

SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

THE GILBERD SCHOOL

A larger than average comprehensive school in Colchester inspected 8th to 11th March 2004 by an inspection team led by Brian Blake HMI.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Gilberd School is a good school. The leadership of the head teacher is good. She is well supported by an effective senior leadership team, by faculty and subject heads of departments and heads of year. Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. The very good relationships throughout the school help to create a good ethos and a good learning environment. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the high expectations set by the effective headteacher;
- the strong contribution made by many managers at all levels throughout the school;
- the governing body's secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- teaching which is good and enables most pupils to achieve well;
- staff that are very committed and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour;
- the very good range of extra-curricular activities that enriches pupils' learning;
- marking that does not always enable pupils to know their strengths and weaknesses or what they need to do to improve;
- provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but records of progress are insufficient with IEP targets too imprecise; and,
- the school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education, citizenship and daily collective worship.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. National test and examination results have improved significantly and nearly all key issues raised in the previous inspection report have been tackled successfully.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards overall are very good, particularly GCSE results which are much better than those found nationally or in similar schools. Standards in music are not high enough. The results of national tests in the three core subjects at the end of Year 9 are above average.

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	A	A	B	A

*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 9.*

Standards are above average in almost all subjects and well above in some. **The overall achievement of pupils is good.** Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. More able pupils achieve well. Competence in literacy, numeracy and ICT is good.

Pupils' personal development is good, with strengths in high teacher expectations, including behaviour, and good pupils' attitudes. Attendance is good and punctuality satisfactory. **The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and teachers challenge pupils to achieve well. Good relationships and effective management of pupils create a supportive learning environment. Marking does not always let pupils know their strengths and weaknesses or what they need to do to improve. The school provides a wide range of courses and options to meet the needs of most pupils. The school does not yet have a sufficiently well planned programme to support the needs of the increasing number of younger pupils with special educational needs.

The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. Accommodation is good overall with excellent provision for the performing arts and very good provision for ICT and physical education. The school is well-resourced. The school's procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. There are very good arrangements for pupils transferring from primary schools. Pupils are monitored effectively and receive good support, advice and guidance throughout their time in school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good and management satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She provides a clear vision for the school and sets high expectations for teachers and pupils. Senior and middle managers also provide good leadership. Although the school development plan is monitored and evaluated, there is insufficient evaluation of its overall effectiveness on provision for the increasing needs of the youngest pupils. The governing body supports the school well and understands its strengths and weaknesses. However, it has not ensured that all statutory requirements in citizenship, religious education and daily collective worship are met fully. There is good support for newly qualified teachers.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the work of the school. They are well informed and very supportive. Individuals and external organisations make a good contribution to the education of pupils. The school has very good links with primary and secondary schools. Pupils speak highly of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure marking provides pupils with information about their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to improve;
- improve further the provision for pupils with special educational needs, for whom traditional academic courses are not appropriate;
- improve the provision for music; and
- meet statutory requirements by providing fully for religious education, citizenship and daily collective worship.

A copy of the full inspection report, which includes all the main judgements and grades, can be obtained from the school. Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about Ofsted inspections', which is available from the school or Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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