

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BARNES FARM JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Chelmer Village, Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115019

Headteacher: Mr T Barrett

Lead inspector: Mrs June Punnett

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 255435

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Junior
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	342
School address:	Henniker Gate Chelmer Village Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM2 6QH
Telephone number:	01245 467973
Fax number:	01245 461947
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Lumley
Date of previous inspection:	March, 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Barnes Farm Junior School is a larger-than-average, community junior school for boys and girls who are 7-11 years old. It has 342 pupils organised in 12 classes. The school is situated in Chelmer Village to the east of Chelmsford in Essex, and the pupils live mainly in the immediate area. The social circumstances of families that attend the school are more favourable than those found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Forty-eight pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning difficulties, but very few have statements to outline more complex learning difficulties. The majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and three are learning English as an additional language. The school gained a Schools Achievement Award in 2002 for academic performance. Pupils usually join the school with above average standards of attainment, although there are yearly variations.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17826	June Punnett	Lead inspector	Art and design, music, English as an additional language
09569	Jan Leaning	Lay inspector	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Science, physical education, special educational needs
27544	Sandra Herbert	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, geography and history
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school benefiting from good leadership and management and overall good teaching.** The school's ethos is very good and promotes a very good atmosphere in which to learn. Consequently, pupils achieve well and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- As a result of the overall good quality of teaching and learning pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above or above average by the age of eleven
- Pupils' attitudes to work, their personal development and the quality of relationships within the school promote a very good atmosphere in which to learn
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- The leadership and management of the school are good
- The provision for pupils' care, health and safety are very good
- The procedures that help teachers to keep track of pupils' progress are not used sufficiently well to help teachers plan lessons
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and pupils are insufficiently involved in evaluating their own work
- There are too few opportunities for subject co-ordinators to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning by observing other teachers teaching

**The school has made good improvements since the last inspection in March 1998.** Improved standards were recognised by a Schools Achievement Award in 2002. All the previous key issues have been tackled well. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly through improved teacher knowledge and better curriculum planning. Standards in religious education, music and physical education are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	B	A	B
Mathematics	B	B	B	C
Science	A	B	A	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

**Pupils' achievements are good.** They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment as a result of the good quality teaching. Standards were higher in the 2003 than in the 2002 national tests, but vary from year to year according to the standards on entry to the school. Standards observed during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science, and above average in ICT, religious education and physical education. Standards reached in music are average. No secure judgements could be made about other subjects. Data shows that by the end of Year 6, over a five-year period, the school achieved above the national trend for all core subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The very few pupils with English as an additional language achieve well as they are clearly identified. They are identified early and given demanding work to make the best of their skills. The more able, and gifted and talented pupils make good progress in their learning as a result of challenging work.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are developed well.** Pupils behave well, respect other people's views and have very good attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy school and attendance rates are very good when compared with those found nationally. Parents contribute strongly to pupils' achievements in these areas.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good.**

**The good teaching and learning results in pupils learning quickly and making good progress.** Teachers are well prepared, and are skilled at making lessons interesting so that pupils enjoy learning. They give pupils the confidence to attempt difficult work and take risks with their answers to questions. There are good assessment systems in English, mathematics and science to evaluate and track pupils' progress, although teachers do not always use this information effectively when planning their lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language is good and ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn.

The curriculum is planned well to provide teachers with guidance for lesson planning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum. A good programme for personal, social and health education teaches pupils how to live healthily. The very good partnership with parents makes an effective link between home and school. The provision for pupils' care, health and safety is very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher shares his clear vision with all staff, parents and governors. All are firmly committed to raising standards further. Governors have a good grasp of their responsibilities. Finances are well managed and the principles of best value are applied when considering purchases. All statutory requirements are met. Good management and good financial systems ensure the school runs smoothly.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The relationships between the school and parents are good. Parents have a very positive sense of belonging to this family school. They like the school's high expectations for behaviour and academic work, and their children enjoy coming to school. Apart from a desire to increase the size of the accommodation they made no significant criticisms of the school. The inspection team agrees with the parents' views. Small classrooms do have some impact on provision, but good organisation and management by teachers ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is not impaired. Pupils reported very positively about their school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Use assessment information better to plan lessons and set individual pupils' targets
- Improve the consistency of marking pupils' work and involve pupils more in evaluating their own work
- Provide regular opportunities for co-ordinators to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning by observing other teachers teaching

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **good**. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and science are well above average and in science above average because pupils make good progress in their learning. There are slight variations in standards from year to year, depending on pupils' attainment when they join the school.

#### Main strengths

- By the end of Year 6, in the 2003 national tests, pupils achieved well above the national averages in English and science, and above the national averages in mathematics
- Good-quality teaching and learning enable the majority of pupils to achieve as well as they should
- Standards in ICT have improved significantly since 1998. They are now above average
- Standards in religious education and physical education are above average by the age of 11

#### Commentary

1. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained since the last inspection. This is in spite of many changes of senior leadership in the school. The standards in ICT are significantly higher than they were in 1998. Standards achieved in the 2003-end-of-Year-6 national tests in English and science were well above average, and in mathematics above average. Standards of work seen were above the national average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (28.0)	26.8(27.0)
Mathematics	27.7 (28.0)	26.8(26.7)
Science	30.1(29.5)	28.6(28.3)

*There were 78 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Over a period of five years, the trend in the school's National Curriculum test points scores for all core subjects has been above the national trend. When compared with similar schools in 2003, standards were average in mathematics, and above average in English and science. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning and achieve well because of the good support they receive in classrooms.

3. In the 2003 Key Stage 2 national tests, girls achieved slightly better than boys in English and science. Boys achieved better than girls in mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as others. Over a longer period of time, the trends show that girls perform better than boys in English, mathematics and science. There were, however, more girls than boys on roll. Higher attaining pupils achieve well as a result of clear identification of needs and challenging work in most subjects.

#### Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**; they behave well. The **good** provision for their spiritual, moral, and social development and the **satisfactory** provision for their cultural, including multi-cultural development supports pupils well. Pupils attend school regularly and almost all are punctual. Attendance is very good; it is well above the national average.



## Main strengths

- Pupils are confident, interested and friendly
- Pupils behave well around the school
- Pupils praise the good relationships and are confident that any adult will help them
- Good, thoughtful assemblies with a strong spiritual and moral element support pupils' learning well
- Class councils give all pupils the opportunity to share their views

## Commentary

4. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school; they are courteous and polite to each other and to the adults; they are very confident and capable, hold lively conversations and express opinions. The school builds very successfully on the good social skills with which pupils arrive. Adults are very good role models. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are very good because of the school's very high expectations. Pupils settle quickly to work, listen carefully and concentrate well on their tasks. Many pupils, especially in Year 6, have responsibilities around the school; some are conscientious dinner and playground monitors and ensure no one is feeling left out. They act as buddies to younger pupils and form links with Year 2 pupils in the infant school. Pupils are very proud of their school and speak warmly about their time here. They have positive views about their teachers, school dinners, PE and art.

5. Behaviour is good; it is supported by the school's strong moral code and a clear and consistently applied behaviour policy. Pupils are proud to be nominated 'star of the week'. They appreciate the system of rewards and understand the consequences if they do not behave well. There is no racial harassment, no bullying was observed, and parents and pupils say that teachers generally manage reported incidents promptly and effectively. Pupils work and play very well together and develop good levels of independence. They show respect for the school environment and handle resources with care.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	322	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

6. Relationships are very good, which is a strength of the school. Pupils say their teachers are fair and kind and this leads to an atmosphere where they can develop their individual strengths and self-esteem. They know the school rules, and want to obey them because the school helps them to understand right and wrong. The class councils operate in a democratic way and pupils can place suggestions for discussion anonymously. Changes to the school dinner menus and input into other areas, such as the playground games, have resulted from these discussions. The school plans to widen the opportunities for involvement by setting up a school council. This effectively gives all pupils a way of expressing their ideas without fear of ridicule or misunderstanding.

7. Assemblies and some lessons offer good opportunities for reflection and a good spiritual element. Pupils' personal and social development is taught in lessons and through circle time, and makes a good contribution to pupils' development in these areas. Visits and visitors support the curriculum well. However, opportunities through art, music and dance to raise awareness of our cultural heritage are less well planned.

8. Attendance is very good, the school successfully ensures that almost all pupils attend regularly and on time. A few pupils are often late. There have been no exclusions.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	4.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The curriculum is well planned and well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment is satisfactory, but developing. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The school provides a very good standard of care for its pupils and has good relations with parents.

**Teaching and learning**

The **good** quality of teaching has a positive effect upon how pupils learn.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good
- Teachers manage their classrooms well, encouraging and engaging their pupils
- Procedures that tell teachers how well pupils are progressing in English, mathematics and science, help pupils to achieve well
- In other subjects, assessment procedures are used insufficiently to help teachers plan their lessons or to set targets for individual pupils
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across the school and pupils are insufficiently involved in making evaluations of their own progress

**Commentary**

9. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, and the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good in all classes. The majority of teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and use this well to extend the learning of pupils. Behaviour is managed well so that pupils can listen and learn. The staff are very good role models for pupils. They effectively build pupils' self-esteem so that they feel confident. In all classes, staff have developed good relationships with their pupils. Pupils try hard with their work and this helps them to be successful in their learning.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(3%)	5(15%)	14(42%)	13(39%)	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

10. Parents and pupils consider that the amount of homework set is about right. During their last term in Year 6 the amount of homework is not increased but pupils learn many important social attributes, such as tying a school tie, this helps smooth their transfer to secondary school. In the most successful lessons, planning takes full account of the varying needs of all pupils, the pace of the lessons are brisk and there is a 'busy buzz' of activity. The majority of classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of learning. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and receive sensitive support from classroom assistants. The quality of teaching for the very few pupils with English as an additional language is good in lessons and helps them to make good progress.

11. Pupils' learning and progress reflects the quality of teaching and is good across the school. Strengths in learning include the enthusiasm with which pupils apply themselves to lessons. In the majority of lessons pupils' behaviour is well managed, pupils have the opportunity to listen and learn. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning, helped by the support they receive from adults and peers in the class.

12. The use of assessment in English, mathematics and science helps pupils to reach their potential. In other subjects, co-ordinators have put assessment strategies in place but these are not used sufficiently to have a full impact on standards. The procedures are of good quality but are currently used insufficiently to have an impact on standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The information is used insufficiently to help teachers set targets for individual pupils. Pupils are not always involved in evaluating their own work, so are unclear about what they need to do next in order to improve their work. In the best examples of teachers' marking, pupils are made aware of what they need to do in order to improve. However, the practice is inconsistent across the school. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall.

13. Pupils of all social and ethnic backgrounds are fully included in the work of the school and are well integrated. This works well because of the consistently high expectations given to pupils by all staff. Staff treat and value pupils as individuals. Many of the behaviour systems are based on positive reinforcement of good behaviour, and these work well.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum provides a **good** range of worthwhile opportunities, including a **very good** range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the provision. It caters for the needs of all pupils and ensures progression in learning. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). There are sufficient teaching and support staff and teachers are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum. Resources are good overall and support teaching and learning in all subjects. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. All statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good opportunities for enrichment, particularly in sport and music
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language
- Good resources for ICT
- Limited hall space and small classrooms

14. The school provides a good curriculum, including good provision for ICT. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged that key skills in ICT were not taught systematically. This is an inclusive school which makes good provision for all pupils.

15. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education which is broad and balanced ensuring lessons are appropriate to pupils of different faiths. A few pupils are withdrawn from collective worship. Provision is made for them to study and reflect on writings from their own faith during the daily act of worship.

16. Pupils' special educational needs are identified at an early stage and their individual academic and personal targets are planned well. The school has good systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement, which are broken down into small achievable steps. These targets are reviewed regularly and provide a good basis for teachers' planning. Parents are consulted and the pupils are also involved in talking about their own targets for improvement. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive a curriculum well matched to their needs, as a result pupils make good progress and achieve well.

17. Teachers plan carefully and deploy support staff well to ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to achieve well. Where necessary teachers prepare differentiated tasks and pupils work in groups with additional help but teachers have high expectations for all pupils and ensure that there are also good opportunities for these pupils to work in mixed ability groups where appropriate. Pupils with English as an additional language are encouraged to make oral contributions in lessons and make good progress.

18. The school is developing an innovative approach to the curriculum. There are good links between curriculum subjects. Planned opportunities for pupils to use their speaking and listening, literacy and ICT skills are particularly good and subject leaders are keen to develop cross curricular links further. This year the school introduced a themed week on the Egyptians, allowing the whole school to teach a variety of learning objectives through this topic rather than having more subject focussed lessons. The week was enriched by visits from outside agencies such as dance and theatre groups. The arts are well provided for throughout the school with a range of theatre and concert visits and a wide range of visitors to the school. The recent introduction of recorder lessons in Year 3 will help to ensure that over time all pupils will have an opportunity to read music and play an instrument. The choir is open to all pupils. There are good opportunities in assemblies and school concerts for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills and to share their talents. There are a variety of field trips to support learning and pupils have the opportunity for residential visits in both Year 5 and Year 6. As well as supporting learning, these visits make an important contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

19. Support for learning outside the school day is very good, particularly in physical education and music. All teachers organise after school clubs. These range from art to football. School teams take part in inter-school tournaments and the choir sang at local events to raise funds for charity. There are after school guitar, wind and piano lessons, some of which are subsidised by the school. After-school activities are popular and well attended by pupils.

20. There is good provision for pupils' PSHE. The school keeps parents well informed about the sex education their children will receive and acknowledges parents' rights to withdraw pupils. Most aspects of PSHE and citizenship are taught through other curricular areas. There is a well thought out policy which makes good links with almost all curriculum subjects to ensure that PSHE is well covered. The cross-curricular work is supplemented by focused days such as the Year 6 personal-safety awareness day and visits from outside agencies such as the 'Bodycare Roadshow'. Older pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility by, for example, being playground monitors. The school raises awareness of the needs of others through fund raising activities for a range of charities. There are good links with local secondary schools to ensure smooth transition and Year 6 pupils are given practical advice such as how to spend their lunch money sensibly.

21. The creation of a computer suite has had a very good impact on teaching and learning in ICT. Small classrooms do have some impact on provision but good organisation and management ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is not impaired. Pupils move around the school quietly and sensibly. When moving to other classrooms to join sets for mathematics or English, care is taken not to disturb others and pupils settle to work quickly. This enables other classes to focus on their lessons. The outdoor provision is good; with both playgrounds having seated areas with tables for quiet activities as well as plenty of space for more boisterous games. The school also has access to a large playing field.

## Care, guidance and support

The school makes **very good** arrangements for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils and this support is at the heart of the school's very good ethos. The school seeks and values the pupils' views very well, and the very good relationships between pupils and adults ensure pupils are confident that they will be carefully looked after.

### Main Strengths

- Procedures for child protection, health and safety, attendance and behaviour management including procedures to prevent bullying work very successfully
- Pupils are cared for very well and are encouraged to become mature
- The school has good arrangements for pupils entering school and for those transferring to secondary schools
- Good procedures for the transfer of pupils with special educational needs

### Commentary

22. Pupils are supervised very well throughout the day and this makes a significant contribution to their safety as well as encouraging strong relationships between pupils and their teachers. When there are personal difficulties, the school has very good liaison with parents and other groups such as social services to help resolve them. Pupils are involved in agreeing school and class rules through the class councils.

23. Pupils' health, safety and welfare are very carefully monitored by means of very good routines and practices. The school has a very good set of procedures to deal with child protection issues. Health and safety are monitored rigorously and pupils who are hurt or unwell in school receive very good care. Pupils have a good understanding of what is acceptable at school and the behaviour code is carefully followed. There are very good procedures to prevent bullying. The standards of care are very good and this makes a very good contribution to the school's positive ethos.

24. Good procedures for introducing pupils to the school involve meetings and visits to the school by the child and parents. Teachers collaborate well with the adjacent infant school, attend their productions and invite its pupils to productions at the junior school. The schools hold a joint summer event and pupils in Year 6 visit regularly to help pupils in Year 2. These contacts enable new pupils to settle into Year 3 very well; parents are very pleased with this aspect of the school's work. Pupils have an older 'buddy' when they arrive and say this is very helpful. The school also has good links with the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Pupils have an induction day, visit for other activities and teachers from the secondary schools visit Year 6.

25. Through good liaison with the infant school pupils' difficulties are clearly identified and there is a smooth transition of support. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and some achieve the nationally expected level in mathematics by Year 6 through well-focused support by teachers and teaching assistants.

26. Class teachers know their pupils well and can offer good advice, support and guidance in relation to their personal development. Parents appreciate this and the involvement in their children's learning through the school contact book which enables them to understand the expectations. The school is beginning to involve pupils in discussions about their academic achievements, including setting targets to guide the next steps in their learning. Pupils' views are sought through the class councils and school designed questionnaires.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has **good** links with parents, most of whom appreciate the regular and effective communication and the school's welcoming approach. Links with other schools and the community are also **good**.

### **Main Strengths**

- The school has developed good communication with parents
- The school handles complaints well
- Good links with the community support and extend the work of the school

### **Commentary**

27. Most parents are generally pleased with the care and education their children receive. The questionnaires identify many strengths. Almost all the parents say their children like school, behave well and are making good progress. They say that the teaching is good, the staff expect hard work and treat their children fairly, and that children are encouraged to become mature and responsible. Parents also feel that the school is well led and managed and that they are welcome. The inspection team agrees with parents. A few parents help with swimming or on visits but many work or have younger children. Parents support the fund raising both for charities and for the school very well and the funds raised are used successfully to supplement the school's provision.

28. Links with the local community are good. Several local sports clubs provide coaching and this has a good input into the success pupils enjoy in sport. Local people contribute to assemblies, and the summer fete is a shared event with the infant school. Local businesses give good support by way of donations and the choir sings for the elderly in the community. The choir have also been involved in a local initiative - singing for 'Harvest for the Hungry' and pupils have filled 'shoeboxes' to support international charities. The provision for pupils transferring to the local secondary schools and links with the adjacent infant school are good. These opportunities enhance the provision for involvement in the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are **good** and are important factors in the school maintaining good standards and the pupils' good achievement. Parents feel that leadership and management are significant strengths of the school. The ethos of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the continuing development of the school
- The governors are supportive and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be developed
- Not all subjects benefit from co-ordinators evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in their subject
- The management of special educational needs is good
- The one-year improvement plan is an effective tool that supports development

### **Commentary**

29. The leadership of the headteacher is good and parents agree that this is a significant strength of the school. He has a clear idea of the school's priorities and vision for the future which he communicates effectively to the staff. The leadership of key staff is good. The staff have created a very positive school ethos in which pupils are very well behaved and enthusiastic. Teachers and teaching assistants show mutual support, hard work and good teamwork. Although most subjects are well led by subject co-ordinators, the current management structure means that the headteacher is taking responsibility for several subjects due to turnover or absence of staff. The plans to develop the role of the newly appointed deputy headteacher will help this situation.

30. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was overseeing the management of special educational needs. He is ensuring that the good provision is maintained while the newly appointed co-ordinator receives the necessary training. The school makes good use of outside agencies that provide additional support for pupils with specific difficulties.

31. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and some subject co-ordinators check the quality of teaching and learning. However, not all curriculum leaders have sufficient opportunity to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning by observing other teachers teaching. This results in some co-ordinators having an insufficiently clear picture of their subject's development across the school. The very good systems for evaluating the school's performance and checking how well pupils are getting on are used effectively to raise standards.

32. The school's one-year improvement plan identifies the priorities, is thorough and is an effective tool that supports development. It reflects clearly the school's main aim, which is to raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. It has a good emphasis on the need to raise standards in mathematics that were lower than other subjects in last year's national tests. The headteacher has introduced a number of good initiatives, which are having a positive effect on standards and on pupils' achievement. Lower-attaining pupils are now well supported in class lessons and are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. This has been achieved through teachers in each year group planning closely together. Year 6 pupils gain from the input of an additional teacher for mathematics once a week. Through a period of staff change, the senior management team, administrative staff and governors have worked hard to maintain the good standards and ethos of the school.

33. The governance of the school is good. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its legal duties and that appropriate policies are in place. The relationship between governors and senior staff is business-like. Governors have a wide range of expertise and a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which has developed well since the appointment of the new head teacher. They ensure that the curriculum is well managed and resourced and have appointed a responsible officer who successfully monitors the finances. To ensure effectiveness, governors take difficult decisions, for example, they did not appoint a head teacher until they were satisfied that they had the right person for the position. The school has a reputation for good standards and these were mostly maintained during a time of difficulty with staffing. Governors are involved with school improvement planning, and are involved with setting targets, monitoring teaching and buy into training to keep up to date.

34. Careful financial planning, administration and monitoring of expenditure ensure that available resources are used well to promote pupils' learning. Financial planning for future years takes heed of possible reductions in income, due to the building of another very local school that may mean a roll fall for Barnes Farm Juniors. The governing body sensibly carried forward a large amount of the budget to enable them to support the costs of the teaching budget. The day-to-day management of finances is good.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	802,890
Total expenditure	706,648
Expenditure per pupil	2,307

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	81,649
Balance carried forward to the next	96,242

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, pupils in Year 6 reached standards that were well above average
- There is effective teaching of basic skills in additional literacy sessions
- The overall good quality of teaching results in pupils learning well and making good progress
- Marking for improvement does not always help pupils to improve their work
- There are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to watch colleagues teach

#### **Commentary**

35. The 2003 national test results for pupils in Year 6 were well above the national average, and above average when compared with similar schools. Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with above average standards in reading and writing and continue to make good progress, and so achievement is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection; there has been satisfactory improvement.

36. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6, in the work seen, are average. Pupils speak confidently and fluently demonstrating a wide vocabulary range. Their speaking and listening skills are good. They listen attentively to teachers and to each other, and are keen to contribute to class discussions. Pupils develop a wide vocabulary through listening to others, and trying alternatives. Some older pupils speak confidently in front of the whole school, introducing themselves and describing projects they have done in design and technology.

37. Standards in reading are good and pupils achieve well. Less-able pupils in Year 6 read fluently, and attempt unfamiliar words confidently. They can explain the plot and describe some characteristics of people in the story. More-able pupils read fluently and with expression. They give reasons for their choice of books and can discuss how the author builds atmosphere through description. Pupils have opportunities to use the library for research, and understand how to use the classification system to find relevant books more quickly.

38. Pupils across the school write for different purposes and in a variety of styles, selecting words carefully for effect. Pupils achieve well in writing. In a weekly booster session, that helps pupils to reach Level 4 in the national tests, pupils consider how to improve their sentences and join short sentences together. They understand the key features of different types of writing, for example, explaining that persuasive writing should be polite, but express ideas strongly. Pupils go through the stages of planning, drafting and editing their writing. In some cases, they evaluate each others' work. Spelling is an issue for some less able pupils. Most pupils develop a fluent handwriting style, but this is not always transferred into their pieces of creative writing.

39. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned, and teachers ensure that pupils understand key ideas. Teachers use open questions to make links to previous work and to enable pupils to extend their understanding. Work planned in the lower sets and booster class helps pupils learn important strategies for writing, for example reading through writing to make sure that it flows and adding interesting adjectives and adverbs. Computers are used in some lessons to assist pupils' learning, and to present work to the whole class. Pupils use laptops to draft and edit their writing.



40. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but the quality of marking varies across the school. Some teachers mark specifically against learning objectives and indicate how pupils could improve their work. In some instances work is not clearly marked and leaves pupils wondering how to improve their work further.

41. There is effective teaching of basic reading and writing skills in additional literacy sessions. These lessons are planned carefully using National Literacy Strategy materials, and are closely linked with planning for the rest of the class. The learning support assistants, who work with small groups of pupils, have good subject knowledge. They work effectively with pupils, encouraging them to think for themselves and work independently. The pupils involved are making good progress, and are beginning to apply the skills they have learned when writing in other areas of the curriculum.

42. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a term, but has a clear idea of improvements needed. Planning and pupils' work are monitored regularly, but there has been limited monitoring of teaching. This results in the co-ordinator being less sure about the quality of teaching across the school, especially where there are new teachers on the staff. The co-ordinator and another teacher are setting targets for pupils in reading and writing to ensure they make progress from their current attainment; this will be introduced later to the rest of the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

43. Speaking and listening are an important part of most lessons. Discussion is used effectively in religious education lessons. Pupils use their writing skills in other subjects, for example, Year 3 pupils had written letters from Roman soldiers describing life in the army. Literacy skills are used well across the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- As a result of good teaching and learning, pupils' achieve well
- Subject leadership is good
- The co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to watch her colleagues teach
- There is an over-reliance on formal testing rather than use of day-to-day assessment to inform teaching and set targets

### **Commentary**

44. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are at expected levels. National tests, taken at the end of Year 6 in 2003, show that the number of pupils attaining the expected level or above is above the national average. The percentage of pupils who attain the higher level is above the national average. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

45. By Year 6 pupils can use their calculation skills to solve word problems, convert decimals to fractions or percentages and can use a protractor to measure angles to the nearest degree and calculate the third angle on a triangle when the other two are given. Pupils are taught mathematics in sets throughout the school. Joint planning and careful deployment of learning support assistants ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result of this pupils achieve well in lessons.

46. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to excellent with the majority of lessons being good or better. Teachers base their planning on the National Numeracy Strategy lesson plans but adapt these to suit the needs of their pupils. The brisk pace of learning in the upper junior classes, results from enthusiastic and very knowledgeable teaching. This means that pupils learn very well and that their standards are improving rapidly.

47. In almost all lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, more-able pupils in Year 4 learn to use a range of strategies mentally to multiply two digits by one. Lessons have a lively pace with plenty of opportunities for pupils to be actively involved. They are given good opportunities to indicate if they would like further explanations or examples before moving on. Teachers adapt their teaching to respond quickly to any difficulties or misconceptions which may arise during the lesson.

48. The subject co-ordinator is an excellent practitioner who is well qualified to lead the subject. She has ensured the subject is well resourced and that there are guidelines to ensure progression in teaching calculation skills and problem solving. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored regularly. But there is limited monitoring of teaching to ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to make progress, or to help newer colleagues on the staff.

49. End-of-year tests are analysed to identify any areas of weakness and these are addressed in future planning. Tests are also used to support decisions about setting and to track pupils' progress. However, there is an over reliance on regular testing rather than the use of teacher's day-to-day assessment to set targets and inform planning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

50. The development of mathematical skills across the curriculum is good. There are good opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in other curricular areas, particularly in ICT, science and the humanities.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths**

- Standards across the school are well above average and pupils achieve well
- Teaching is good and pupils respond well to teachers' interesting lessons
- Priority is given to the investigative aspect of science

### **Commentary**

51. Standards in national tests and in work seen are well above average. These high standards are a result of the well-planned opportunities pupils have to explore all aspects of science, and especially investigative skills. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities achieve well. Investigations are carried out thoroughly and pupils learn how to make predictions based on what they already know about science. They explain their findings clearly by using charts and written accounts. By Year 6, their predictions show that they have gained a good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. They explain the reasons for the outcome of their investigations precisely, using the correct scientific vocabulary. They use their literacy and numeracy skills very well so that they can record accurately and explain clearly the work they are doing.

52. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well prepared and good use is made of the resources. Teachers plan well to overcome the difficulty of the sometimes limited space and conditions. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make science interesting and fun. They explain the work clearly and check pupils' understanding and emphasise the need for accuracy. Pupils respond very well and are interested in their activities. They work together very effectively, measure accurately and discuss their findings in a mature manner. Where they are limited for space, pupils co-operate, take turns and help each other out. Teachers assess what the pupils know using probing questions, expecting pupils to be able to explain their answers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and make very good progress. Planning is systematic and ensures that the skills that pupils need to know are taught well and that all pupils in the same year groups cover the same work. Marking is inconsistent. In the best examples, teachers tell the pupils clearly how they can improve their work, but, in some cases, work is not marked and often that of the less-able pupils is not finished.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for ICT is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good overall
- Resources for ICT are good
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum
- Teachers are not yet making full use of all the resources available to support teaching

### Commentary

53. There is very good improvement in provision since the last inspection. The creation of a computer suite has ensured that all pupils have regular lessons. All teachers have received training to ensure competence in teaching ICT skills, and standards in Year 6 are above average. Resources in the school are very good, including a set of laptops with wireless access to the Internet, tablet computers and a digital video camera. The laptops are well used to allow pupils to practise and develop their new skills in the classroom.

54. In Year 3, pupils learn basic skills such as how to save and edit text and incorporate graphics. They also learn to enter information into a simple database. Careful planning and record keeping ensures that these skills are regularly practised and built on. By Year 6 pupils learn to create 'power point' presentations.

55. Good teaching enables all pupils to achieve well in lessons. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have high expectations. Lessons are organised to ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged in their learning. Teachers make lesson objectives clear and ensure a good pace by giving pupils time limits for tasks. Pupils generally work in pairs. They co-operate well and stay on task with little teacher intervention but are confident about asking for help when they need it.

56. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator and senior management team. This has ensured that the National Curriculum for ICT is fully in place and that there are good systems for assessment. The school has a good range of software to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. As new software is brought into the school, the co-ordinator is aware of the need to address the ongoing training issue in ICT.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57. Pupils use ICT well in all subjects to enhance the quality of presentations and to search for and sort and analyse information. Laptops are well used in literacy to draft and edit writing. They are particularly well used to support pupils with special needs. Pupils are confident with searching the Internet to find information to support their work in other subjects and they can create graphs to present their findings effectively and use spreadsheets to support their work in mathematics. They also use ICT in design and technology lessons to draw flow charts and make use of light sensors on their models. ICT makes a good contribution to the quality of pupils' learning across the school.

## HUMANITIES

58. No **history** lessons were observed during the inspection and only one **geography** lesson was seen. As a result it is not possible to make secure judgements about provision or teaching and learning in these subjects.

59. Scrutiny of pupils' work and displays around the school together with discussion with subject leaders and scrutiny of overall curriculum planning indicate that requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Good use is made of field trips and visitors to the school to enhance pupils learning in both subjects and work on display also shows that pupils' make good use of ICT to gather information and present their work attractively.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths

- All aspects of religious education are covered well in teachers' plans
- The quality of teaching and learning is good

### Commentary

60. Standards and achievement in religious education are good. Younger pupils can explain events in stories from other faiths and are beginning to understand the significance of church buildings and the ceremonies that take place there. Older pupils study how religious beliefs affect the lives of people, for example, the reasons behind the persecution of the Jews. Written work is mainly concerned with recording facts, but discussions with pupils show that they understand the significance of events and symbols, and can empathise with others' beliefs and situations. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

61. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, which ensures that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils learn about stories from the Bible and from other faiths such as Hinduism, and develop an understanding of the significance of religious festivals and the relevant symbols.

62. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers present ideas in different ways, telling stories, using visual aids and artefacts and giving examples from their own experience. Pupils take part in a range of activities, retelling stories from different faiths, writing prayers, and using the Internet for research. Teachers question pupils to help them make links to previous learning and to their own lives. For example, in one lesson, pupils were learning to think about life as a journey. After a discussion about 'rites of passage', pupils drew a time line for their lives, indicating events such as their first birthday and starting school.

63. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Pupils' work is sampled to ensure consistency and progression across the school. The scheme of work is being evaluated, especially considering how to make lessons more varied by including drama and other ways of presenting lessons.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. No lessons were observed in **design and technology**; it is not therefore possible to make an overall judgement about standards or the quality of teaching and learning. However, the evidence from pupils' completed work and displays around the school shows that standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils understand the process of analysis, design and evaluation of finished products. They explain their reasons for choosing the final designs for slippers and evaluate comfort and safety, explaining how to improve their designs. There are good links with ICT: pupils use digital cameras to take photographs of their models, word process the recipes for bread, and are planning to use control technology on their vehicles, so that lights will come on when entering a tunnel. The long-term curriculum plan for design and technology provides appropriate coverage and progression, and the subject is well managed.

65. Only one short lesson was seen in **art and design**. It is not therefore possible to make overall judgements about standards, or teaching and learning. The subject co-ordinator is on maternity leave but art portfolios and displays were scrutinised.

66. In the art and design lesson seen, pupils reached average standards in their work. The assessment of pupils' skills has improved since the last inspection. Sketchbooks are used across the school although their use is not sufficiently defined and do little to help pupils improve their work. Displays show average standards of work, and cover aspects such as paint, clay and collage.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Singing is good and pupils attain above average standards
- There is a need to improve the subject knowledge of some teachers
- Good extra-curricular enrichment

### **Commentary**

67. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain the expected standards in music. This is an improvement on the standards found at the previous inspection in 1998. The subject now has a much higher profile in the school through pupils' attendance at local music festivals, the choir, recorder clubs and music enrichment days.

68. In the lessons seen, pupils achieved average standards except in hymn practice, where singing standards were above average. Pupils enjoy their music making and achieve well in lessons. In most lessons the quality of teaching and learning was good, and never less than satisfactory. There is a need to improve the subject knowledge of a few teachers. The co-ordinator gives these teachers specific lesson plans to assist them, but has not delivered any in-service training. Teachers plan well and this results in a broad and balanced musical curriculum.

69. The subject co-ordinator has promoted music well; as a result it has a higher profile in the life of the school and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The co-ordinator intends to increase further the number of tuned instruments and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning by watching other teachers teach the subject. Pupils enjoy their musical activities and this is reflected in the enthusiastic singing during hymn practices. The choir meets during a lunchtime. More than 50 pupils take part and are enthusiastically preparing for a summer music festival. The school is currently practising Roald Dahl rhymes as a musical. Last summer a successful whole-school concert was held outside and since then pupils have been involved in harvest, carol and Easter concerts. Year 6 pupils participate in a leavers concert. Occasionally school staff and pupils play at assemblies. Tuition is offered in guitar, piano, and wind instruments. The curriculum enrichment in music is good.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision for physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths**

- Very good leadership and management
- The good teaching results in good achievement
- There is very good provision for a range of sporting activities

### **Commentary**

70. Physical education is strong both in lessons and after school, as all the teachers are involved in improving the choice and quality of activities. Pupils take part in a very broad range of physical education activities, including basketball and golf, during their time at the school. This results in standards in physical education that are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 go swimming and Year 5 have sessions involving outdoor adventure activities. Standards have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.

71. In the lessons seen, all the teaching was good. Teachers plan carefully to build on previous work. Pupils are given adequate time to practise their skills. They evaluate and improve their own performance and teachers use pupil demonstrations well to improve skill levels. Teachers make very good links between physical education and other subjects where it will help pupils' understand better. For example, the Year 5 classes are linking dance to history in the series of lessons 'Sailing the

Seas'. A feature of these lessons is the enthusiasm and involvement of both boys and girls, whose movements linked well to the mood of the music, even if not all pupils kept in time.

72. The subject is very well led and managed. A large majority of pupils take part in a sports activity out of school time during the school year. These range from athletics to netball, football, hockey and cricket to tennis and cross-country running. The school takes part, and is successful in, local competitions. Pupils are involved in physical education not just at school, but in sporting activities in the local area and in other schools. Many teachers at Barnes Farm help to run after-school sports activities. The school is very well supported by the local community including Chelmsford City Football Club, Chelmsford Athletics Club and Essex County Cricket Club members. They have close links with two local secondary schools and the curriculum is enhanced with several national initiatives promoting sport and fitness.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

73. No lessons were seen in this subject and no pupils' work was available for scrutiny, so it is not possible to make a judgement about standards, pupils' achievements nor the quality of teaching or learning. The curriculum section of this report judges provision to be **good** overall.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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