

INSPECTION REPORT

JOTMANS HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Benfleet

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115251

Headteacher: Ms N Buchan

Lead inspector: Mr G Timms

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 December 2004

Inspection number: 267120

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	5 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	307
School address:	High Road Benfleet Essex
Postcode:	SS7 5RG
Telephone number:	01268 755456
Fax number:	01268 795604
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Jacks
Date of previous inspection:	22 – 25 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has 307 full-time pupils on roll from the Reception class to Year 6. There are almost exactly the same number of boys and girls overall, although the figure varies from class to class. The number of pupils who enter or leave the school during the year is low. Children enter the Reception class full-time in the September of the year in which they are five years old. Data shows that the attainment of children joining the school in the Reception year is average, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. The great majority of pupils are from a White British background; small numbers of other pupils are from Asian British, or white and black Caribbean backgrounds. The school has no pupils having English as an additional language, no Traveller children and no children of refugees or asylum seekers. The number of pupils who claim free school meals is just under six per cent, which is below average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is also below average. Pupils' special educational needs are mainly moderate learning or specific learning (dyslexia) difficulties. Since the last inspection, the staffing position in the school has been stable, though more recently three experienced teachers have retired and the school has recruited three newly qualified teachers. The school received the Investor in People award and a School Achievement award in 2001, the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003 and the Healthy Schools award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English as an additional language English Art and design Physical education
9504	Ms S Gurney	Lay inspector	
26232	Mr C Grove	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography
32523	Mrs F Devine	Team inspector	Science Citizenship History Music Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school, with some very good features. It is a happy place. The pupils achieve well, display very positive attitudes and behave very well. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are very well cared for, and teachers and other adults foster a very good atmosphere of equal opportunity for all. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, and is well supported by other key staff and by a governing body which both supports and challenges to very good effect. The financial management of the school is excellent. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the school has a very good ethos and is very effective in promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils;
- very good opportunities are provided for pupils through the range of extra-curricular activities;
- standards of reading at Year 2 and Year 6 are not as high as they could be;
- the school provides pupils with very good care, and very good support and guidance;
- the governing body makes a very good contribution to the leadership of the school;
- the subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient impact in raising the standards of pupils' work;
- links with other schools and colleges are very good, and the school is benefiting from these.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. All issues in the previous report have been dealt with effectively. National Curriculum requirements are now met in information and communication technology and in design and technology, and the outdoor provision for the physical development of Reception children is much improved. The medium-term and long-term planning of the curriculum has improved. The prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report to Parents now meet statutory requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	B	C	C
Mathematics	B	B	B	A
Science	D	A	B	B

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

The overall achievement of pupils is **good**. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average. Children in the Reception year make good progress and most will meet the national goals for early learning, which indicates good achievement. Pupils continue to make steady progress in Year 1 and Year 2, where their achievement in writing, mathematics and science is good and their achievement in reading and information and communication technology is satisfactory. From Year 3 to Year 6, pupils' achievement in science is very good, in mathematics and English it is good, and in information and communication technology it is satisfactory. Reading standards are not as high as they could be. Although pupils are taught to read, their basic skills are not built on sufficiently through discussion of stories, through development of their skills in understanding and in drawing inferences from stories, and through opportunities to use books as a resource in other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology and in religious education are average at Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in geography, history, music and physical education could not be securely judged, but appear to be average. In art and design and in personal, social and health education, standards are above average across the school, and in design and technology standards are at least average.

Throughout the school, pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. Levels of attendance are in line with national figures and are satisfactory. Pupils' punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall, and is sometimes better than this. Teachers promote equality of opportunity for all their pupils very well. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, form very good relationships and provide a good level of challenge, to which pupils respond very well, resulting in good learning. The school's assessment of pupils is good, but target-setting for individual pupils is not yet fully effective. The school's curriculum provides a range of good learning experiences, and opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities are very good. The school's accommodation and resources are good. The school provides very good levels of care for its pupils, and the support and guidance offered to pupils is similarly very good. Links with parents and with the wider community are good, and those with local schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The headteacher provides very good, and caring, leadership for the school. The governing body fully meets all the statutory requirements laid upon it. Governors are very good in maintaining a strategic overview and in providing both support and challenge for the headteacher. The management of the school is similarly very good, especially in the quality of the teamwork.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. In their questionnaire responses, and at their meeting with the lead inspector, parents were very complimentary about the school. Pupils are also very positive about the school, and about their trusting relationships with teachers and other adults. They see the school council as a good way of discovering their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the standards of pupils' reading by developing their good basic skills to a higher level;
- increase the impact of co-ordinators in raising the standards of pupils' work in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children's achievement in the Reception year is good in all areas and most of them will meet the national goals for early learning. Pupils make steady progress in Year 1 and Year 2. Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. Their achievement in writing, mathematics and science is good, and in their reading and information and communication technology, it is satisfactory. Pupils progress well from Year 3 to Year 6. Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are generally above average. Pupils' achievement is very good in science, good in mathematics and English, and satisfactory in information and communication technology.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make a good start in their Reception year, and achieve well.
- Achievement is good across the school.
- Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 attain average to above average standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children generally begin in the Reception classes with average skills. They make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of their learning. By the time they leave the Reception classes, most will reach the national goals for all areas of early learning. There is some variation between year groups, so that in some past years, children have entered the Reception year with below average skills and attainment.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.2 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.4 (14.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.5 (18.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The attainment of Year 2 pupils in National Curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection has been variable, but mostly above the national average. In 2004, results were above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. Results in 2001 were well above average in all three subjects, but fell to below average or well below average in all three subjects in 2002. Since then, results have improved but they are not in any instance as high as they were in 2001. Currently, attainment in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is average, but it is above average in science. The level of challenge in lessons is consistently good, however, with the result that pupils of different levels of attainment are achieving well in most subjects.
3. In recent years, results in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 show that girls have tended to attain higher standards than boys, especially in reading and writing. But at present, no significant difference in attainment between girls and boys is evident. In 2004, about one in four pupils reached the high Level 3 standard in reading, and one in five pupils reached the high standard in writing. In mathematics, almost a third of pupils reached the high Level 3 standard. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening, and in writing, and achieve satisfactorily in reading. Pupils' practise handwriting skills, but these are not transferred

sufficiently to their writing of other work. In mathematics, attainment is average in number work, and pupils' achievement is good. In science, pupils' attainment is now above average and their achievement is good. In information and communication technology, pupils are attaining at an average standard and achieving satisfactorily.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.9 (27.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.1 (27.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.5 (30.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Although there has been some variation from year to year, the attainment of Year 6 pupils in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection has mostly been above average. In 2004, results were above average in mathematics and science, and average in English. These results suggest good achievement in mathematics and science since Year 2, and satisfactory achievement in English. Since the last inspection in 1999, results in Year 6 have been maintained in mathematics and science, but they have declined in English since 2001. Currently, attainment in mathematics is above average and well above average in science. Attainment in English and in information and communication technology is average. High expectations, which are shown in the challenge offered to pupils, have meant that achievement in most lessons is at least satisfactory, and is most often good for pupils of all levels of attainment.
5. In recent years, pupils' results in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 show that girls have tended to perform slightly better than boys. But the attainment of boys and girls is not significantly different. In the 2004 tests, attainment was above average in mathematics and science, and average in English. In mathematics, four pupils in every ten reached the high Level 5 standard, and in science, the proportion was almost half. In English, slightly less than one pupil in every five attained the high Level 5. Analysis of the progress of these pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 shows that their achievement in mathematics and science was good, and their achievement in English was satisfactory. Speaking and listening are particular priorities in the school, and pupils' standards are improving. Although there is some very good reading work in Year 6, other year groups do not have sufficient opportunities to develop more advanced reading skills. The current focus on writing skills is leading to improvement in the range of purposes for which pupils can write effectively, and thus to better achievement. In mathematics, pupils' number and other mathematical skills are above average. Pupils are reaching above average standards in scientific skills and knowledge. Achievement in both mathematics and science is good. In information and communication technology, pupils' attainment is average, and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' work in Year 6 shows that their achievement in art and design, design and technology, and religious education is good and their achievement in history is satisfactory.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well overall because work is effectively matched to their needs, and they are well supported in their individual tasks by teaching and learning support assistants and by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are happy and have very positive views about the school.
- Pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good.

Commentary

7. Pupils are happy, and members of the school council spoke very warmly about the school and about the absence of any form of harassment. Parents agree that almost all pupils like school. Pupils have very good attitudes to all aspects of their schooling and their behaviour is very good. In lessons, pupils are attentive, eager to answer questions and show enthusiasm for their learning. They co-operate and collaborate well. The school has high expectations for good behaviour and for respect for others, and the pupils respond very well to these. Members of staff are successful in promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Relationships are very good throughout the school and bullying is extremely rare. No pupil suggested bullying or harassment were causes for concern. There have been no exclusions from the school over the last three years.
8. Attendance is very well monitored and is in line with the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. The few unexplained absences are speedily followed up by the school secretary. Punctuality is good.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

9. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Assemblies, health promotion, religious education and circle time all play an important part in preparing pupils to take an active role in the community as responsible and caring citizens. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily, and they understand the importance of exercise. Through their studies, pupils gain a very good understanding of other cultures and are knowledgeable about other faiths and belief systems. Pupils understand that there are children who are less fortunate than themselves.
10. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. All teachers encourage pupils to take on useful jobs in the classroom. The school council promotes responsible attitudes towards the running of the school. Older children enjoy helping younger ones, for example helping them to come into school in the morning and also with their reading. Playtime is enhanced by play leaders from Years 5 and 6, and "buddies" help to ensure that no child feels left out or lonely. Sporting activities and team games also encourage responsibility and pride in the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education based on a good curriculum and good teaching. The care provided for the pupils is very good. Links with parents and the community are good, and those with other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The school is very effective in promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, and more than a quarter of lessons are very good or better.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity for its pupils very well.
- Good relationships with pupils and high expectations of their behaviour are evident.
- Teachers explain well and question pupils well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class by assistants or by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- Assessment information is mostly well used.

Commentary

11. Teaching and learning are good overall. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching reported at the last inspection has been eliminated, and the overall quality of teaching has improved. Five lessons in every six are now good, very good or excellent, which compares with six lessons in every ten which were judged as good or better at the time of the last inspection. Members of the school council referred very positively to the helpfulness of teachers both with pupils' school work and with their personal difficulties.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	9 (24%)	21(57%)	6(16%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

12. The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception classes is good, and often very good. Teachers encourage children to become independent, for instance through self-registration in the morning. They form very good relationships with children, and make good impact on children through effective use of voice and eye-contact, which leads to good listening by pupils. Teachers make learning exciting and involve children well through effective questioning, and providing good feedback, which reinforces pupils' learning. Many activities create good speaking and listening opportunities, including discussion in pairs. Achievement is celebrated, for instance a child who had successfully coloured in a worksheet for the first time received strong praise from both headteacher and teacher. Good planning and classroom organisation result in good learning by pupils. Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are clear about their roles and are effectively used by teachers to lead discussions and keep children focused on their work. Pupils with special educational needs are very well included in lessons.
13. Teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 is consistently good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, and as a result pupils are attentive and well behaved. In English and science lessons, teachers use and reinforce well such specialist vocabulary as 'phoneme', 'insulators' and 'conductors', and in mathematics pupils are helped to understand that words such as 'times', 'multiply' and 'groups of' are synonymous. Through asking open-ended questions of pupils, teachers explore their thinking well. Lessons are well organised, including good prior preparation of resources for teaching, and good instructions to pupils. Effective planning of teaching means that learning is built up sequentially. The high-level teaching assistant has good teaching skills, as also have the other teaching assistants. Sometimes, however, teaching assistants are not well deployed during whole-class sessions in that no role is

assigned to them. This limits their effectiveness in supporting some pupils' progress, for instance through checking on their understanding or noting their level of participation.

14. Teaching in Year 3 to Year 6 is generally good and sometimes very good. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with pupils, and set a good pace in lessons, which arouses interest. Lessons are well planned to include activities well matched to different groups of pupils. Teachers display good knowledge of subjects when they give explanations to pupils. Furthermore, good use of questioning helps them to develop in pupils good reasoning skills, for instance in mathematics and in science, and good thinking in English lessons. Specialist words in different subjects are effectively introduced and consolidated. In the best lessons, teachers had a very good personal control of English, and used their voices well to create good momentum in the lesson. High expectations for good work habits and presentation of work have been set, and in the best teaching, excellent expectations are set. In the final sessions before the end of lessons, teachers often challenge pupils effectively to take their thinking further. Good use is made of pupils' developing literacy skills, including their speaking and listening skills, in various subjects, but there are limited opportunities to use their mathematical skills elsewhere in the curriculum.
15. The teaching of reading is satisfactory, and helps pupils develop satisfactory basic skills when learning sounds, and when putting sounds together to build up words. The teachers do not provide sufficient focused opportunities for guided reading in groups, thus giving pupils time to discuss books, to compare their ideas about what is happening in stories and to develop an enjoyment of fiction. However, a very good example of this being done well was observed with a group of Year 6 pupils and a volunteer helper. In addition, teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use non-fiction books in other subjects, to help them to improve their research skills.
16. Satisfactory use is made of pupils developing language and literacy skills in many subjects. In the case of information and communication technology, there was also some satisfactory use in lessons in mathematics and religious education, but pupils have limited opportunities to apply their mathematical skills elsewhere in the curriculum.
17. Teachers match activities and tasks well to the prior learning of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in English and mathematics, and this supports them very well. The special educational needs co-ordinator also teaches pupils in class. She helps them to understand how to complete tasks effectively, and thus promotes very good equality of opportunity for these pupils. Teaching assistants have access to pupils' individual education plans and they support those pupils with special educational needs accordingly. The plans of these pupils are reviewed regularly to assess their progress. Liaison between teachers, teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator is effective.
18. Assessment procedures are good in the Reception classes and across the school, particularly in English and mathematics where the information is well used. For instance, one teacher re-grouped pupils for practical activities according to an assessment of their attainment on the previous day, in order to match activities to pupils to greatest effect. This challenged pupils well. Assessment of pupils' progress in English and mathematics also takes place on a termly basis, using a computer program. From this, targets are set for individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school is not yet making good use of this arrangement by checking how far pupils have reached their targets. National assessments, and also optional annual assessment tests, are undertaken, and the results of these tests are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. Science is not yet part of these assessment arrangements. A computer program is used to provide assessments of pupils' progress in information and communication technology, but the information yielded is of limited value.

The curriculum

The school ensures that all pupils have access to a range of good learning experiences. These are further enhanced by a very good variety of extra-curricular opportunities. The school's accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Week-long projects on different topics provide more depth to the curriculum.
- The provision for special educational needs is good.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities.

Commentary

19. The curriculum effectively provides a broad range of opportunities for all pupils. The long-term and medium-term planning ensures that all subjects of the National Curriculum as well as religious education are covered, and all statutory requirements are met. In addition, the use of specific curriculum weeks enables teachers to provide more depth to certain topics, which normal timetabling does not allow. For example, in recent times the school has developed some very good design and technology work over a week-long project. They have planned weeks for learning about health issues and about multi-cultural aspects of the curriculum.
20. The teachers plan a growing amount of cross-curricular work and this makes the learning more relevant to pupils. For example, in art in Year 3 to Year 6, a lot of the work is based on the history topics. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects has improved since the last inspection.
21. The school provides very good opportunities for enrichment. There is a very good selection of clubs and after-school activities, especially for the older pupils. A good proportion of pupils take part in these, enabling those with specific talents or interests to develop these further. Activities involve sport, music and creative activities including drama and art clubs. Pupils have the chance to take part in a range of competitive sports, and to perform to a wider audience through, for example, singing in the local church and cathedral.
22. Visitors to the school are used very effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history, and to encourage their personal development through visits from, for example, the police and the fire service. Trips to places of interest take place, and Year 6 pupils have an opportunity to take part in a residential visit to an outdoor centre. Pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school has held very effective weeks to develop pupils' awareness of health issues and to promote healthy eating. This has resulted in an award from the local education authority.
23. The school has a very good commitment to inclusion¹. Although the school has no pupils at an early stage of learning English at present, provision for such pupils has been effective in the past. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils have full access to the curriculum and they are taught by their teachers alongside other pupils. The special educational needs room offers adequate space for individual and small group work for these pupils.
24. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans which are very well written and reviewed by the special educational needs co-ordinator, in conjunction with teaching and support staff and pupils' parents. The individual education plans include short-term curriculum or behavioural targets, which are very well detailed, as also are the strategies to be adopted to support these pupils. The plans fulfil their function very well. Copies of plans are provided for the assistants who work with pupils, as well as for the teachers, so that good

¹ Inclusion refers to the arrangements to meet the educational needs of all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or background.

account is taken of recommended strategies in planning their work. Where necessary, there is effective liaison with external agencies, such as the range of specialist services offered by the local education authority.

25. The accommodation and resources of the school are good. They have improved since the last inspection. The school has worked to improve the outdoor provision, in particular for the children in the Reception classes, but also for all other pupils. There is a good quality gym trail and adventure play area, good-sized fields and playgrounds, an environmental area and a swimming pool. Some classrooms are small for the numbers of pupils, although teachers work hard to ensure that this has little impact on pupils' learning. The school has plans to replace the de-mountable buildings with permanent rooms when funds permit. A new computer suite has been created, and this can accommodate up to half a class at a time. A small library has also been developed, and this is being well used by some pupils at lunchtimes.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are made to feel happy and secure.
- Parents feel their children are well supported and cared for.
- Members of staff have very good and supportive relationships with the pupils.
- Very good procedures ensure pupils' health and safety.

Commentary

26. Staff support pupils very well and the ethos of the school is very friendly and caring. Induction² procedures both for the Reception classes and for those pupils joining other classes are good. Pupils settle in quickly and easily, and this has a positive effect on their achievement. Good arrangements are made to prepare Year 6 pupils for their secondary education.
27. The school satisfactorily implements the locally agreed child protection procedures and all staff are given basic training on the need for vigilance and what to do if they have reasons for concern. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are very good. First aid provision is very good and augmented by a small medical room. The school is proud of its Healthy School Award.
28. Personal, social and health education and circle time contribute very well to pupils' care, guidance and support. Pupils enjoy comfortable and trusting relationships with their teachers and other members of staff. The school monitors pupils' academic and personal progress very effectively and uses this information well to set targets and offer appropriate guidance.
29. Teachers know the pupils well and listen to their views informally. The school council is also a good vehicle for getting pupils' views, which are taken seriously. Pupils interviewed spoke highly of the care and guidance they are given.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with the local community are also good and those with local schools are very good.

² Induction refers to the procedures for receiving pupils who are new to the school, helping them to settle into school routines and to make friends.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly all parents are pleased with the school and its leadership.
- The Friends of Jotman's Hall is a very active and successful association.
- Family learning courses offer help and guidance to parents.
- Some aspects of pupils' annual reports are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

30. Over half the parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, and of those who did so, the great majority were very positive. A very small minority had concerns about bullying; about information on their children's progress; and about whether the school listened to their views. Inspectors found no evidence for concern about bullying. The school recently sent its own questionnaire to parents to ascertain their views, and parents are strongly encouraged to get involved in the life of the school. Parents' consultation evenings are very well attended. The 'big orange books' offer a good communication channel and are very well used by parents of the younger children. However, pupils' annual reports to parents have some unsatisfactory aspects. The reports on English and mathematics are satisfactory, though some of the targets are too general. Science and the other subjects are mainly very impersonal and inspectors themselves could not understand the information and communication technology reports.
31. The Friends of Jotman's Hall enthusiastically organise a range of well-supported events. They create a strong community spirit and are very successful fund-raisers. Parents and friends give very generously. School productions are very well supported and parents are increasingly attending class assemblies, staying for coffee and taking the opportunity to see their children's work. The local further education college has run family learning courses in the school and these have enjoyed good support from parents. Further courses to involve parents are planned.
32. The school has good links with the local and wider community. Elderly residents and children from the neighbouring nursery are invited to concerts and performances. Educational visits improve pupils' understanding of the area. A wide variety of visitors talk to the pupils and demonstrate their skills and expertise. Links with business and industry have improved greatly since the last inspection. A major local industry has supported the school's security arrangements and smaller businesses help the school in a variety of ways, including making generous gifts and donations when appealed to for sponsorship.
33. Links with other local schools are very good. The main receiving secondary school provides the strongest support, and a specialist sports college releases a tutor for half a day each week to help with physical education. Technical support for information and communication technology is provided very effectively through a local secondary school, which is a business and enterprise college. The school is actively involved in the Benfleet and Thundersley Inter-school Cluster which encourages schools to share good practice and expertise. The school's partnership with its parents, other schools and the community gives pupils a more rounded education and supports their attainment and progress well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good. The governance of the school is also very good. The leadership of key staff is good overall, but the role of subject leaders is underdeveloped. Financial management is outstanding.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body has a very effective structure, and it is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide a very clear focus on raising standards.

- The management team structures are successful in using staff expertise and in working for continuous improvement.
- The subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient influence on practice throughout the school.
- There is excellent financial control and monitoring.

Commentary

34. The headteacher provides very good and caring leadership that is well focused on raising standards and maximising the achievement for all pupils. She has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school, and the evidence is clear that areas needing improvement are recognised and addressed rigorously. For example, standards in speaking and listening, and writing were identified as areas where there was some underachievement. The data was analysed and action plans drawn up to raise standards. There is evidence of the success of this work throughout the school.
35. The school has a strong management structure based on teams. These work well in providing the school with a very clear sense of purpose and direction. Decisions are made appropriately and agreed positively, and there is a strong focus on raising standards. Meetings are minuted well, and action agreed is followed up appropriately. Agreed objectives form the basis for school improvement planning, and all staff are able to have an input into the priorities and action planning process. The governing body oversees the process effectively and monitors the implementation of the plan during the year.
36. The role of subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped at present; the school has recognised this weakness. Although partly due to changes in staff and their responsibilities, co-ordinators do not have sufficient time or experience in leading innovation and in carrying out their duties as successfully as is needed. This results in some inconsistency in provision, from timetabling and lesson planning to recognising and addressing weaknesses in teaching and learning.
37. Performance management is used very effectively to address staff development needs. All staff are included in the process and a very good structure for this is in place. There is a good balance between whole-school and individual objectives, and the system is resulting in improvements to provision. The newly qualified teachers are offered a good level of support and the professional development of all staff is provided for through a good range of staff meetings, training days and courses.
38. The leadership and management of the special educational needs co-ordinator are good, and in some respects very good. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the role, and provides good training for the learning support assistants, and good liaison with the special educational needs governor who challenges and supports the work. The quality of the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs is high, and arrangements for producing and reviewing plans is good. The 'gym trails' is a significant innovation, which builds pupils' self-esteem, promote physical control and address behavioural difficulties.
39. The governing body meets all its statutory responsibilities, and is very effective in maintaining a strategic view of the work of the school. For example, governors are already considering the impact on the school of possible staff changes or of a significant increase in house building that is planned for the area. They are very supportive of the school, but also challenge aspects of provision appropriately so that the members of staff have to reflect on the reasons for actions. They are well led by a strong chair, and the work of the curriculum committee is particularly effective in monitoring standards and teaching and learning throughout the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	818,449
Total expenditure	829,238
Expenditure per pupil	2,701

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	20,567
Balance carried forward to the next	9,778

40. Since the last inspection, the school has used available money wisely to improve the buildings and facilities for staff and children. The finance and administration manager ensures the budget is very effectively managed and excellently monitored. Among many other roles, she provides the governing body with important benchmarking information to help them with their decision-making. The school works hard to ensure good value in its spending and monitoring of the budget.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. The provision for children in the Reception classes is good overall. It has improved since the last inspection in all areas of learning. The school has recently altered its admission arrangements so that all children start in the September of the year in which they are five, but care is taken that all children's needs are catered for, and if part-time provision is appropriate, it is arranged. Induction arrangements are good and parents have good opportunities each morning and evening to meet with staff and monitor their children's progress.
42. Attainment on entry varies from cohort to cohort. For example, the current Year 2 children were below average overall when they entered the school, and a significant proportion failed to achieve the national goals for early learning expected of them by the end of the year. However, the current Reception children were broadly average on entry and are achieving well so that almost all are in line to reach the national goals by the end of the Reception year. Close links with a local playgroup support the induction process. For example, during the inspection the older playgroup children visited the Reception Nativity production. Planning is in line with national guidance. However, the teachers with Reception children in their classes do not plan very closely together, and this results in some inconsistency in provision. The assessment of children's progress is good. The teaching assistants offer very effective support for teachers and they are largely well deployed. Leadership is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and other adults have very positive relationships with the children.
- Children are confident and they are developing into good learners.
- Children learn to behave well and to follow school rules and routines.

Commentary

43. The teaching is good. Children achieve well, and by the end of the year they should all have reached the national goals for early learning. The teachers have very effective relationships with children. They are firm when they have to be but also very supportive and caring. This results in children who feel confident to try new activities and to take part in the work. Children get excited by new activities and show real enjoyment in the tasks provided for them. This creates a very positive ethos and prepares children very well for their future schooling.
44. Children are confident in speaking to adults about their work, or sharing a reading book with them. They are given appropriate responsibility, such as clearing up after activities. During the inspection, they performed a Nativity play, to a large audience of adults, families and friends, with confidence and evident enjoyment. After only one term in school, this showed how well they are able to work together, co-operating in such a major way. Children's social and personal development is supported by good use of outside expertise. For example, during the inspection, the local community police officer provided a good talk on how they could keep safe over the Christmas period.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a lot of opportunities for improving speaking and listening skills.
- Most children are confident users of books and they are developing into good readers.

Commentary

45. The teaching is good. Children achieve well, and by the end of the year they should all have reached the national goals for early learning. Children develop good speaking and listening skills. Teachers provide good role models in the way they speak and read stories. While working with children they use all opportunities to talk and encourage children to talk. Even in quite large groups, children listen well, whether to a teacher or another adult such as the visiting police officer. Puppets are used effectively to develop language skills and imaginative play.
46. Children learn a range of traditional stories and rhymes, as well as some more modern versions. For example, one class has role play areas designed as the houses of the three little pigs. The other class acted out the story of the bear hunt with very good drama and movement skills. Children's reading skills are good. They are confident at using books and developing good vocabulary levels, especially where parents regularly support learning at home. Children use illustrations well to support their understanding of the text. Writing skills are at an early stage but appropriate tasks are provided for them to learn how to form letters, to trace and copy letters and words, and to write for a purpose. Good resources are used to help children learn to recognise and write their names.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's counting skills are developing well.
- A good range of resources is used for activities.

Commentary

47. The teaching is good. Children achieve well, and by the end of the year they should all have reached the national goals for early learning. Children are already counting between 10 and 20 together. Computers are used well to support this work, with activities requiring children to match numbers to objects. In one very good lesson, children learned to recognise low value coins and to count pennies. The teacher had set up a very good role-play area representing a toyshop at Christmas, where children could consolidate and reinforce their learning. They learn about the properties of two-dimensional shapes when creating patterns with a Christmas theme.
48. Using cubes, children build two towers and compare them using key vocabulary such as 'more than' and 'less than'. Very early data handling work has resulted in the teacher creating a bar chart showing children's holiday activities, and enabling them to see how data can be collected and recorded, and then interpreted. Older Reception children are able to compare the sizes of containers by filling them full, and half full of objects, and then counting and comparing.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to learn about different cultures.
- Children use computers and other equipment confidently and effectively.

Commentary

49. The teaching is good. Children achieve well across a range of aspects of this area of learning, and by the end of the year they should all have reached the national goals for early learning. A topic about the Amazonian rainforest enabled children to learn about the animals, people and geographical features of a very different area of the world. Preparing for and performing the Nativity play ensured that children have a good knowledge of the Christian Christmas festival.
50. Children learn to use programmable toys, and to use computers for a range of activities. They can click and drag items to create a picture, and can use art software to create their own pictures. They are given good opportunities to use the digital camera. They have opportunities to investigate materials and to use a range of joining methods for wood, paper and card.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for outdoor activities is much improved since the last inspection.
- The opportunities for using large equipment for work and play are very good.

Commentary

51. The teaching is good. Children achieve well, and by the end of the year they should all have reached the national goals for early learning. Children have good opportunities to work and play outside. Improvements to resources and play areas mean that children have very good access to a selection of wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. They use this equipment confidently and imaginatively and they learn to share and work collaboratively. In the hall, the gymnastic apparatus is also used to develop children's physical skills, and they learn a range of ways to move about. Children also have good opportunities to use a range of small tools such as scissors, saws and paintbrushes which they learn to control well. Their colouring skills are good and pupils show increasing control of the tools they use.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff provide a good range of opportunities to use a wide selection of media and materials.

Commentary

52. The teaching is good. Children achieve well, and by the end of the year they should all have reached the national goals for early learning. Children learned songs and dances for the Nativity production. They enjoy creative work. In one good session, they used clay for the first

time to produce plaques for Christmas presents. At other times they have used other malleable materials, as well as crayons, chalks and paints. A wide range of materials is used for collage work. For example, in autumn, leaves were used, while Christmas socks were decorated with glitter, sequins and stars.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking, listening and writing are improving as a result of the school identifying and addressing weaknesses.
- Reading skills are underdeveloped throughout the school.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school.

Commentary

53. Standards are broadly average overall at Year 2 and Year 6, but within that picture there are some significant strengths and weaknesses. Analysis of the 2004 national test results for Year 6 in writing shows that compared with the results they got when they were in Year 2, over three quarters of the pupils made the expected or better progress, and achieved well. There were no significant gender differences in the results. In Year 2 in 2004, the test results show that writing is above average for the first time since 2001, while reading is average. Achievement overall is good throughout the school and has remained at the levels found during the last inspection.
54. Speaking and listening skills have a high priority across the school. This work has been developed after analysis of results showed deficiencies in the provision. Teachers' planning now identifies speaking and listening opportunities more closely. Practice such as using talking partners for a short period enables pupils to reinforce their learning and consolidate their knowledge through having to articulate their ideas to others.
55. In reading, the inspection evidence shows that the basic skills of decoding words, and learning sounds and key vocabulary are good. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to discuss their reading, and to develop their understanding of the content and their comprehension skills. Very good work like this does happen in Year 6, for example, making very good use of a volunteer helper. However, there is insufficient time in other classes for group reading activities, or for pupils to develop more complex skills such as taking notes, making inferences and researching information. The lack of these is partly responsible for the fact that too few pupils demonstrate more developed higher-level reading skills and enjoyment in reading. Attitudes to reading vary, as does the use of the school and public libraries, but the school has a clear plan to improve pupils' perceptions of reading through author visits and book events.
56. The recent work carried out to improve writing has been largely successful so far. There are good opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes, but the presentation of much of the writing is not as good as it should be, and the handwriting skills demonstrated by pupils when practising are not carried over into their other work. In one Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils demonstrated satisfactory understanding of the use of bullet points and commas.
57. The quality of teaching is good overall and satisfactory for reading. The support provided by teaching assistants is of good quality, but teachers do not always make best use of their time in whole-class sessions. Support is very good in Year 5 and Year 6 where the teaching is instrumental in achieving the results currently attained by the time pupils leave the school. The

strengths include very good relationships with the pupils, and challenging and well-planned tasks that develop pupils' skills to a good level. Work is well marked in most classes, and the assessments made are used in future planning. Insufficient time is found for pupils to read and discuss together, and to use books in other subjects. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in developing pupils' word processing skills.

58. The subject is well led, both by the subject co-ordinator, and through the work of the senior management team, who have focused on speaking, listening and writing recently. Good use has been made of consultants and advisers from the local education authority in training and supporting staff. However, the co-ordinator has not had sufficient opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of this work on classroom practice. Test results, and other assessments of progress, are analysed and used to address the weaknesses highlighted. Underachievement among individual pupils is picked up and addressed, and the small-group work that focuses on specific pupils, and individual work with pupils with special educational needs, is effective in raising achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory, and members of staff ensure a good range of opportunities are provided for this. For example, in one Year 5 music lesson, pupils were required to write their own words to fit a Christmas carol tune. In other subjects, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write at length, for example retelling Bible stories in religious education. However, opportunities to develop pupils' more advanced reading skills are not always taken. For example, too few opportunities are found for pupils to use information books and electronic resources to research information for history or geography.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good.
- Effective lesson organisation, high expectations and good relationships, are raising pupils' confidence.
- Teachers' skills, including effective questioning and matching of tasks to pupils, are developing their mathematical thinking well.
- The new co-ordinator knows what is needed to improve the subject, but there is not yet a sufficient focus on raising pupils' standards.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils is good overall, but target-setting needs improvement.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop the skills of investigation.

Commentary

60. Standards are broadly average at Year 2, and are above average at Year 6. In recent years, there have been no significant differences in the attainment of boys and of girls at Year 2 or Year 6. Since 2001, results at Year 6 have consistently been above average, but at Year 2 results have been variable, sometimes above and sometimes below the national average. Analysis of the 2004 national test results for Year 6 pupils shows that, compared with the results they got when they were in Year 2, more than four pupils in every five made expected or better progress, and achieved well.
61. Pupils are achieving well in mathematics right across the school, but especially those in Year 2 and in Year 5 and Year 6. The great majority of pupils make expected or better progress from Year 2 to Year 6. Good achievement often results from high expectations and the level of challenge offered by teachers. The effective matching of tasks to pupils of different levels of

attainment is another factor. Effective questioning elicits pupils' thinking, promotes mathematical understanding, and leads to good achievement by pupils. In these situations, pupils transfer their knowledge well to new situations. For instance, after Year 2 pupils had practised counting forwards and backwards in 10s and in 1s, they moved on to thinking how many 10p and 1p coins they needed to buy various objects.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and use mathematical vocabulary well. Lessons are effectively planned to include tasks which are well matched to different pupils. This was especially true of the Year 2 and Year 3 class, where the mathematics co-ordinator was highly effective in this respect. Expectations about pupils' presentation of written work are more variable across the school, though there are several instances of high expectations. An effective pace leads to the good use of time in lessons. Teaching assistants work well with pupils with special educational needs. There were a number of instances of the effective use of information and communication technology programs in classrooms to support pupils' mathematical learning, but no examples of pupils using information and communication technology to produce mathematical work in their exercise books.
63. Pupils pay very good attention to teachers and are very willing to respond. Relationships between teachers and pupils are also very good. Pupils' confidence is accordingly generally high, and their capacity to work collaboratively as well as independently is good. Teachers take opportunities to assess pupils' learning, often in the whole-class sessions at the end of lessons. The school sets individual targets for pupils, but these are often not well matched to pupils, and pupils are not being assessed against their targets. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but comments do not sufficiently help pupils to understand what they could do to improve their mathematics.
64. The co-ordinator is beginning to lead the subject well. Although she is newly appointed, she has made a good start in the role. For instance, she has effectively analysed pupils' weaknesses in answering questions in tests. Subject action planning also shows that the school knows what to do to continue to raise standards. However, observation of teaching and analysis of pupils' exercise books have not yet taken place. Weaknesses in target-setting are acknowledged, and consideration is being given to improving these arrangements. The quality of the curriculum is good overall, and there is a satisfactory emphasis on problem-solving approaches to mathematics, but there are few opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge for investigative purposes. Improvement to provision since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Few opportunities were observed for pupils to use their mathematics in science. However, in some design and technology projects, pupils had better opportunities. For instance, when Year 6 pupils designed and built models with motors, they used their mathematical knowledge to produce drawings, including correct measurements, and costings of materials.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, pupils reach above average standards, and achieve well.
- Recent work to promote investigative skills has been successful.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards science.
- Assessment procedures, including marking, are inconsistently used.

Commentary

66. Teacher assessments in Year 2 showed that most pupils reached the expected level. Pupils' results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were above average and almost half of the pupils reached the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are above average at the end of Year 6, and are average at the end of Year 2, and that pupils' achievement is good. In lessons observed, there were several opportunities to extend the investigative skills required in pupils' learning. An increased focus on investigative science and problem-solving has had a positive impact on the standard of teaching and learning.
67. Teaching and learning in science are good throughout the school and during the inspection some very good teaching was observed in Year 4 to Year 6. Particular strengths in teaching include good questioning skills that encourage pupils to explain their findings. Teachers organise and manage pupils' learning well. All teachers have a good rapport with their pupils and have high expectations of work and behaviour, which result in pupils listening carefully and working with enthusiasm. Minor weaknesses were observed in some lessons when the distribution of resources slowed the pace of pupils' learning.
68. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed effectively in lessons through whole-class teaching and in enquiry-based research activities. Pupils are encouraged to ask, as well as answer, scientific questions. They use scientific vocabulary with good understanding. Science teaching contributes significantly to literacy skills, including writing, speaking, and listening.
69. Pupils are engaged in a wide variety of problem-solving activities. In a lesson about electricity, pupils investigated plugs and wires to know which materials are conductors and which are insulators. In a very good science lesson, pupils investigated the internal workings of an electric bulb. Information and communication technology is used in science to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils are asked to think as scientists and to explain and record their findings. Teachers employ a good range of presentation strategies when exploring complex topics such as what happens to a filament to make it glow.
70. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator does not yet check teaching elsewhere in the school. Teachers' marking is not consistent. Overall, marking is not informative and gives pupils little indication of how they could improve their work. The school has already identified the need to develop assessment and target-setting so that planning better informs future learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The personal information and communication technology skills of staff are good.
- The co-ordinator has produced good improvements to information and communication technology facilities.
- Leadership and management are not sufficiently focused on effecting improvements to pupils' standards.
- Better assessment is required to facilitate the development of pupils' skills over time.

Commentary

71. Pupils are attaining average standards in the range of information and communication technology applications at Year 2 and at Year 6, and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 made a successful start in producing a PowerPoint presentation which included importing artwork and sound effects. In Year 5, pupils showed good achievement in creating their own version of a control technology program, which involved a range of outputs including delays. Pupils in Year 4 gained practice in changing layout and fonts to produce the format of a newspaper article, but the task was insufficiently challenging because criteria for effective work were lacking. In Year 1, pupils' assembled work showed they are successfully gaining experience of a range of applications, including data handling.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Only a small number of lessons could be observed during the inspection. In these lessons, teachers and other adults, including one teaching assistant and a parent helper, displayed good knowledge and skills, which enabled them to demonstrate to pupils and to provide them with good support for the acquisition of skills. Pupils show interest in information and communication technology applications and eagerness to undertake work in the subject. Pupils' work over time shows that they are learning to produce bar graphs, construct spreadsheets, and make use of art applications as well as to word-process and to transform word-processed work in various ways. There was also a good example of the use of a written instruction sheet to enable pupils to work independently. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology in classrooms to supplement their teaching. For instance, some pupils in an art lesson in Year 5 used a program to create a scene in Ancient Greece. In a Year 2 lesson focusing on tens and units, some pupils who completed their first task in good time used computer programs which provided them with further practice on the topic.
73. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. For historical reasons, the co-ordinator's role has had as its principal focus the improvement of facilities, including hardware and issues of compatibility, and also staff training and the acquisition of relevant software. Some attention has been paid to teaching and learning, but further improvement requires that greater prominence be given to these issues so that there is improved development of pupils' skills and knowledge over time. There is not yet a good enough balance between these management activities, as the subject action plan shows. There has been high reliance on a program which acts as an assessment tool for information and communication technology, but the value of this in assessing pupils' attainment is limited.
74. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement to the school's resources for teaching the subject. The new information and communication technology suite, and the greater number of classroom computers demonstrate this. The school also now has a bank of laptop computers for flexible use within the main building, though these were not used during the inspection. The capacity to teach control technology has also improved. Staff training has been undertaken with the result that teachers and teaching assistants are more confident in their use of information and communication technology. The school has a link with a secondary business and enterprise college, which is providing much better technical support than hitherto. The school is therefore now better placed to effect further improvements to the curriculum, and to the teaching and assessment of pupils, in order to provide for better development of their skills and knowledge from Year 1 to Year 6.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Satisfactory use was observed in some lessons in mathematics, art and design and religious education. In an English lesson, pupils in Year 6 made good use of the school's facilities to begin a powerpoint presentation.

HUMANITIES

76. Only one **geography** lesson was observed during the inspection, and therefore no secure overall judgements about provision, standards and the quality of teaching could be made. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 class are working at expected standards and achieve satisfactorily in creating their own symbols and keys on a map of Essex. Pupils worked with evident enthusiasm and the standards of presentation of their work were satisfactory. Effective teaching aroused pupils' interest and led them to understand the principle of the key to a map.
77. Only two **history** lessons were observed during the inspection, and therefore no secure overall judgements about provision, standards and the quality of teaching could be made. Teaching and learning were good in lessons observed. Historical skills are incorporated into many other subjects and there are opportunities for pupils to use research skills. There are strong links to art and multi-cultural work. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and some pupils have taken part in an archaeological dig. Visitors to school deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the periods they study. The successful Viking and Victorian days are evidence of this. Information and communication technology is used to develop the skills of enquiry and investigation. Pupils examined good historical artefacts in a Year 1 lesson when comparing a Victorian Christmas to the present day.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages develop a good understanding about different religions.
- The study of religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

78. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards which meet the expectations of the Essex Agreed Syllabus. The syllabus is being implemented successfully throughout the school. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils studied the 'Nativity' and referred to the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke. The high expectations of the teacher ensured that the lesson was both challenging and interesting. Pupils were encouraged to use investigative and research skills; they made reasoned judgements about religious issues. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils gained experience of group discussion in order to understand Christians' perceptions of Jesus, and made good use of the opportunity. In such lessons, there are good links to literacy and speaking and listening skills are promoted. The religious education curriculum also contributes significantly to education for citizenship.
79. The study of religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Their social development is enhanced as they study other faiths and build a sense of identity in a multi-cultural society. Religious education is valued in the school and good links are made to topics introduced in assemblies. Assemblies are attended regularly by a variety of visitors, and are used to raise awareness of moral and social issues. Spiritual development is enhanced through prayer and moments spent in reflection. Assemblies meet statutory requirements.
80. The leadership and management of religious education are good, and the subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. Only one lesson was observed in **art and design**, but together with the evidence from displays, photographs and portfolios of pupils' work, it is clear that overall standards are above average throughout the school. Pupils have good opportunities to use a wide range of media and materials. Their skills develop consistently well. In Year 1, they use chalks on black paper to create some very effective firework pictures, which make a very good representation of movement and noise. In Year 6, they use the skills they have learned to produce very good work relating to the Ancient Greek culture. This includes three-dimensional work in clay and the use of a modelling medium for creating figures of Greek athletes. They also use papier-mâché to make masks in the style of the Aztecs, and use collage techniques for pictures inspired by the work of Paul Klee. Other artists and cultures are regularly studied. For example, in Year 5 some very good work emerged from looking at the backgrounds and the figures in paintings by Lowry. In Year 6, pupils have produced excellent paintings of seascapes in the style of Turner. Good cross-curricular links are evident, when artwork is connected to history or when doing observational drawings, for example of the school's 'ship'.
82. No teaching of **design and technology** took place during the inspection. At the previous inspection, standards in design and technology at Year 2 were judged as average, but as below average at Year 6, because pupils were not familiar with all stages of the design process. The teaching was only satisfactory in view of omissions in the curriculum. Evidence from the present products and design work of pupils, and from photographic evidence, now confirms that pupils are reaching at least average, and often good, standards at Year 2 and Year 6. Evidence also shows that the full cycle of designing, making and evaluating is now clearly in place. A Year 6 project on models with motors provided a good illustration of each stage of the process from initial investigation and disassembly, through an initial design and mock-up, to a final design which included a switch and bodywork, instructions for construction, costings, and a final evaluation. Other year groups use a variety of means to learn about design processes, including food technology, textiles, packaging and clay work. The school's organisation is innovative in providing for one Design Week each term on average, which facilitates the completion of all stages of the process in a short period.
83. Only two **music** lessons were observed during the inspection, and therefore no secure overall judgements about provision, standards and the quality of teaching could be made. Teaching was good in both lessons. The school provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in music. Specialist teachers ensure that a wide range of opportunities is provided for pupils, including participating in music festivals, composing music and musical appreciation.
84. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities such as the school choir and recorder group. Many older pupils play instruments and perform well in the orchestra which offers very good opportunities for the further development of skills. Pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 play a variety of tuned and untuned instruments, and provide good accompaniment for assemblies and other school activities. Pupils enjoy singing and performing for an audience. Music from other countries and cultures enriches the curriculum, as is evident in the school's multi-cultural studies. The school has made good progress in this area since the last inspection.
85. Only one **physical education** lesson was observed during the inspection, and therefore no secure overall judgements about provision, standards and the quality of teaching could be made. However, the school provides very good opportunities for those with an interest or talent in any sport to join a range of clubs or take part in school teams. The netball and football teams have both been successful in recent years, and good use is made of the expertise of support staff and friends of the school in coaching activities. The accommodation is good, with a good-sized hall, playgrounds and field, and a swimming pool that can be used in the summer months.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. Only two lessons in **personal, social and health education** were observed during the inspection, and therefore no secure overall judgements about provision, standards and the quality of teaching could be made. Pupils are effectively learning the skills, knowledge and understanding which help them to play an active and positive role as good citizens in the community. Pupils learn what kindness to others involves, and to discriminate between kind and unkind behaviour. Circle time, when pupils sit in a circle and learn to listen to, and to value, each others' feelings and opinions, provides an opportunity for pupils to use speaking and listening skills, and helps them to develop their understanding of each others' problems.
87. Personal, social and health education and citizenship is taught consistently throughout the school. The school has recently introduced whole weeks dedicated to aspects of this area of the curriculum, and this is already having an impact on pupils' attitudes to one another and to the wider community. The curriculum is enhanced by visits from fire and police officers who help pupils to keep themselves safe and to become aware of safety issues. 'Healthy' weeks help pupils to know and understand a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are also made aware of issues about drugs' awareness. The school has plans to implement the Healthy Schools initiative more fully.
88. Some aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught through other areas of the curriculum, especially religious education lessons and the school council. Pupils learn to appreciate what it means to be a positive member of a diverse and multi-cultural society, and to think about others' feelings and to consider the right and wrong ways of approaching problems.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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