

INSPECTION REPORT

BADDOW HALL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114913

Headteacher: Mr G Niven

Lead inspector: Mr A C Jolly

Dates of inspection: 10-12 January 2005

Inspection number: 271077

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 245

School address: New Road
Great Baddow
Chelmsford
Essex
Postcode: CM2 7QZ

Telephone number: 01245 472391
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr R Bellman

Date of previous inspection: 24/1/2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Baddow Hall Junior School is situated in the urban village of Great Baddow near Chelmsford in Essex. It shares a site and grounds with the infant school from where most of the pupils transfer. The majority of pupils come from local housing, which is a mix of privately owned, social or council built housing. The level of pupil mobility¹ is above average in the current Year 6 although this is not the case in other years. Only a very small number of pupils come from a minority ethnic background and there are no pupils who have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and specifically those with statements of special need are above average. Their major needs are associated with moderate learning difficulties, followed by social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The level of attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The school was awarded *Investor in People* status in 2002 and *Healthy Schools* in 2004.

¹ Pupil mobility signifies the number of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than the start of Year 3

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8750	Mr A C Jolly	Lead inspector	English French Physical education Personal, social, health education and citizenship
1166	Mrs R Hussain	Lay inspector	
26405	Mrs C Bond	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education Special educational needs
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school where all pupils achieve well. Standards are above average by Year 6 in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science as a result of consistently good teaching. The leadership and management of the school are good at all levels. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in English, mathematics and science are above average;
- Year 6 national test results were above the national average in English and science in 2004;
- the quality of teaching is consistently good;
- leadership and management are good;
- standards in information and communication technology are much improved and are above average;
- the total weekly teaching time is below the nationally recommended level;
- the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent;
- attendance levels are very good;
- pupils are very well cared for.

There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. There is now a rigorous system to manage the performance of teachers. Standards have risen in mathematics and science in Year 6. Standards have also risen significantly in information and communication technology from the unsatisfactory levels identified at the last inspection. The school development plan has improved and now has a greater focus on raising standards. Assessment procedures have been developed to ensure that pupils are challenged in their work. The headteacher, senior management team and governing body have been actively involved in monitoring and evaluating standards. Homework is now given more consistently to support learning and there are many more opportunities for pupils to take the initiative. There is still some imbalance in the amount of teaching time given to some subjects, particularly music and in design and technology, which is leading to them having only a superficial coverage. This is mainly because the weekly teaching time is lower than the nationally recommended level.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **good**. Pupils join the school with broadly average levels of attainment. They make good progress throughout the school so that standards in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average by Year 6. Able pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The results in the table indicate that the school's performance has been predominantly above average in English and science and average in mathematics. The pattern of results has been upward overall. The school's performance in the national tests is less impressive when compared with schools in a similar context; the standards in 2004 compared to similar schools were average in English and science and below average in mathematics.

Standards in English and history remain above average. Standards in mathematics and science are also above average, which reflects an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The improvement in information and communication technology in Year 6 has been even more significant so that standards are also above average. Standards in religious education are average and the subject complies with the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They have a positive approach to learning and the many areas of school life. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes. Their attendance level is well above the national average and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good** overall. Teaching is consistently **good**, with very good features, and never unsatisfactory. Computers and laptops linked to projectors and interactive whiteboards are used very effectively so that lessons are often stimulating and enhance pupils' learning. The key skills of numeracy and literacy are consistently well taught and the learning needs of pupils of all abilities are supported well. Although pupils' work is regularly marked, constructive guidance on how they can improve is inconsistent.

There is a satisfactory curriculum, although a few subjects, particularly music, are not taught in sufficient depth. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities to enrich the pupils' learning. This is a caring school that both meets the needs and celebrates the achievement of its pupils. Relationships with parents and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**. The leadership team of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teacher have all played key roles in the improvement of the school. The governors are well informed and have a clear grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There are very good procedures to ensure that the day-to-day management of the school is effective. However, the weekly teaching time of pupils does not meet the nationally recommended levels. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school. They believe that the teaching is good and there are high expectations in the school, which enables their children to make good progress. Parents and pupils are appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular activities and the good arrangements to help pupils settle into the school. The pupils praise the way the teachers make learning fun and use of computer technology to make lessons more exciting.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- increase the total weekly teaching time of pupils so that it at least meets nationally recommended levels;
- improve the quality of marking of pupils' work so they are more regularly given advice on how they can improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement is **good** throughout the school. Standards remain above average in English and history in Year 6. In science, mathematics and information and communication technology, standards are also above average in Year 6, which represents an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards were above average in the Year 6 national tests in 2004 for English and science.
- The performance of able pupils in English, mathematics and science was above average in the 2004 Year 6 national tests.
- Standards in the work seen are above average and have improved in mathematics, science and particularly information and communication technology by Year 6.
- Standards are above average in English, history and information and communication technology in Year 6.
- Standards in mathematics in the Year 6 national tests were below those found in similar schools.

Commentary

1. The school's Year 6 national test results from 2002-2004 has been better than the national trend. In the 2004 Year 6 national tests, standards were above average in English, and science and average in mathematics. Results dipped in English, from the previous year, but rose in mathematics and science. The percentage attaining the expected Level 4 was above average in science and average in English and mathematics. The percentage attaining the higher Level 5 was above average in all three subjects. Boys performed particularly well in 2004 but girls also compared well with their own gender nationally. There is no sustained variation in performance by boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (28.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.7 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (29.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The performance was less impressive when compared with schools in a similar context. The standards in English and science were average and in mathematics below average in the school's Year 6 national tests. The inspection judgements, based on a wider range of evidence than the tests, confirm that standards in English and history are above average, reflecting the findings of the last report. Standards have improved since then in mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Standards in the latter were judged to be unsatisfactory, so the improvement has been exceptional. The use of computer technology has been at the forefront of the drive for improvement in the school and is a major positive

feature of the teaching. Standards in religious education are average and fully meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in other subjects were not a focus of the inspection.

3. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average and they make consistently good progress throughout the school so that their achievement is good. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from clear individual education plans and good support from teaching assistants so that they make good progress. More able pupils receive challenging work and the most gifted are identified to receive specific support from an educational consultant, so that they achieve well. Boys and girls attain equally, although their performance varies within year groups. There are good individual target setting processes in English and mathematics and whole school targets for test performance are challenging yet realistic. The school is therefore well placed to improve standards further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The level of pupils' attendance is **well above the national average** and punctuality is **good**. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' level of attendance is very good.
- The school fosters pupils' self esteem and they are confident, courteous and articulate.
- The school promotes good relationships well and this creates a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Spiritual values are well fostered, although opportunities for reflection are limited.
- The school has implemented effective strategies to ensure behaviour is consistently good.

Commentary

4. The pupils' behaviour in the school is good overall. Some concerns about behaviour held by parents have been addressed successfully by the school. Attitudes are not as high as reported at the last inspection.
5. Most pupils behave well in the playground and dining hall at lunchtime and they are courteous and polite in corridors and classrooms. In several classrooms, particularly those containing the oldest pupils, behaviour is very good. Very occasionally, a minority of pupils become restless and this is usually when an introduction to a lesson is overlong. There have been no exclusions in the last year and there are very few incidences of harassment and bullying.
6. Pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated. They particularly enjoy taking part in the various extra-curricular activities and work well together, both individually and in groups. Relationships between pupils are good and they have good relationships with their teachers. The Pupil Council is an effective forum for nominated pupils to meet regularly to discuss school issues and make recommendations. This is part of an effective approach to developing pupils' self-esteem and many of them are both confident and articulate.

7. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Residential trips, school visits and extra-curricular activities all help to provide for the pupils' social development. There is an effective emphasis on moral issues in assemblies and lessons, ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The school has recently had a 'Divali' week of activities to give an insight into another culture and has planned a multi-cultural week. The school promotes good artistic and cultural links, particularly through musical performances and poetry competitions.
8. There is a committed spiritual ethos that is particularly noticeable in religious education lessons and assemblies. In a particularly moving assembly, the headteacher made very effective use of a projector linked to a laptop to show clear pictures of the contrast before and after the Tsunami disaster. The powerful, evocative images stunned the pupils. From this current tragedy a link was made to the story of Jesus and the Sea of Galilee and the twin themes that people need to keep their faith and that God is more powerful than the elements. The school recognises that it needs to develop the opportunities for reflection to heighten pupils' awareness further.

Attendance

9. Attendance is very good and within the top ten percent of schools nationally. It has improved steadily because of the very effective use of an automated system to monitor attendance rates, good liaison with the Educational Welfare Service and an efficient system of calling parents on the first day of their children's absence. Parents are sent a copy of their child's attendance record and reminders of the importance of good attendance as soon as a problem surfaces so it is dealt with quickly. Punctuality is good with nearly all pupils arriving on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.0
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** overall. The school has a satisfactory curriculum with good opportunities for enrichment.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**, which reflects the findings of the last inspection. Assessment is now satisfactory and the issues raised during the last inspection have been addressed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over a third of the teaching is very good.
- Effective use of computer technology often produces stimulating lessons.

- Teaching assistants give very effective support to pupils with special educational needs.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- The teaching is well planned to meet the learning needs of pupils of different abilities.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (37)	14 (44)	6 (19)	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. The quality of teaching is good and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Over one-third of the teaching is very good, which is a significant improvement on the one-tenth, which was previously identified.
11. At the heart of the good and very good teaching is the very effective use of computer technology in several classrooms. The use of computers, linked through a projector onto an integrated whiteboard introduces sophisticated visual images and allows teachers to outline clear learning objectives and lesson development. In a very well taught religious education lesson in Year 5 about the circle of time, the teacher was able to gradually reveal images that linked natural elements to Hindu beliefs. Pupils are encouraged in English lessons to respond to the text by highlighting relevant words and phrases on the integrated whiteboards. This not only keeps them involved in the task but also provides a more interesting and stimulating option which Year 6 pupils say makes learning fun. It also gives considerable pace and polish to the teaching.
12. Pupils work well together, both in pairs and in larger groups. They respond positively to the opportunities provided for discussion. For example, in a Year 6 physical education lesson, they confidently evaluated the quality of each other's gymnastic movements.
13. The teaching of literacy is consistently good and in numeracy it is very good which is having a positive impact on raising standards. Mathematic lessons are characterised by a brisk opening with effective questioning. Good subject knowledge by teachers of literacy and numeracy also contributes to the good and very good teaching. French has recently been introduced to the school and pupils have benefited from the excellent subject knowledge and very good teaching of a native speaker.
14. All pupils receive good support and guidance and their learning needs are well planned and provided for. Teaching assistants actively support the needs of pupils with special educational needs at all stages of the lesson. Most lessons involve considerable challenge for able pupils and extra challenge for those who finish their tasks early is often provided.
15. When the teaching is less effective it is because the introductions to lessons are overlong or explanations are too lengthy. Occasionally too much time is spent on the least important part of a lesson connected to its learning objective. It is on these occasions that the small minority of pupils become restless and lose concentration.

16. The school has responded well to the criticisms about homework in the last report. The arrangements are now well understood by parents and pupils and it is used sensibly to support learning. The systems to assess pupils' progress are also much better in English, mathematics and science. This also helps to inform an effective target-setting system in those subjects, in which parents, teachers and pupils are all involved. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, teachers do not give comments consistently enough on how they can improve or relate their observations to levels of the National Curriculum or the learning objective of the task. This restricts the progress pupils make.

The curriculum

The school offers a **satisfactory** curriculum, which affords a **good** preparation for secondary school. Overall, accommodation and resources are **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for personal, social, and health education and citizenship is good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of clubs and school visits.
- Total weekly teaching time is below the national recommendation, which results in superficial coverage of a few subjects.

Commentary

17. The school offers a satisfactory curriculum. Total weekly teaching time, however, is below national recommendations for pupils of this age, with the result that time for subjects such as music and design and technology is less than is found in most schools. There is a very strong emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. In Year 6, these subjects are taught in classes based on ability, so that work can be more closely matched to the pupils' needs. Planning in all subjects is satisfactorily based on national guidelines and adapted to meet the needs of the school. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects of the National Curriculum, for religious education and for collective worship. There are opportunities for instrumental music tuition to develop pupils' interest and ability. The school always looks for ways to stimulate pupils and develop the curriculum further. Recent innovations include the introduction of French lessons for every class and the use of special 'curriculum weeks', which focus on a particular subject or aspect of school life.
18. A wide range of clubs allows the pupils to pursue their interests outside lessons. There are opportunities for the pupils to participate in a choir, recorder groups, a homework club and clubs for mathematics, computers, French and sports. Matches are played against local schools, often with considerable success. The curriculum is enriched further by visitors and by school visits to places such as Fingringhoe Wick, Colchester Castle and Zoo, Braintree Museum and Danbury Park. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit.
19. There is a good match of well-qualified teachers and sufficient teaching assistants to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Members of the administrative staff provide good support. Accommodation overall is good, though storage space is at a premium. Strengths include a large hall, a new information and communication technology suite and a group learning room. There are plans in hand to address the issue of disabled access to the first-floor classrooms. There is an extensive sports field and playground and the school's own swimming pool is used in the summer term. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects. There is a good range of books in the reference library, although it shares space with the information and communication technology suite.

How well are pupils' cared for, guided and supported?

The school offers its pupils **very good** care, in a safe, trusting environment. Pupils are guided and supported well. Monitoring of pupils' personal development and academic achievement is good. Inclusion is good. The school seeks pupils' views very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care, welfare, health and safety are of a high standard.
- Induction procedures are very good.
- Pupils know their views are highly valued.
- Pupils of all backgrounds are very well valued.

Commentary

20. The school is a secure and happy environment because it is supported by very effective procedures on health and safety, child protection and pupils' welfare. Health and safety procedures have improved since the last inspection. Training which is

specific to pupils' needs, is regularly updated for all staff so that they are aware of their responsibilities. Pupils' welfare is a high priority as illustrated by the introduction of a care register and the Healthy School Award project, which focussed on safer journeys to school. This led to the establishment of a 'walking bus' and a cycling club.

21. Parents in their meeting praised the strong family atmosphere resulting from the good relationships between pupils and staff who know the pupils well. Good relationships are established early because of the very good induction² system, which involves liaison with the main infant school from which the pupils transfer. This has recently been revised and improved to include more opportunities for pupils from the infant school to participate in junior school events and to sample lessons. Parents and pupils appreciate these increased opportunities because they help pupils to settle into the school quickly and comfortably.
22. All pupils are valued well and this is highlighted by the school's inclusion projects related to pupils' special needs. Baddow Hall was the lead school in the area in setting up initiatives such as the Brain Gym and gym trails to develop pupils' potential. Parents praised the school's emphasis on catering for the needs of the more able as well. Good examples of work focussed to meet specific needs of all pupils were seen in lessons.
23. Support for personal development and academic achievement through monitoring is good because of the manageable systems for all subjects introduced by the current headteacher. Pupils are also supported well through the lunchtime and homework clubs. Although the quality of assessment is generally only satisfactory, assessment procedures for tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science are good because they clearly indicate the outcomes expected from tasks and are supported by good target setting. Marking, however, is not always effective in helping the pupils to improve.
24. Pupils know their views are very important and respected because they are encouraged to make them known in classroom discussion and through the well-established, effective school council. The council meets regularly and has successfully developed a variety of projects, such as the waste paper recycling scheme, which it initiated. Pupils feel empowered because they take responsibility by setting the agenda, chairing and conducting the meetings themselves. The council has a high profile because it has its own display board in the school and pupils report regularly in the newsletters about their work and their decisions. Representatives are also invited to attend meetings on whole school issues such as the drawing up of the home/school contract and school policies and projects.

How does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?

Overall links with parents are **good** and their views are largely positive. Parents' involvement in the school and their children's learning is good. Information about pupils' progress and general information is very good. Links with the local community are good and are satisfactory with other schools.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The partnership with parents is good and most parents are very supportive of the school.
- Information through reports and consultation meetings keep parents very well informed about their children's progress. General information is also of a very high quality.
- The school has good links with the local community.

Commentary

25. Overall links with parents are good because the school is committed to establishing a strong partnership with parents and has introduced a Family Learning programme to encourage greater involvement of parents in their children's learning. In return most parents are very supportive. This is evident because there is a thriving Parent School Association, which raises substantial funds for school projects and also funds a regular commitment to maintain the swimming pool. Several parents help regularly in school and others help to run after school clubs. Parental support for school events is very strong as illustrated by the need for three performances of the pantomime in order to accommodate the large numbers wanting to attend.
26. The school has tried several different formats, with little effect, to attract parental support for the governors' annual general meetings because attendance is poor. Most parents support their children's work at home very well. The quality of this support has improved because of the introduction of the new homework policy and parents clearly understand what is expected of them. Most parents are confident that they can talk to staff if they have a problem. Parents' views and wishes are valued because they are regularly canvassed through surveys on a variety of issues. Responses are sometimes limited though, because questions are phrased using technical language and are not always user-friendly. The school respects parents' differing views and needs because it tries very hard to accommodate the various religious beliefs within its families.
27. Information for parents overall is very good. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress because the annual reports are very informative. They not only give detailed personal comments on progress in each subject but also include specific information on pupils' strengths and personal development and relevant targets. The carefully thought out self analysis completed by pupils gives parents a very good insight into their child's view of their own performance. More information is given at parent consultation meetings each term. The quality of general information is very good because of the school's professional approach to newsletters, the school web-site, curricular information and documentation such as the school brochure.
28. Community links are strong because the school has several contacts with local institutions for visits and visitors to the school that enrich the pupils' experience and the curriculum. Business links are good because local businesses support pupils' work, for example the poetry competition sponsored by the local newspaper and sponsor projects such as the roof top gardens.
29. Links with other schools overall are satisfactory. Links with the Infant School are satisfactory and improving because of new initiatives to share joint assemblies, joint Parent School events and fund raising and discussions to increase consistency in assessment. Links could be improved still further because there is insufficient

exchange of curriculum information and teacher contact between the schools. Well-established links with two local secondary schools, in particular with the partner school in Sandon, are also satisfactory because they offer support for information and communication technology, mathematics and physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are all **good**. This reflects an improvement on the findings of the last report.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and leadership team have a clear vision for the future.
- There are very good procedures for the induction of new staff and professional development.
- The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The total weekly teaching time does not meet nationally recommended levels.
- The school has responded well to criticisms in the last report.

Commentary

30. The headteacher is providing good leadership. He has been instrumental in ensuring the school has responded effectively to the considerable criticisms in the last inspection report. He has ensured his leadership has been focused on monitoring and raising standards. The quality of the school development planning has improved and is good. An ethos has been created in which all pupils are welcomed and valued. For example, a race equality policy is translated into effective practice.
31. The school has benefited from complementary expertise of the members of the leadership team. The deputy headteacher, as a leading mathematics teacher, has ensured the school's standards in mathematics, which were below average in the Year 6 national tests in 2004 have improved. She has also been effective as staff development coordinator so that induction arrangements for new staff, and professional development opportunities for all staff, are very good. The senior teacher has been instrumental in the considerable improvement in information and communication technology. Standards in the subject are now above average and its use in teaching is making lessons more purposeful and exciting. The leadership of other curriculum coordinators is good overall.
32. Provision for special educational needs is good. Pupils are well supported in the classroom by learning assistants, who work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils make good progress alongside other pupils. The coordinator works hard to provide a supportive environment where pupils' specific needs are met, whilst enabling all pupils to take a full part in all school activities. There are good links with all agencies involved in providing specialist help. Pupils and parents are active partners in the provision made, ensuring that pupils achieve as well as possible.
33. Assessment arrangements have also been modernised and improved. There are good systems to monitor performance data and review patterns of attainment, so effective strategies can be implemented. The leadership team are very good role models for other staff and pupils.

34. The governing body are more established and effective than at the time of the last inspection. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and effective procedures to monitor and evaluate standards and provision. There are robust systems of performance management and the governors ensure the school effectively secures the best value for money possible.
35. The carry-forward on the budget is slightly above recommended levels, but financial management is effective. There are good management systems generally which have been recognised by the award of 'Investors in People' status. However, the total weekly teaching time is below the nationally recommended level, which results in some subjects, such as music and design and technology not being taught in sufficient depth.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	671,576
Total expenditure	677,556
Expenditure per pupil	2,765

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,924
Balance carried forward to the next	34,945

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

English

Provision in English is **good**. Standards are above average as a result of good teaching and leadership. All pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attained above average standards overall in national tests from 2002 to 2004.
- Standards of reading are good throughout the school.
- Standards of writing have improved and are good.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and gives advice too infrequently on how to improve.

Commentary

36. Standards in the work seen in Year 6 are above average reflecting the findings of the last inspection. The school uses nationally standardised tests for reading and spelling and assesses pupils' writing skills in the September when they join in Year 3. All these assessments confirm standards on entry to the school are broadly average so the standards attained in Year 6 reflect good achievement by all pupils.
37. Able pupils benefit from challenging tasks set, particularly for older pupils. Those who are particularly gifted are identified and receive specific targeted support. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs so that they achieve well. Although patterns of attainment fluctuate in different years, both boys and girls attain well compared to their own gender nationally.
38. The standard of reading is good. Guided reading groups are well organised so pupils' skills are developed well. The school has recognised the need to develop further the skills of inference and deduction. Almost all the oldest pupils read fluently and the more able are expressive readers who can describe well the characters and plot in the stories they are reading.
39. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' writing and standards are good. Pupils in all years are given plenty of opportunities to write poetry, prose and dialogue. This has resulted in noticeably improved standards in the Year 6 national tests in 2004 when the percentage attaining both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 were well above average. The school is committed to a commercial scheme, also used in the Infant school, to develop pupils' handwriting. Standards are good and many pupils present their work well in English as well as other subjects.
40. Standards of spelling are less impressive, although satisfactory. There is currently no consistent strategy to teach spelling in the school, although all pupils have regular spelling tests. Although spelling mistakes are identified in all classes, corrections are not rigorously completed so pupils do not learn sufficiently from their mistakes.

41. Teaching is predominantly good. It is at its best in Years 5 and 6, where it is always good. This contributes to the accelerated progress pupils make in English in the final two years in the school. All teachers have good subject knowledge so that the basic skills of literacy are well taught. The weekly and longer-term planning of lessons is consistently good and all lessons have clear learning objectives.
42. The school has responded most positively to the criticisms levelled in the last report about the insufficient use of information and communication technology in lessons. The use of laptops or computers linked to a projector and integrated whiteboards, have added a further dimension to the teaching. It enables lessons to progress more speedily and gives visual images which help pupils' understanding.
43. When the teaching is at its best it is because explanations are clear and concise, enabling pupils to move on to the main activity quickly. Conversely, when teaching is satisfactory rather than good it is as a result of overlong introductions, which in a few classrooms lead to restlessness from a minority of pupils.
44. There are good target setting processes involving teachers, pupils and parents, to ensure pupils progress well. These complement effective arrangements to assess pupils' progress which enable the school to set realistic targets for the national tests. Although pupils' work is regularly marked, the teachers' comments do not provide constructive advice consistently enough on how to improve. Homework is regularly set and the arrangements are understood well by both parents and pupils.
45. The subject is well led and managed by the coordinator who has monitored planning, pupils' work and the teaching of the subject. This has led to a systematic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and appropriate priorities for the future. The school's performance in the Year 6 national tests has been a little volatile, but the trend has exceeded the national pattern. It is well placed to maintain and extend further the existing good standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. There are many opportunities for speaking, listening and writing across the curriculum and provision across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. In history, topics encourage a range of writing including reports on visits, empathising with historical characters, timelines and factual analysis. Pupils write freely about their beliefs and values in personal, social, health education and citizenship and write up reports on experiments in science. In their religious education lessons they write about the key beliefs in major religions. Most lessons are characterised by question and answer sessions in which pupils are articulate speakers and polite listeners.

French

47. French has only been introduced to the curriculum since September and so all classes are following the same course for this year. Most of the lessons are taught by a native French teacher, who encourages the development of pupils' spoken French effectively. Teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned so that existing knowledge of vocabulary and phrases is reinforced. Pupils are developing good accents and almost all have a grasp of the vocabulary for numbers from one to ten, greetings and classroom objects. The present time slot for French lessons is too long, particularly for the youngest pupils and makes considerable demands on the concentration of pupils and the resourcefulness of the teacher. This innovation is preparing pupils well for studying a foreign language at secondary school.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good** and has improved since the previous inspection. Achievement is good and standards are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and are now above average.
- Teaching is very good and this enables all pupils to achieve well.
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Subject leadership is very good and is a significant factor in the high standards.

Commentary

48. By Year 6, all pupils achieve well. Standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are above average, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. Higher attaining pupils are challenged appropriately and they also progress well. Progress accelerates as the pupils move through the school. In the latest national tests, the boys outperformed the girls, although lesson observations do not currently indicate any significant difference.
49. Teaching is consistently very good and this leads to very effective learning. Through questioning and written tasks, the teachers match work well to pupils' differing needs and they ensure that all pupils are fully included in learning. There is a strong focus on developing the pupils' skills in mental calculations. The teachers employ a variety of strategies to achieve this, including games, which introduce an element of fun into learning. They make very effective use of available resources, particularly interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning. They deploy teaching assistants effectively and this enables lower attaining pupils to make very good progress.
50. There is a strong focus on developing the pupils' problem solving skills, emphasising the need to be systematic in this. The teachers encourage the pupils to explain their strategies and this consolidates understanding, in that the pupils see that there is often more than one way of solving the problem. This was clearly apparent in a Year 6 lesson, in which the pupils investigated aircraft seating arrangements and in a Year 5 lesson, in which the pupils calculated the costs of holidays. The teachers use the final parts of lessons well to assess learning and to regularly set homework.
51. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively, although the quality of marking is variable. Some teachers are more thorough than others in offering guidance as to how the work might be improved.
52. Subject leadership is very strong. The coordinator has done much, in terms of monitoring teaching and organising training for colleagues, to raise the quality of teaching and learning. She has developed good procedures for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress and for using information gathered to plan the next steps in learning and to set targets for improvement. There is a clear action plan to raise standards further. The curriculum is enriched by two mathematics clubs and by a 'mathematics curriculum week'.

Mathematics skills across the curriculum

53. There are good opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematics skills in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 6 draw accurate line graphs to record investigations into air resistance and the mass of solutions over a number of days. They draw accurate bar graphs of the time taken for different types of salt to dissolve. In history, pupils in Year 6 produce computer-generated charts of occupations in Victorian times. In geography, pupils in Year 4 record traffic flows in Maldon Road and total the numbers of people who use various buildings in Great Baddow in a typical day.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good lessons in Years 5 and 6. Pupils achieve well. The depth and range of learning is impressive, particularly for higher achieving pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy their lessons.
- The subject co-ordinator is highly effective.
- Too little time is given for checking on classroom practice.

Commentary

54. Standards in last year's national tests were above average for pupils in Year 6. More than half the pupils attained the higher Level 5 in the tests. Standards of work seen in the current Year 6 are also above average overall. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when pupils attained average standards across the school. Pupils now achieve well due to effective teaching and a good curriculum that focuses appropriately on developing pupils' responses in the key skills of experimental and investigative work.
55. The attention now given to ensuring that pupils are fully involved in science investigation has improved pupils' attitudes and enjoyment. The use of interactive whiteboards in lessons plays a significant role in this, particularly in Year 6. Pupils enjoy practical work, and co-operate well with each other. Such activities are no longer over-directed by teachers as they were during the last inspection. The investigative nature of pupils' learning underpins the secure body of knowledge that pupils acquire year on year. The depth and range of this learning is impressive for many pupils in Year 6. Pupils use scientific language well but are not always able to spell some of the key words.
56. The quality of teaching is good, with some very good lessons in Years 5 and 6. Teachers promote learning well throughout the school, making each topic exciting and challenging. Learning is effectively enhanced by the quality of teachers' questioning, helping pupils to think deeply about their work. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Work is appropriately matched to their needs and the staff and other pupils give effective support. Although teachers ensure that all pupils know how successful learning has been during lessons, marking of work in books is less consistent and helpful. It rarely includes points for development.

57. A very effective and hard-working leader coordinates the subject. She has created good systems for checking pupils' progress and analysing data, and ensures that all teachers have access to advice and support. This has led to a significant improvement in attainment over the past two years. She has had only limited opportunity to check on other teacher's classroom practice however.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **good** and has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved significantly and are now above average.
- Teaching is good and this is developing the pupils' confidence and expertise.
- Information and communication technology is used widely to enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Subject leadership is very strong and is a significant factor in recent improvements.

Commentary

58. By Year 6, all pupils achieve well. Standards are above average, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support and they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are given appropriate challenges and they too make good progress. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The pupils' word processing skills are good. They combine text and graphics imaginatively, in order to appeal to the reader. They make effective use of spreadsheets to enter, retrieve and analyse data. They access the Internet for research and to communicate by e-mail.
59. The quality of teaching is good and often very good and this leads to effective learning. Lessons are well planned and organised. The teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and this helps to develop the pupils' confidence. There is a good balance between direct teaching of specific skills and independent learning. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, this enabled the pupils to make very good progress in their development of a multimedia presentation to promote the school. The teachers have high expectations and they challenge the pupils to explore and experiment. They make effective use of pupils' experiences of information and communication technology at home.
60. Subject leadership is very good and is a significant factor in the high standards. The coordinator has led training for colleagues, which has developed their confidence and expertise. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' progress and for using this information to plan the next steps in learning. The coordinator has developed a clear action plan to raise standards further. Certain pupils in Years 5 and 6 play a very active role in regular updating of the school's informative and interactive website.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Information and communication technology is used widely to enhance teaching and learning in other subjects and this is a significant improvement since the previous

inspection. In literacy, for example, pupils in Year 6 use varying fonts effectively to write newspaper articles, play scripts and accounts of the Marie Celeste mystery. In mathematics, pupils in all year groups use computer-generated graphs to record data. In art and design, pupils in Year 6 make effective use of the Internet, clip art and a digital camera to produce imaginative work and younger pupils generate effective pictures in the style of famous artists, such as Matisse. Very effective use of the whiteboard in a Year 5 religious education lesson enhanced the teaching of aspects of Hinduism. Information and communication technology is often used imaginatively to enhance acts of collective worship.

HUMANITIES

62. It was not possible to make judgements on provision for **history** or **geography**, as these subjects were not a focus of the inspection. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils achieve well in **history** and attain above average standards. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The pupils have a good understanding of aspects of life in Victorian Britain. They compare schools then and now and they use their literacy skills well to write in the role of a Victorian schoolchild. They know about the hard lives led by many children in Victorian times and they write effective accounts of life as a domestic servant. The pupils use a variety of sources to research information about aspects of life in Britain in the sixties. The curriculum is enriched by worthwhile visits to museums and to other places of interest.
63. It was not possible to judge standards in **geography**. However, there is evidence that the pupils use a variety of sources, including the Internet, to research information about the characteristics of mountain environments. They have a satisfactory understanding of recent changes in Great Baddow, such as modern housing developments. They know why Chelmsford is such a busy place and they investigate local traffic problems. They consider ways in which the school environment might be improved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**. Standards are average overall. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory and there is some very good teaching in Years 3 and 5. Pupils enjoy the subject and achieve satisfactorily. The co-ordinator works hard to maintain the subject's profile in the school, but has too few opportunities to check on classroom provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some good plans available to support the new locally agreed syllabus.
- The coordinator has thorough subject knowledge and works very hard.
- The subject has had a low profile in the school until recently.

Commentary

64. Standards are at expected levels for pupils in Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress learning the key facts about three of the major faiths in the country and about how they might affect the lives of believers. This meets the requirements of the new locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is satisfactory, although some higher attaining pupils have a deep understanding of the subject. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is some good teaching in Year 3 and Year 5, where the depth of pupils' learning is sometimes impressive. Teachers are creative in their ideas to stimulate pupils' interest, and make good links with other areas of the curriculum in order to reinforce learning. New planning materials have been devised to support the recently produced syllabus, and this has given impetus to the school's enthusiasm to improve standards and opportunities for all pupils. Appropriate priority is given to the teaching of Christianity in each year group. The school makes good use of community support in the teaching and learning of Hinduism and Judaism. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. Marking of pupils' written work rarely indicates how pupils might extend their learning further.
66. Religious education is satisfactorily led by the co-ordinator. Her good subject knowledge ensures that teachers have an appropriate resource for support and advice. However, she has too little opportunity to check the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and this has led to a small amount of inconsistency in provision across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. It was not possible to make judgements on provision in **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education** as they were not the focus of the inspection. However, it is clear from the school timetables that the first three subjects receive less weekly teaching time than is found in most junior schools.
68. Only one lesson in **art and design** was observed during the inspection. Pupils enjoy this subject, and would like more art and design lessons. Many show good drawing skills in several areas of the curriculum. In the lesson seen, however, most pupils were unable to replicate the same skills in adding colour to their still life pictures. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils experience a wide range of learning. Displays around the school are made attractive by the quality of the pupils' work exhibited there. The co-ordinator ensures that school displays also appear regularly in the local library. He maintains a useful portfolio of photographic evidence to assist his colleagues in assessing standards in each year group, and provides good curriculum support materials.
69. There were no lessons in **design and technology** during the inspection, but displays around the school provided evidence of the range of learning that pupils experience in each year group. The subject is taught alternately with art and design in specific blocks that follow national planning schemes. Slippers recently made by Year 6 are of exceptional quality, with evaluations that show justifiable pride in the finished products. The procedure used for designing each new product is very detailed, enabling pupils to think deeply about their plan before beginning work. However, few planning sheets include measurements, limiting pupils' opportunities to consider the key factor of accuracy in their design.
70. Teaching timetables suggest that **music** is underemphasized in the school. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards or achievement, as only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Evidence from assemblies indicates that singing is of a high standard, however, and discussions with pupils show that they enjoy music lessons, and would like more of it. The school's talented coordinator, who teaches each year group for thirty minutes a week every other half term, teaches most of the music. Despite the brevity of these lessons, pupils cover the full range of study across the school. In addition, several attend choir practices or recorder groups, as well as

participating in individual instrumental tuition. The school is proud of its regular performances and concerts.

71. It was only possible to observe one lesson in **physical education**, which was in gymnastics. The pupils were enthusiastic, well motivated and active, working well individually and, with partners and larger groups. There was a good emphasis on evaluating each other's movements in order to improve performance. The school has a balanced curriculum that fully meets the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Accommodation is good as there are extensive playing fields, satisfactory playground space and a good sized hall. The school has an open-air swimming pool, which enables all pupils to have a swimming lesson each week in the summer term. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and school teams have experienced considerable competitive success, particularly in football, cricket and netball.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There is **good** provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils achieve well in this area of learning.

Strengths and weaknesses

- There are regular opportunities for the pupils to discuss relevant issues.
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to develop their social skills.

Commentary

72. Each class has regular opportunities to discuss relevant issues such as friendship, peer pressure, bullying, racism, animal welfare and fox hunting. The pupils can develop social skills in clubs, school productions, community involvement, and on school visits. Certain pupils take part in decision making as members of the Pupil Council and the school website group. The school encourages support for charities and are sponsors of a child in Malawi. There is formal sex education in all year groups, with due regard to age and maturity. The school nurse helps with this education. The pupils learn about the dangers of alcohol and drugs misuse and about the need for a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. The school was recently awarded intermediate 'Healthy Schools' status.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
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).