils learn about being safe and keeping each other safe. The school has taken a lead in the 'Involving Pupils Project', which aims to involve pupils more closely in setting their own targets and being part of their own assessment and review.

28.The majority of the school's practices for monitoring and promoting attendance are at least satisfactory, and the school receives support in this from the educational welfare officer. However, in some cases, reasons for non-attendance are not recorded, which means that inadequate information is available for the monitoring of authorised and unauthorised absence. The school has worked with the education authority and transport contractors to ensure pupils arrive on time. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Registers are not completed consistently, and in some cases they are incomplete.

29.The support provided by therapists and other visiting professionals is excellent, mainly as a result of the high quality of liaison between all concerned. The speech and language therapist, in particular, is extremely effective in setting targets which form part of pupils' individual education plans alongside targets set by teachers. The school has recently arranged for a learning support assistant, with appropriate training, to work under the supervision of the therapist, so that increased support can be provided. This works extremely well to support pupils' communication skills. Therapists also attend annual review meetings and maintain good liaison with parents.

30.The school has excellent procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and any incidents of bullying. Significant improvements in individual pupils' behaviour are resulting from the consistent use of these procedures by all teachers and learning support assistants. Staff work hard to ensure that there are good relationships between pupils, encouraging them to help each other when appropriate. There is a designated teacher for child protection, and good procedures follow local guidelines, with all staff receiving regular guidance. Health procedures for first aid and administration of medicines are very good. Procedures for reporting accidents and incidents are carried out appropriately. A senior member of staff and a school governor carry out regular checks of health and safety. Despite the strenuous efforts



of the school to arrange for improvements to the premises through the local education authority or by grants from the Department for Education and Employment, a number of health and safety hazards remain as a consequence of the poor accommodation. A number of minor health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the headteacher, who took immediate action to resolve them.

### **32. Inclusion and integration**

31. The school has developed excellent arrangements for the inclusion and re-integration of pupils with moderate learning difficulties into mainstream local schools. Six Year 8 pupils have successfully been integrated, full-time, into a local high school. Pupils are making excellent progress and are very well supported by a teacher and two learning support assistants from Edith Borthwick School. There has been excellent liaison and co-ordination of this integration project between staff of Edith Borthwick and the staff at the receiving school. Pupils have been consulted throughout the process and their needs are very well catered for. They clearly feel part of the secondary school and do not wish to be distinguished from other pupils in any way. There is also a part-time integration of a Year 8 pupil into a local high school. Several pupils are integrating part-time into neighbouring primary schools and are making very good progress, again, due to excellent liaison and support. Pupils respond well to normal class procedures.

### **33. Partnership with parents and the community**

32. The previous report highlighted strong links with the local community. Happily, these are still strengths of the school and are still very good. The school contributes to the life of the community in many ways. An excellent example is the hosting of a youth club, for pupils at the school and from other schools, sponsored by a national bank. The school participates in local competitive sports leagues, and helps organise a county music competition. It also raises funds for good causes and joins with the local school and church in such events as Harvest Festivals, carol singing and Christmas shows. The school has good links with the community and provides opportunities for its pupils to take part in college taster courses and high quality work-experience placements. Pupils take part in community projects such as the Business Education Partnership volunteer scheme. For six years a strong partnership has existed between a large local insurance company and the school. The company provides regular staff volunteers in the classroom and for other activities, and also helps with mock job interviews for Key Stage 4 and Post 16 students. Many other local companies provide the work experience placements that allow the school to give students their first taste of work. The school itself provides training placements and work experience for a variety of students from other educational establishments, including a college of further education, a university and local careers and business partnerships. This further broadens pupils' contact with the wider community. These very good links have a very positive effect upon the personal development of pupils and help to promote their responsibility and skills of independence.

33. Wherever possible, the school supports the integration of pupils into local mainstream schools. Many of the older pupils spend part of their week at a local college of further education, which helps them make the transition between the school and life in the wider

community.

34. Information provided for parents is excellent. Home-school books and diaries are used to communicate regularly with parents, and are looked at daily by staff, but parents can also telephone direct to a classroom with any problem. The school brochure, annual report to parents by governors, and other written information, such as advice on how parents can help their child to read, are of the highest quality and distributed to all parents. There are frequent letters from school to parents about school events. Information provided in annual reviews, individual education plans, and Statements of Special Education Need is also of a high standard and provides suitable opportunities for parental contributions. Reports have clarity, provide relevant information on pupils' progress and state the areas of curriculum that are studied. Records of Achievement are also excellent and provide both pupil and parent with a detailed record of each child's successes.

35. Parental involvement in their children's learning is very good. Parents particularly value the ethos of the school and the standards of behaviour that the school instils in their children. Parents are encouraged to approach the school promptly with any problems they or their children have. There are suitable procedures for dealing with complaints and, although these are few, they are addressed in an appropriate manner. Most parents participate in their child's annual reviews and target setting, and many also take part in planning co-ordinated home and school work on changing pupils' inappropriate behaviour. They also appreciate the regular parent support groups and training sessions arranged for them by the school. For example, teachers provide parent workshops on Maketon signing. Homework has been the subject of recent consultation with parents, and as a result, a homework policy and strategy have been drawn up. Further work is still needed to ensure that all parents understand what the school aims to achieve through homework and the school has plans to do this.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **37. Leadership and management**

36. The school has an excellent ethos and this is attributable to the very strong sense of purpose that is very evident across the school with a focus on the achievements of pupils. Aims, values and policies are the product of consultations with parents and staff and they are disseminated in well set out documents, including the prospectus and staff handbook. These make it very clear what the school is trying to achieve through its curriculum and in teaching.

These aims and values are reflected very successfully in the schemes of work and policies of the school

37. The headteacher and senior management team lead by example through their high quality leadership and teaching and by their commitment to working with parents, staff, governors and professionals from other agencies. Management responsibilities are very clearly defined and delegated. Compliance with statutory requirements is very good. Job descriptions, management procedures, and the terms of reference of the governing body are all designed to give structure and support to the leadership and direction of the school. Regular, well-recorded meetings held by governors, the senior management team, key stage co-ordinators, and subject co-ordinators give strength and purpose to policy and decision making. The

headteacher and staff enjoy the fullest support and co-operation of the governing body, to whom they provide detailed written reports. Governors make regular visits to school and classrooms, and have linking roles for particular areas, such as literacy. This enables governors to have relevant experience of whether policies, curriculum, and teaching are effective. The excellent links that are forged with other schools, the local college and other professional agencies are strengths of the leadership of the school. These links provide for integration by pupils into mainstream schools, to support and enhance curriculum provision. Plans for the school to develop as a Multi-agency Resource Centre are progressing. The headteacher has excellent leadership qualities, as illustrated very well when organising a meeting of representatives from health and education.

38. There is a very good school development plan (SDP) that sets out detailed planning for the curriculum and other areas of the school over a period of five years. It includes predicted costs; delegates those who need to take action, and sets out clearly how success will be measured. A written summary of the progress of the school development plan is not made. This information is, however, gathered meticulously by the headteacher and given verbally or included in the various written reports to governors and staff. There is no regularly updated, written summary to give an overall picture of what has been achieved by the school development plan that would assist staff, governors and parents to know whether it is successful.

39. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection and has a very good capacity for further improvement. The senior management team has very good procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. Extensive audits, using questionnaires, direct observation of teaching, and other methods of collecting relevant data, have been carried out in many areas. The school development plan further supports monitoring in other areas of management by setting targets for quality assurance. Much of the information collected has been used to inform future planning, and to improve the quality of teaching. An example is the survey undertaken of annual reviews and individual education plans, which asked for views on their appropriateness from parents, staff and pupils, and then used the information gathered to make improvements. Some of the data obtained about pupil achievements and standards in certain subjects still have to be assessed and used creatively to support changes to curriculum or teaching methods.

40. The senior management and governors have been aware of shortcomings in the school's accommodation for many years. They have successfully introduced a number of important improvements. Their detailed risk assessments, planning documents and curriculum audits are well documented, and show that there is little more that they could have done to draw the local authority's attention to the remaining defects. Despite repeated representations, a number of key accommodation issues therefore remain unresolved, and this is unsatisfactory. The present arrangements that base the Key Stage 3 autistic pupils in the science classroom are unsatisfactory. Urgent action is required to ensure appropriate provision for the curricular needs of these pupils, and for their safety.

#### **42. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

41. Overall, the school benefits from experienced and well-qualified teaching and non-teaching

staff in all subjects. The number of teachers is about average for a school of this type. Effective deployment and very good planning ensure that maximum use is made of their skills and knowledge. The high quality of teaching reflects the very good match between teachers and the demands of the curriculum, with the exception of that for autistic pupils at Key Stage 3.

42. Learning support assistants make a significant and positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in the school. They take part in planning and in the assessment of the pupils, and their relationships with the pupils are very good. There are clear and appropriate job descriptions for all staff that are reviewed regularly.

43. Excellent record keeping by senior managers and a sound professional interview system (appraisal) support teachers in identifying their strengths and their training needs. Very good arrangements for the induction and professional development of teachers are effectively linked to the school development plan, and enhance the curriculum and teaching.

44. The same high quality is apparent in the additional training received by non-teaching staff. This has included courses for behaviour management, a National Vocational Qualification and training for work with children with autism. Teachers and learning support assistants have received in-house training recently in numeracy, literacy, information

technology and behaviour management. The headteacher and deputy provide training on a range of topics for staff of the school and they also train teachers in other schools across a range of special needs issues. In-service training for all staff has greatly improved since the last inspection and is now very good.

45. Accommodation is poor. Since the last inspection some improvements have been made to the school premises, but a number of shortcomings remain that directly affect pupils' progress and access to the curriculum. The school is too small for the increased numbers of pupils. Many classrooms are cramped and inappropriate to pupils' and teachers' needs. The accommodation for autistic pupils in Key Stage 3 is inappropriate and poor; it adversely affects their progress. They share a room designated as a science laboratory and their safety is compromised because science equipment is not secured adequately. The science laboratory itself is inadequate and unsatisfactory as a science facility, as it is too small and has very few specialist features. As such, it is not satisfactory for use either for science teaching or for children with autism.

46. There is no specialist area for music, and the current art room is located in a demountable classroom and also lacks specialist features. These shortcomings in accommodation severely restrict the breadth of curriculum in these subjects. The location of the school library is poor, and is inaccessible for pupils who are in wheelchairs, since it is in the first floor gallery overlooking the main hall. It also has an unsatisfactory number and range of books for the numbers of pupils. A number of classrooms also located on the first floor restrict wheelchair access. The main hall is too small and unsuited to physical education with pupils of secondary age. It is also cluttered with equipment and stored chairs. Pupils and students at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 have no separate recreational or leisure areas, and this too is unsatisfactory.

47. Across the school there is a chronic shortage of storage space and this exacerbates the effect of cramped conditions. Outside, the large grounds are well maintained, with a very good play area for pupils to enjoy, but the terrain is difficult to supervise efficiently. Boundaries are not sufficiently secure.

48. The governing body has addressed the above major shortcomings in an appropriate manner over a period of time, but with limited success. Plans have been drawn up in conjunction with the local education authority to secure appropriate accommodation for Key Stage 3 autistic pupils, but the project has still to be initiated.

49. The school is well maintained by a dedicated caretaker. Teachers and learning support staff take much care and attention to present pupils' work in an attractive way. Classrooms, although small, are made into pleasant, lively learning environments, considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work.

50. Resources are much improved since the last inspection. This is especially the case with information and design and technology where funding made available from the National Grid for Learning has been used wisely. The school has invested heavily in new computers, software and other learning equipment and materials, and these are now very good. Resources in music are very good. Resources are good in all other subjects except for science, physical education and French where they are satisfactory.

## 52. The efficiency of the school

51. The efficiency and financial planning in the school is much improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The staff, senior management team and governors work together to set key targets for action, and to determine how much they will cost to achieve, when they construct the school development plan. This takes account of both current and longer term needs to provide a high quality education and to support school improvement. The headteacher, finance committee and full governing body carefully check how money is spent and whether this has an effective upon standards across the school. Funding for the development of the Literacy Hour has been well used and similar importance is now being given to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Very good use is made of other additional funding.

52. The deployment of staff, including support staff, is very good. They have clear roles, current job descriptions and clearly delegated responsibilities. The professional development of all staff is closely linked to the school's needs. The teamwork between teachers and support staff is very good and supports the good progress made by the pupils.

53. Resources, greatly improved since the last report and covering all aspects of the curriculum, are very well organised, easily accessible, and very well used and maintained, the only exception being the library. The school's poor accommodation is used effectively, with the exception of the science room and library.

54. Administration and financial control are excellent. Administrative staff are friendly, helpful and efficient, and enable the headteacher and staff to concentrate on the work of the school and its pupils. Financial controls are firmly in place, and there are efficient and effective systems for financial management. In the previous inspection report there is a comment that no financial audit had been undertaken by the local education authority for several years, and an audit has not still not been carried out. This is unhelpful to the school. The school's private account is audited regularly.

55. The school successfully achieves its stated aims. It is highly valued by parents and pupils. Pupils make good progress in both academic and personal development. There is good teaching and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Leadership is very effective, with high standards of financial planning and control and very efficient use of resources. Unit costs are average for similar schools. Therefore, the school gives very good value for money.

## 57. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 57. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

56.Children under five make very good progress. In language and literacy, children extend their communications skills through vocalisation and gesture. They listen and respond appropriately, some using signing. They associate rhymes with objects in a game. Children are increasing their understanding of how books work. They recognise their own written names and those of others. In mathematics, children increase their understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes. They match and sort objects. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, children are extending their range of play skills and show very good progress in understanding cause and effect. They track objects in an ultra-violet light. In creative development, children recognise key words and phrases from known songs and have an awareness and recognition of colour.

57.The physical, personal and social development of the children is very good. Lower attaining children are successfully working on individual targets to improve their self-help skills, for example, when using the toilet, dressing and undressing, eating and drinking. Appropriately structured play promotes children's skills. They anticipate events in the class, making simple choices, taking turns and initiating communication. Children quickly settle into the routine of the classroom and attitudes and behaviour are good. They learn to share adult attention with other children and increase in their awareness of other children's moods. Cultural awareness is successfully developed through activities linked to celebrations from a range of faiths and special events such as birthdays.

58.Teaching is very good and has high expectations of participation and behaviour. There is a very good match between children's needs and tasks presented. Very good use is made of gesture and signing. The teacher successfully leads a very competent team of learning support assistants. Everyone works collaboratively, following very well timed and planned lessons that challenge and extend children's learning. There are very good links with other providers of Early Years education locally, including provision from other agencies such as health and social services. The teacher in charge does much of this work in her own time. The quality of information given to parents is excellent. Parents are fully involved in these vital early years, and through the use of home -school books and coffee mornings, parents are given many good opportunities to help their child continue learning at home.

59.There is an extensive and appropriate range of experiences in the Early Years curriculum plan. This covers very well the way the school plans for children's progress towards early learning goals. The curriculum links satisfactorily to the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum, the agreed syllabus in religious education, and the school's approach to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. A strong feature of the curriculum is the useful and appropriate separation in the documentation between what the children will learn and the activities to promote that learning, and these assist in the very good progress children make. Children respond very well to these activities which are very well structured through very detailed lesson planning. Children feel secure and are helped to gain a sense of their own success and achievement by means of challenging but realistic targets which take account of their special needs. Improvements in accommodation since the last inspection have greatly aided the range of planning and content of the curriculum for Early Years.

## 61. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### 61. English

60. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve standards in English since the last inspection. The careful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stages 1 and 2, and the close collaboration of teachers with the speech therapists have been highly effective. Overall, pupils make good progress in lessons, and over time they achieve their set targets. Progress is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 where the literacy hour and the influence of speech therapy have had a positive impact. Progress is good in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils make better progress in speaking and listening and reading than in writing as a result of the strong focus in the last two years on the development of oral communication and reading. Emphasis has been placed on enabling pupils to develop their English skills in other areas of the curriculum through the focus on literacy targets in topic work and in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs).

61. Speaking and listening skills are very good. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn more signs and symbols and increase their clarity and vocabulary in speech. They learn to take turns in speaking. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils follow simple requests, using cards with symbols on them. Higher attaining pupils answer questions, retell their news and recall facts from a visit. For example, they can explain why men wear a hard hat on a building site and can name parts of a building. Lower attaining pupils respond to their names on the register and return greetings through smiles, gestures and words. Some communicate their ideas and wishes through facial expression, gesture, or signing; others speak clearly. They reply to questions about their news and choices. Most pupils can 'name and do actions' when asked, using signing or spoken language. Some respond to the teachers' questions or prompts with single words or signs. They listen very carefully. Pupils use speech or signs to repeat nursery rhymes, and join in with songs to improve the intonation and rhythm of their communication. Pupils with complex difficulties on the autistic continuum learn to take turns, listen carefully and repeat phrases. By the end of Key Stage 2, lower attaining pupils respond to objects of reference and make choices by signing or speech. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 reinforce social skills and learn to greet adults in both formal and informal situations. They listen to each other carefully and respond to songs with enthusiasm, either by joining in or by gesture and action. Some, mainly higher attaining pupils, follow a sequence of instructions by listening carefully to their teacher. They can repeat two or three instructions in the correct sequence and some higher attaining pupils can alter and follow the sequence successfully. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils are extending their vocabulary and have a good range of descriptive words. Lower attaining pupils make clear choices and decisions using simple language in complete sentences. Pupils work in teams in drama, listening to each other carefully and giving and following instructions competently. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils tell others their news and discuss their work assuredly. Many pupils are confident in using language in a variety of formal and informal situations. For example, Year 11 pupils asked a visitor with her baby a variety of sensible questions. These ranged from the cost of childcare to the difference in relationships between mother and child and father and child. They were engrossed by the answers and made perceptive and sensitive comments in reply.

63.



62. Progress in reading is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy sharing books stories and rhymes. Many can name some letters of the alphabet. They know words have meaning and recognise some characters. Higher attaining pupils confidently talk about early books from the scheme. Pupils like books, make deliberate choices and can indicate the parts they particularly enjoy. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 know all the vowels and consonants in the alphabet both by name and sound. They are able to use phonic skills to attack new words and have an extensive sight vocabulary. The development of understanding of what they read often lags behind their actual reading accuracy. However, some pupils read simple stories for pleasure. Lower attaining pupils use symbols to help them read books from the reading scheme. Pupils with more complex difficulties make good and sometimes very good progress in identifying words, and developing signing. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils read aloud from books with some expression. They understand how books are organised. They learn to appreciate poetry and can identify rhyme and some figurative language. They have useful strategies to establish meaning and good word attack skills. Most pupils talk about their choices and preferences in books, enjoy reading aloud and are enthusiastic about books. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils read accurately and fluently a wide range of books and become independent readers. Lower attaining pupils work on computer programmes to increase their word attack skills and continue to develop their ability to use initial letter sounds, and contextual and picture clues, to help them decode unfamiliar words.

63. Progress in writing is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. By the end of Key Stage 1, a few pupils form the letters of their name, with the appropriate case letters. Higher attaining pupils work carefully on correct letter formation and can copy under the correct letters. Lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 2, have support with over-writing and tracing letters to write the first letter of their name. Higher attaining pupils, with some support, write a sentence and can use information technology to word process their work. They begin to use their own word-books and to understand simple punctuation. At Key Stage 3, with some adult support, most pupils can write simple sentences. A few pupils over-write or copy the sentences they dictate to adults, while others use a sentence-frame and to complete words or phrases. Some pupils are beginning to write more independently, with a more varied vocabulary. Writing is legible, with letters reasonably well formed and of even size. At Key Stage 4, pupils begin to write for a range of purposes and a wider audience. Higher attaining pupils write with feeling and imagination. For example, Year 11 pupils have composed an anthology, including favourite poems that they themselves have written and others by published poets. A few pupils at Key Stage 4 write in a cursive script with even and correctly formed letters. They are beginning to write in sentences that are organised, clear and arranged in sequence. Pupils are also developing very simple note taking but, information finding skills are limited.

64. Pupils use their knowledge, skills and understanding of English well across other subjects. For example, in mathematics, younger pupils know and read the words for shapes. In topic work there is a focus is on establishing key words. In personal and social education even pupils with complex difficulties can repeat two or three instructions in the correct sequence, usually without help.

65. Pupils at each key stage enjoy English lessons. They are highly motivated to succeed in reading and show particular interest in work in the literacy hour. Their attitudes to work are

usually positive, particularly where there is a high level of appropriate challenge. In the majority of lessons, most pupils willingly answer questions, listen to each other and are proud of their achievements. Pupils with more complex difficulties are enthusiastic and listen carefully to instructions. They behave appropriately, sitting in a circle and taking turns. Lower attaining pupils concentrate well for extended periods of time and are pleased at their success and that of others. Older pupils work well in a group or in pairs and organise their own books and equipment quickly and sensibly.

66. Overall, teaching is good and it is never less than satisfactory. Teaching is very good in Key Stage 2. A key feature of the very good teaching is the right balance of pace and challenge to extend and develop pupils' learning. In the primary department teachers bring stories and language alive in the literacy sessions by their enthusiasm and vivid teaching. They have good subject knowledge and are confident in a range of strategies and techniques. Most teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and understand their needs well through very clear individual education plans targets and detailed assessment. The best lessons in the secondary department are delivered with energy and gusto. Teaching is sharply focused and detailed, with clearly defined learning objectives that are well communicated to pupils. Teachers with classes of pupils with severe learning difficulties or more complex needs adapt the literacy lessons to meet their pupils' needs with skill and sensitivity. Teachers have put considerable time and effort into making sensory resources to supplement commercial resources for their literacy sessions, with the result that each session is carefully structured to the specific learning needs of each class. A focus by teachers on reading skills, the development of whole class teaching, and consistent use of symbols and signing, is successful in promoting good progress. The good assessment, recording and evaluation of pupils' reading, particularly in the primary department, ensure this progress is maintained. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of the lesson is slower, lessons are competent but rather mundane and pupils are more passive or unsettled. The most frequent type of homework set is reading which is usually done well, but not all teachers are consistent in their approach to homework overall.

67. The subject co-ordinator successfully manages the school's approach to literacy. The curriculum is carefully planned and structured for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, and is highly effective. The co-ordinator plans to carry this approach through into Key Stages 3 and 4 so that there is a whole-school response to the teaching of literacy. However, the co-ordination of English over four key stages is unwieldy since the introduction of accredited courses at Key Stage 4, and lacks the efficiency that a having separate primary and secondary English co-ordinators would achieve.

68. Assessment of specific skills, linked to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and specific standardised testing are in place for reading and language development. In Key Stage 4, pupils suitably follow a nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement syllabus and pupils are assessed across four modules through course work and supervised set tasks. Teachers keep very careful records of pupils' progress to ensure that they are learning the right things and their needs are being met.

69. Resources are generally good, both in quantity and quality. However, accommodation for English is unsatisfactory in some areas. Some classrooms are too small to allow a range of

English activities, and are not accessible to wheelchairs. Although there is a good range of books in classrooms, the library is unsatisfactory because the range of books is inadequate both in type and number. This impedes pupils' progress in information seeking and retrieval skills. The library is inaccessible to some pupils.

## 71. **Mathematics**

70. Overall progress in mathematics is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Although across the key stages progress is good, it ranges between very good and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, but is routinely good and very good in Key Stages 3 and 4.

71. By the end of Key Stage 1, progress is good. Pupils recognise and join in counting and action songs. They sort shapes in to sets. Most pupils recognise and name a circle, and higher attaining pupils name rectangle, square and triangle, and recognise shape words. They are beginning to sequence the day, and anticipate events. By the end of Key Stage 2, lower attaining pupils understand more and less, long and short. Some can draw long and short lines, cut ribbons or build a long line of toys. Higher attaining pupils can recognise numbers to 99, sequence numbers and makes simple additions. Many pupils know how to use a computer mouse and keyboard to operate a program to develop their skills of number recognition.

72. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils count in twos to 20 and in tens to 100. Higher attaining pupils count forward and backward. They recognise four equal parts as quarters of a whole and understand a half and a third. Teachers' records show that all pupils recognise common two and three-dimensional shapes and can match an object with its picture. Pupils understand what an angle is and recognise a right angle. Lower attaining pupils can place a protractor to measure an angle, and higher attaining pupils can measure the angle accurately. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use decimals in money calculations and can use a calculator. Some recognise time on a digital watch.

73. There is good use of mathematics across the school in other subjects. In the classes for younger pupils, registration and circle time are used as an opportunity for counting, or for learning the days of the week, the order of the day's lessons and the concept of passing time. Timelines are used in history to mark the approach of the millennium. Maximum and minimum thermometers are used when studying the changing weather in geography. Pupils weigh and measure in food and design and technology. Most classes, including those in Key Stages 3 and 4, have made a good start with using the lesson planning associated with the National Numeracy Strategy, and this is already making an impact on the pupils' performance in those classes.

74. Pupils' attitude to learning is predominately good and often very good, especially in Key Stage 2. In those very few lessons where pupils' attitudes are just satisfactory, they are responding to lessons that are inadequately planned and prepared. In the great majority of lessons pupils settle well and are willing to learn. Attention and concentration span is generally good, with pupils persevering for appropriate periods on their work. All pupils collaborate well when working in pairs or groups. Older pupils are well motivated and show a developing ability to work independently for reasonable periods. Relationships between pupils

and adults are always very good. Pupils respect their teachers, their classrooms and resources, and enjoy receiving praise for their efforts.

75. Overall the teaching of mathematics is good, and ranges between very good and satisfactory. In some classes at Key Stages 1 and 2, planning for the National Numeracy Strategy is not fully in place and a lack of detail reduces the impact of the teaching. Teaching is always at least good in Key Stages 3 and 4. All four National Curriculum Attainment Targets are covered and there is an appropriate focus on using and applying mathematics in real life situations. All teachers have at least satisfactory subject knowledge and an awareness of the needs of each individual pupil in their class. Most teachers are well prepared, have a confident presentation and appropriately high expectations of work and behaviour. Individual lessons are usually well planned with objectives in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers work as a team with learning support assistants, and their joint planning enhances many lessons. In the very good lessons, teachers enable pupils to acquire mathematical understanding through a range of teaching strategies and well-selected resources. Work is well matched to the ability of the pupils. A good balance between group work and individual programmes encourages pupils to work independently. Most lessons start briskly, with a short mental arithmetic session, followed by a review of relevant work from earlier lessons, and they maintain a good pace. The recording and assessment of pupils' progress are carried out in relation to the relevant programme of study and individual education plans. All teachers use praise well to encourage pupils and promote learning. Pupils' progress is greatly enriched by the effective work of the learning support assistants. Although older pupils are sometimes given tasks to complete at home, this is not yet a routine procedure.

76. The new subject co-ordinator offers effective leadership; has accomplished much in a short time, and prepared an impressive subject development plan. There is a good scheme of work and assessment criteria. The senior management team appropriately provides support. Although the co-ordinator checks the quality of teaching by other teachers, time for this needs to be increased to ensure a more consistent approach to the application at Key Stage 1 and 2 of the National Numeracy Strategy. The time allocation for mathematics is generally satisfactory, but lessons are not of uniform length and are often interrupted for assembly. Some external accreditation is available for all pupils, and appropriate consideration is being given to having more. There is a good range of equipment and materials.

## 78. Science

77. There have been improvements to teaching and the curriculum for science since the last inspection. Standards are now higher and the quality of teaching and learning, overall, is higher. Few lessons were available to be observed during the inspection. However, judgements are based on scrutiny of work in pupils' files, individual education plans and teachers' records.

78. By the end of Key Stage 1, progress is good. Pupils use science skills to understand the suitability of various materials for buildings and to learn that some materials are waterproof whilst other materials will leak or disintegrate on contact with water. By the end of Key Stage 2, progress is good. Pupils have examined which substances will react to magnets, and they know that magnetism will work through materials. Higher attaining pupils understand the effect of forces that make materials stretch, snap or bend. By the end of Key Stage 3, progress is good. Pupils review the functions of the blood and know that it conveys energy and vital building materials, as well as collecting the waste products of the body. Pupils

predict the changes to pulse-rates and know how to check the pulse rate of fellow pupils to confirm their predictions. Pupils ask sensible questions and are eager to predict the outcome of the experiments. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress in science lessons at the local college of further education. They successfully examine the effects of oxygen on metals by experiments in which metals are left covered in grease, or in water or vinegar. Pupils understand the five senses of the body and the importance of a balanced diet.

79. Overall, the teaching of science is good. In a good lesson seen at Key Stage 2, lower attaining pupils were able to relate a variety of foods to particular animals because of the careful planning of the teaching in presenting the lesson in easily managed stages. In another good lesson at Key Stage 3, the teacher enabled higher attaining pupils to investigate the characteristics of various substances because the pupils were challenged by the teacher's high expectations that they would succeed in an ambitious lesson. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, keep them involved, and use appropriate questioning and praise to encourage their progress.

80. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in all lessons. They show enthusiasm and are keen to participate in experiments. Pupils attending the college for lessons are particularly well behaved in an adult environment.

81. Resources for teaching science in school from Key Stages 1 to 3 are good. Science for Key Stage 4 pupils and Post-16 students is delivered at a nearby further education college by college staff. The college is well equipped. Whilst there has been a significant improvement in resources following the last inspection, there has been a lack of support and advice to develop the subject. The science room is inadequate for its purpose and inefficiently used. The room is shared as a base with Key Stage 3 pupils who have autism. This is an unsatisfactory arrangement. At present the poor accommodation for science hinders the delivery of science for all pupils and students at the school.

82. Despite the long-term absence of the subject co-ordinator, the subject remains well managed by senior staff. There is a well-thought out curriculum with secure links to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There are clear arrangements for the science curriculum to contribute towards various topics taught at Key Stages 1 and 2. Assessment is also of a high standard with monitoring, recording and evaluation ensuring both effective curriculum review and information to inform pupils' individual education plans. Plans for pupils to take accreditation in the form of a nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement in science are well advanced.

#### 84. **Information technology**

83. Progress at each key stage is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils learn how to use a mouse and operate simple programs. They learn how to interact with the computer in an effective manner and begin to understand the cause and effect of their decisions. By the end of Key Stage 2, progress continues to be good; pupils use letter and word recognition programs to develop their skills. Number blends and computation skills are similarly supported by appropriate software. Pupils learn how to use simple word-processing skills. They can open and close files and use a drop-down menu. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4,

progress continues to be good. Higher attaining pupils learn how to 'log on' to the school computers and work on Windows based programs using mouse and keyboard skills. Some pupils use desktop publishing skills to write a simple report and create posters. A few higher attaining pupils research information from the Internet for school topics. There are good examples in English, where a popular television programme's web-site has been searched for information; also in art, where pictures and further information are found on a particular religion. Lower attaining pupils work on specialist software that supports their literacy skills.

84. Pupils' attitude to learning is good. They enjoy their time using the computer and show very good concentration levels. When pupils need to share equipment, they work together well. Behaviour is always good and motivation is high. Older pupils enjoy being able to use the Internet to explore information that is relevant to their studies.

85. Teaching is good. Teachers generally have good personal skills in information technology. These have been supported well by the very good in-service training opportunities that the school has provided. Teachers are keen to keep up to date with new ideas on the availability and use of relevant software. Lessons are planned well, with very good attention to the relevant use of appropriate software to support learning. Teachers use the digital camera very successfully for recording pupils' progress, and good use is made of tape recorders for work on language.

86. The subject is managed well. Curriculum planning is good and has improved since the last inspection with good attention given to the demands of the National Curriculum. This is reflected well in lessons. Teachers and learning support staff have good opportunities to contribute to the development of the subject through the team that represents the upper and lower school. The school makes good use of information disseminated by national initiatives. Assessment is variable across the school, and few teachers have clear procedures to measure achievement. The school is aware of this weakness and is making appropriate plans to develop further.

87. A technician makes a significant contribution to both the maintenance of equipment and the understanding of the capabilities of the hardware. The resources for the subject have been significantly improved since the last inspection and are now good. Good investment, in conjunction with national initiatives, has been made, and for the future the school is considering wireless technology for networking computers. Resources are very good and well monitored and supported, and the school has undertaken a full audit of both software and hardware. Older hardware is well maintained and remains valued by some teachers. In Key Stage 2, some computers are at inappropriate heights for some younger pupils, who are not able to reach the keyboard and mouse comfortably. The arrangements for the siting of these computers should be reviewed.

#### 89. **Religious education**

88. Progress is always at least satisfactory and often it is good. This maintains the profile observed in the previous inspection. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1. From the evidence available in scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' records, progress is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils recall what they did at a recent harvest festival, respond empathetically

to the story of Rama and Sita and see simple connections between Christmas and Divali. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils recount their recollections of a visit to a synagogue and the artefacts they held and saw. They remember that the scrolls are read 'backwards', and higher attaining pupils can name the Menorah and know the meaning of 'shalom'. Pupils remember and compare features of churches. For example, they describe the Bishop's chair in Chelmsford Cathedral and recognise the dove as a Christian symbol of peace. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils successfully complete the values and beliefs module of the Youth Award Scheme.

89. Pupils' response is always at least satisfactory and usually good. Pupils listen to teachers attentively, are interested and become involved in the lesson. They are keen to answer questions. Concentration is generally sustained well. They listen to each other's answers politely, showing good skills in speaking and listening and most contribute in discussion times. Older pupils complete written work in a competent manner.

90. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, and in the majority of lessons it is good. Teachers have a secure grasp of the subject. Planning is effective, with the main points of the lesson clearly expressed. They have high expectations of behaviour and generally pupils are able to meet them. Teachers manage behaviour well and have a good relationship with pupils. They allow pupils to elaborate their opinions and treat their views with respect. Time is used well and the last few minutes of most lessons are used to assess pupils' understanding. In all lessons there is a realistic balance between oral and written work.

91. Good leadership continues to develop the subject well. The policy and scheme of work meet the requirements of the local authority agreed syllabus, and their use ensures that pupils make progress at all key stages. Although there are overall subject assessment criteria, suitably modified for each pupil, the component modules do not clearly identify which aspects are to be assessed in each. There are very good religious artefacts and a wide range of resources that are used well.

### 93. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

#### 93. **Art**

92. High standards in art have been maintained since the last inspection and, at some key stages, have been improved upon. Accreditation through GCSE has been achieved for pupils at Key Stage 4. Clear targets in pupils' individual education plans contribute significantly to pupils' progress.

93. Pupils' progress in art is, in most lessons, very good or better. Occasionally, when teaching does not adequately meet the needs of pupils at Key Stage 3, their progress is unsatisfactory. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, as judged from a small number of lessons, pupils' reports, discussion with teachers and displays of pupils' work, pupils make very good progress. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, where teaching is of a very high standard, pupils make excellent progress, and many achieve success in their GCSE examination.

94. At Key Stage 1, pupils produce very effective work as teachers encourage them to explore



a range of media around the current topic on houses. Lower attaining pupils use brushes successfully; they finger- paint, and print with blocks of different textures. Some higher attaining pupils draw a picture of a house by using a computer program. At Key Stage

2, higher attaining pupils produce very attractive, carefully crafted paper-sculpture. A display in the school hall of hedgehogs made with straws showed great attention to detail. Pupils with severe learning difficulties produce, with help from staff, a high quality display of sensory squares which they later enjoyed exploring.

95. At Key Stage 3, pupils work in media including lino-cutting, pastel, and clay. Pupils use charcoal to draw scenes on a theme of war and showed skill and concentration in beginning their work. Some pupils are developing skills with watercolours, learning the correct terms and enjoying the effects of producing a wash. However, where lower attaining pupils' complex needs are not adequately planned for, they make little progress.

96. At Key Stage 4, pupils in the first year of GCSE course-work develop techniques with many materials, including three-dimensional work. They draft a design from a sketch and select materials according to their effectiveness and appropriateness. When producing masks representing Hindu gods, pupils use the Internet and CD-ROM to research sources; adapt their work to suit a particular purpose, and make decisions about the effectiveness of colour. Many pupils are working towards success in their examination.

97. Pupils gain great enjoyment from their lessons and good teaching helps to build their self-confidence. They work with concentration. At Key Stages 3 and 4, they persevere for long periods, co-operate with each other, and help a friend who has missed a lesson. They show pride in their work and, due to excellent teaching, are very respectful of each other's efforts.

98. Teaching at all key stages is usually very good or better. Teachers' knowledge of individual pupils' abilities and use of detailed individual education plans help pupils make at least very good progress. Schemes of work are thorough and support teachers' planning. In the best lessons, excellent planning and the teacher's infectious enthusiasm encourage pupils to work boldly and effectively. Teachers praise efforts of pupils and this raises their confidence. They teach appropriate vocabulary which pupils use appropriately.

99. The co-ordinator has completed a very good scheme of work since the last inspection, and this has helped all teachers, including non-specialists, to teach the subject successfully. Accommodation for art is inadequate, with insufficient room for groups of pupils to work separately; no space for clay or larger three-dimensional work, and very limited areas for displaying either resource materials or pupils' work. The co-ordinator has purchased CD-ROMs to economise on space, but this does not compensate for the poor quality accommodation.

### **Design and technology**

100. Progress is good across the school and by the end of each key stage. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve the subject since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is good, with pupils having opportunities to explore a range of materials and construct their ideas within the topic for the term. Photographic evidence of a technology day shows that pupils use small hand tools for drilling, sawing, painting, cutting and creating models that they are clearly proud of. Older pupils in the lower school work

with clay; make moving skeletons and beads of an Egyptian style, and construct with building blocks. They successfully make artefacts that are linked with their topic. In food technology, pupils explore and make 'Roman Toast' in a topic linked to history. They follow simple recipes that give them opportunities to operate in a kitchen for the first time.

101. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, specialist lessons in design and food technology promote some very good results. Pupils use design-and-make strategies and achieve very good progress, making simple models from different materials. For example, they create a simple sailing yacht and bird-box from wood, a plastic photo frame, or a metal spider.

102. Pupils enjoy their lessons. Behaviour is good, and pupils work with each other very well. They enjoy the challenge of working with different materials and are well motivated. Older pupils show pride in their work.

103. Teaching across the school is good, with some very good practice by the specialist design and technology and food technology teachers. Lessons are planned well, interesting and relevant, and are delivered at an appropriate pace. Relationships with pupils are very good, and pupils respond well to the teachers' expectations. Subject knowledge is very good, and there are clear strategies for cross-phase curriculum discussion.

104. The subject is well led and the curriculum has been thoroughly revised since the last inspection with cross-phase work effectively matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is reflected in the good quality subject documentation. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress are good. Very good attention is given to appropriate health and safety issues. Learning resources have been much improved since the last inspection, but there remain some difficulties for teachers in the lower school, with no access to water in the classrooms. There is a good workshop with a range of both large and small tools, and a very good food technology section.

## 106. **Geography**

105. Geography was observed for one lesson in Key Stage 3. In Key Stages 1 and 2 it is taught within a topic approach and there was no geographic focus during the inspection week. The subject is not taught at Key Stage 4. Overall progress at each key stage is satisfactory. For Key Stages 1 and 2, this judgement is based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, and teachers' planning and records. Pupils compare different types of transport and some of the main features of each. Information technology is extensively used to help provide their pictures and support their writing. Pupils also know the names of geographic features such as mountain, river and valley. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are able to discuss what are natural and man made features in a landscape and have a simple understanding of earthquakes and volcanoes. They know the symbols used in television weather forecasts; understand the Beaufort Scale for wind force, and can read temperatures using a maximum and minimum thermometer.

106. Pupils enjoy geography and respond well. They sustain concentration and interest, and have a good relationship with their teachers. In discussion, pupils show an interest in the subject and are pleased to demonstrate their knowledge.

107. At Key Stage 3, in the one lesson observed, teaching was satisfactory. Planning is at least sound and rooted in the good scheme of work, supported by clear assessment criteria. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and questioning is used successfully to check pupils' understanding. The policy and scheme of work have been extended since the last inspection and now meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Subject leadership is good. Resources are good.

## 109. **History**

108. Only one history lesson was seen because of the way the timetable is organised. A scrutiny of work and a survey of teachers' records show that pupils make very good progress over time in developing skills of research and increasing their knowledge and understanding of history. In the very good lesson at Key Stage 2, the teacher planned the lesson well on the Ancient Egyptians. As part of a series of lessons on civilisation, pupils learn about the food that those people grew and farmed. Pupils make very good progress in the lesson; they improve their historical research skills, and collect information about the feasts prepared and the types of food that were eaten by ancient Egyptians. Pupils make connections to other lessons. For example, they recognise the importance of the Nile to the people for the farming of grapes and cereals. Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They are proud of their efforts and enjoy a good relationship with the teacher.

109. The subject is well managed. There have been improvements to the teaching of history since the last inspection. Pupils now make very good progress at all key stages, and there is a scheme of work at Key Stage 3 that follows National Curriculum Programmes of Study. History is not taught at Key Stage 4. At Key Stages 1 and 2, history is a significant element in the primary topics. In some, such as a topic on the Ancient Egyptians, it is the lead subject. In other topics, there is still a clear contribution to the overall delivery of the theme. For example, when working on the topic of buildings, pupils learn about the various styles of house through the ages. Careful pupil records are kept and annual reports show in detail the aspects of history that are covered and progress pupils make. The subject co-ordinator does not have time allocated to evaluate the teaching of the subject but does carry out regular reviews of pupils' learning. Very good use is made of the local area to support the teaching of the subject. Pupils have enjoyed following a day at a mock Victorian school at a local castle, dressing up in the costumes of that time and studying a Victorian classroom. They have visited a Tudor Hall and, on a residential visit to Wales, they saw how people worked in mines. There are satisfactory resources of books and CD-ROMs but few artefacts. However, teachers borrow books and artefacts from the schools' library service to support topic work.

## **Modern foreign language (French)**

110. By the end of Key Stage 3, progress is good overall but can be variable in some lessons. Higher attaining pupils build up a vocabulary of French words by reading and writing French words next to common items such as a book or table, and words for family members. By selecting one of four given words, they complete short sentences such as 'J'habite une maison.'

For lower attaining pupils, the curriculum focuses more on French life and culture. Using the teacher's worksheet, they tick a preferred French food named in French. They enjoy French songs, including a counting song, and some learn about the story of 'Le Petit Prince'. All pupils have had the opportunity to experience the French language, food and culture at first hand in a successful trip to Boulogne. At Key Stage 4, progress is very good. Higher attaining pupils broaden their vocabulary and write key phrases such as 'Comment s'appelle votre tante?' Lower attaining pupils name body parts and colours.

111. Good use is made of the French language skills of some staff in the better lessons, and this provides pupils with a good model of spoken French. Where teaching is best there is very good use of targets from pupils' individual education plans and the lesson proceeds at a lively pace encouraging pupils to work with confidence and enthusiasm. In lessons where teaching is only satisfactory, teachers have not planned for individual pupils' needs and do not make good use of the time available. Pupils lose interest and less able pupils, have little opportunity to participate. The curriculum is very well planned and is appropriate to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Commercial schemes used by teachers are satisfactory for higher attaining pupils, but more appropriate resources are lacking for lower attaining pupils, though teachers at times make good use of computer programmes.

## **Music**

112. Pupils make very good progress in music. Records kept, and examples on videos and audio-tapes from festivals and in-school shows, demonstrate that pupils perform to high levels. A recent outstanding example is the school's entry into a national competition to compose a song for the Millennium in which they got through to the regional finals, a remarkable achievement as they were in competition against mainstream schools. The school takes part in yearly music festivals for special schools in Essex. The festival is organised by the school's deputy headteacher, who is the subject co-ordinator. An outstanding feature of the pupils' attainments is their ability to listen, at length, to a variety of music. They are encouraged to bring in music that they enjoy, and are prepared to listen to more classical forms of music and then to discuss the qualities of the different types.

113. Pupils behave very well in their music lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and enjoy the music making, and the opportunities to appreciate listening to music from a wide range of artists such as Holst, Puccini, Lloyd-Weber and the Spice Girls. They are keen to contribute their opinions about the music played and make sensible suggestions and comments.

114. The teaching of music is very good and has sustained a high standard since the last inspection, remaining a strong feature of the school. Teachers prepare lessons carefully allowing pupils to enjoy themselves and this challenges the pupils to listen carefully to the effects that composers produce by using different instruments when playing 'sad' or 'happy' music. Teachers have ambitious expectations for the pupils. For example, teachers explain the grouping of the principal sections of the orchestra and anticipate that pupils will be able to identify these groups in classical pieces. Teachers show pupils that tempo and volume can make a difference to the listening to music. They involve all pupils and give appropriate tasks to pupils in line with their attainments, using praise effectively to encourage pupils to try

harder. Above all, teachers, by their enthusiasm, impart a love of music of different types to the pupils.

115. The subject is very well managed, and the curriculum for music is imaginatively planned and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Assessment procedures are also very good and help teachers to plan for the learning needs of the pupils. The school is very active in local and national music festivals and runs the musical events for Harvest Festivals and Christmas. However, in recent times there has been little use made of visiting performers or outings to musical shows. There are very good resources for the teaching of music, including electronic keyboards, acoustic guitars, electric drums and a range of multi-cultural instruments. The teaching of music is hindered by the lack of a specialist room where the sounds of music making will not disturb other classes.

### **117. Physical education**

116. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, progress overall is good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in gymnastics and know how to move across a bench in different ways; they learn to make a sequence of balancing movements requiring co-ordination of arms and legs. In swimming, progress is generally very good with many pupils able to swim several metres using recognisable strokes. Non-swimmers increase in confidence, and can climb in and out of the pool unassisted and move about the pool using buoyancy supports. This progress is sustained at Key Stage 3. Pupils know the rules of indoor hockey, understand about team games and compete well. They understand that they have to practise in order to improve, and they work hard with sustained effort and concentration on the tasks set. They work co-operatively, and behaviour and relationships are good. They are eager to take part in activities, and show increased awareness and competence in the personal skills of dressing, turn taking, listening to and following instructions.

117. By the end of Key Stage 4 and Post 16, lower attaining students make good and sometimes very good progress in learning the social skills necessary to use a local leisure centre swimming pool. They have a very good attitude, behave appropriately in public places, and work hard to increase their swimming skills. Higher attaining students make very good and often excellent progress. Without adult supervision, they walk from school to a local college of further education sports hall, where they participate in multi-sports activities under the direction of college staff and trainee sports supervisors. They play badminton, short tennis, carpet bowls, and table tennis. Most show a good level of skill, know the rules and how to compete successfully. Behaviour is very good, and relationships with one another and with the college staff are also very good.

118. Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. It is best in swimming, where it provides a lot of individual tuition and is very well supported by learning support assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. For pupils using the local college of further education for sports, a high level of expertise by college staff is provided, and there is very good organisation for activities, with close collaboration from school staff. Teaching of gymnastics and games in the school hall is satisfactory but lacks flair, with too much lesson time spent on setting up equipment.

119. There have been improvements in the curriculum and management of the subject since the previous inspection, with the introduction of a scheme of work, a subject co-ordinator, and a subject action plan linked to the school development plan. However, at present the

temporary co-ordinator is not a physical education specialist. More detail needs to be presented in the scheme of work to give a better indication of the time allocated for each area of the curriculum. A suitable range of physical education activities is offered to pupils, including horse riding for younger and lower attaining pupils. There is also excellent collaboration with health service physiotherapists and occupational therapists to provide support to pupils' physical developmental needs. A recent excellent example of this is the introduction of a programme for Rebound Therapy (exercises using a full-sized trampoline). Resources are generally good. The school hall and dining room is only satisfactory for physical education activities for younger pupils up to Key Stage 2. The school makes very good arrangements to augment provision by the extensive use of local community swimming and sporting facilities.

### **121. Personal and social education**

120. Personal and social education is taught in some discrete lessons, during form times at the beginning and end of the day, and as appropriate in other lessons. Progress is good at all key stages. It is particularly evident in Key Stage 4 and Post 16, where pupils have greater opportunity to mix socially outside school, when on work experience and at the local college. These pupils also successfully complete the Youth Award Scheme that includes a large element of training in life skills. For some pupils, there is the goal of re-integration into mainstream provision. All pupils have an appropriate understanding of social and moral principles, and follow the school discipline codes. There are many examples of collaborative work amongst pupils. Parents are pleased with the positive effect that the values and attitudes promulgated by the school have on pupils and feel that the school achieves high standards of behaviour.

121. In the few discrete lessons observed, teaching is good. A theme for the week is established at the Monday morning assembly, and on Friday pupils have an opportunity to celebrate their own successful work or share in the success of others. Lessons are generally well planned and organised. Teachers know the pupils well, and each pupil has an individual education plan with appropriate targets in this aspect that enables the teacher to focus on each pupil. Many classes have established their own rules by general negotiation. Tutorial periods are used to discuss behaviour, or establish good independent social skills. The school has very high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour. Opportunities to include personal and social education in other subjects occur in English, food technology, art and physical education. Further opportunities are provided by the school council, local visits, residential experiences, links to the community, work experience, college courses and visiting speakers on a wide variety of topics. A good policy and scheme of work are closely linked to the school's values and expectations.

### **123. Autistic Resource Bases**

122. Pupils in the Primary Autistic Resource Base (ARB1) make very good progress. Secondary pupils at Key Stage 3 who remain in the Resource Base provision are making much less successful progress than the majority of pupils at Key Stage 3 included in the main body of the school.



123. At Key Stage 1 and 2, there is extensive understanding of the particular needs of pupils on the Autistic Spectrum of Disorders (ASD) and teaching is very good. Very detailed planning ensures the team of four classroom assistants is very effectively used to support the broad range of learning objectives within the school's curriculum. Subjects are appropriately modified so that they address the particular needs of pupils with ASD. The teacher in ARB1 works very closely with the speech and language therapist to develop very effective individual pupil language programmes for pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis upon daily living skills, social communication, and creating an environment where pupils develop in confidence and independence. This contributes to the very good progress of pupils over time. They enjoy the structured routines of the class. The ability of pupils to predict the sequence of activities planned for them reduces pupils' anxiety when activities end and new ones begin. Within these known and familiar structures to sessions, pupils can maintain and build upon skills and understanding. Teaching increases the number of ways that pupils can make their wishes known to others and this reduces anti-social behaviour. This is greatly appreciated by parents. Very effective use is made of action songs and repetitive rhymes to help pupils to focus and to provide a secure environment that will increase opportunities to develop expressive language. Excellent use is made of short literacy sessions where simple stories, such as the Three Little Pigs, are retold using props made in design and technology lessons. Pupils are able to repeat phrases from these stories. The class timetable does not accurately reflect the broad range of curriculum activities achieved. This is a relative weakness. Information technology skills are taught, but computers distract some pupils and this limits their use in supporting other areas of the curriculum as fully as they might. Only limited use is made of digital images, word processing and symbols that accompany words, especially symbols depicting emotions and simple concepts, and more could be achieved.

124. Pupil responses are very well assessed over time on individual targets. This includes a record of how frequently the pupil has had to be re-focussed on to the task and how much help was needed to complete tasks. Scrutiny of these assessments illustrates the very good progress being made. Pupils are making very good progress at learning to be part of a group, taking turns, listening and imitating, making simple choices, understanding and using simple vocabulary.

125. The curriculum is well supported by visits, including a residential trip to Wales. This visit brought to life areas of history and geography and gave an appreciation of man's impact on his environment. Pupils are able to make simple comparisons of their lives in Essex with those of people who lived long ago in a different part of the country.

126. At Key Stage 3, the recently opened class base is much less successful. The newly appointed teacher has made some good relationships with the pupils in this provision, but some unsatisfactory elements are apparent. The curriculum is too narrow and does not ensure appropriate access to the school's Key Stage 3 curriculum. This is a serious weakness in provision. The accommodation is poor. The use of the science room as a class base inhibits gains made by pupils when in ARB1 in important areas such as independent learning strategies and independent life skills. The pupils have some limited access to the facilities used by other Key Stage 3 pupils, but the use made of these is neither sufficiently planned nor based on the school curriculum model for Key Stage 3. Half of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory. Pupils are not learning appropriate strategies. Achievements gained in Key

Stage 1 and 2 are barely maintained, and there is evidence of regression and erosion of skills. Some of this may be due to the nature of pupils' autism, but there is evidence that insufficient preparation of pupils for the transition and lack of suitable curriculum and facilities are more likely influences. The school recognises these weaknesses and has planned appropriate changes

#### **128. Post 16 (Further Education Programme)**

127. Progress of students in the further education programme is good. Students are well prepared for further supported education and the world of work. They develop good personal and social skills through such opportunities as the very well organised residential trips. In all aspects of the programme, students are encouraged to achieve personal goals that are carefully targeted by individual educational plans. Progress in basic skills of numeracy, literacy and communication is good overall and sometimes very good.

128. Teaching in the further education programme is good. There are clear schemes of work designed for each student, with good access to vocational preparation and appropriate personal and social development skills. Lessons are delivered in the context of an adult environment, where very positive relationships promote an ethos of learning and productivity. Relationships between staff and students are very good, with staff encouraging students to support each other. Learning support staff make a significant contribution to the programme and work effectively as a team with teaching staff.

129. The curriculum is well ordered and is clearly mapped out for each student. Staff have worked hard to develop modules of work that are appropriate to the wide range of needs of students. They take into account the need to prepare students for work opportunities, and there is a well-organised work experience scheme where students may be placed on a farm, a supermarket, in a shop or with a removal company. Staff work hard to relate work experience to each pupil's individual aptitude.

130. Assessment is continuous and leads to very good records of achievement for each student. Students contribute regularly with their own self-evaluations. External accreditation is achieved through appropriate nationally accredited programmes and internal certification, offered through attendance on the link courses at the local further education college.

131. Pupils' behaviour and attention to the programme is good. Pupils respect teachers and work steadily in lessons. They work well together and help each other when necessary. They are willing participants and enjoy the programme. Concentration in lessons is good, and pupils co-operate well with staff.

132. Accommodation, in two demountable classrooms, is just adequate for teaching space. The classrooms are located next to a primary school playground that is often very noisy. This is not helpful for less able pupils who may require a more peaceful environment. There is, moreover, no appropriate independent area for pupils to socialise in. Staff have made very good use of the available buildings which have been skilfully adapted to promote an effective adult-style environment. Good photographs of students in their various activities are displayed around the classrooms. These support, celebrate and remind students of their achievement. There are good computers and software resources. Resources for the Further

Education programme are good, with very good use made of the links with a local college of further education.

## **134. PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **134. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

133. The inspection was undertaken between 15th and 19th November 1999 by eight inspectors. A preliminary visit was made to the school by the Registered Inspector to meet pupils, staff and governors. A meeting for parents was held and their views recorded. Parents' responses to questionnaires were analysed. Prior to the inspection, inspectors read a wide range of well presented and detailed documentation provided by the school. This included policies, the prospectus, the governors' annual report to parents, staff and governors' handbooks and the previous inspection report. Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and staff, governors, parents, other professionals and pupils. Inspectors attended a meeting of the school council. Swimming and physical education lessons at off-site venues were observed. All teachers were observed teaching. One hundred and twenty-five lessons or parts of lessons were observed and all subjects inspected. Pupils' work was scrutinised, together with a sample of pupils' statements, annual reviews, reports and individual education plans, as well as various other pupil records. Many other observations were recorded, including those made during mealtimes, break-times, lunch clubs, and the arrival and departure of pupils. Accommodation and resources were inspected. The work of pupils integrating into local mainstream schools was reviewed. Students on work experience placements and those attending link courses at the local college of further education were visited.

## 134. DATA AND INDICATORS

### 136. Pupil data

Y R - P	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
16	156	151	156	25

### 136. Teachers and classes

#### 136. Qualified teachers (Y R - P 16)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	21.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	7.2

#### 136. Education support staff

Total number of education support staff:	37
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	825

### 136. Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
	£
Total Income	1082314.00
Total Expenditure	1073754.00
Expenditure per pupil	6972.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	31711.00
Balance carried forward to next year	40271.00

## 136. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	156
Number of questionnaires returned:	67

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	52.2	46.4	1.4	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	73.9	24.6	1.4	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	35.0	48.3	15.0	1.7	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	55.1	40.6	2.9	1.4	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	63.8	34.8	1.4	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	67.2	28.4	4.5	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	54.4	33.8	10.3	1.5	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	42.9	36.5	14.3	4.8	1.6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	70.1	26.9	3.0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	61.8	27.9	7.4	2.9	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	73.5	22.1	4.4	0	0