

INSPECTION REPORT

St Cecilia's Catholic School

North Cheam

LEA area : Sutton

Unique Reference Number : 102993

Headteacher : Mrs. P. Rickard

Reporting inspector : Mr. S. H. Ward
T13307

Dates of inspection : 4th October-8th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706653

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Primary
Type of control :	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils :	3 to 11
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	London Road North Cheam Surrey SM3 9DL
Telephone number :	0208 337 4566
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Appropriate authority :	Governing body
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs. M. Ayres
Date of previous inspection :	12th-15th June 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Selwyn Ward (Registered Inspector)		Attainment and Progress Teaching Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Efficiency
Norma Ball (Lay Inspector)		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Martin Andrews	English Art	Special educational needs Equal opportunities
Jennifer Catlin	Science Geography Music Under fives	Leadership and management
Shirley Lee	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	Curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The teaching is very good.
- Pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics.
- Pupils make very good progress in music and information technology.
- Pupils behave very well, and work and play well together.
- The school's strong Catholic Christian ethos provides a secure and caring community while promoting high academic standards.
- There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and planning appropriate work.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs helps them make very good progress.
- Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress.
- Very good provision is made for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Where the school has weaknesses

- The library is inadequate.
- The toilets are smelly.
- The School Development Plan does not look far enough ahead.
- Some parents feel that they are unable to approach the school with problems or complaints.

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses have already been identified by the school. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school is able to demonstrate exceptional improvement from the position described in the previous inspection. Many of the weaknesses identified in that inspection are now strengths of the school. Teaching is now very good in both key stages and for under fives. There are effective schemes of work in place in all subjects, assessment is used well, and the school now has very good systems in place for monitoring teaching and learning. Standards in all subjects are at least in line with national expectations and in many they are above or well above average, including English, mathematics, geography and music which were all identified as below average in the last inspection. Aspects of *National Curriculum* subjects concerned with exploration and enquiry are now covered well. The school has dealt with the health & safety concerns identified in the previous inspection, however the school's strategic planning continues to be focused only on one year's curriculum development and the school still has inadequate library facilities. The school is well placed to continue to do what it does well and to make further improvements.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the *National Curriculum* tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
English	A	A	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
Mathematics	A	C	
Science	C	D	

The information shows that in English and mathematics standards are well above average compared to schools nationally, and in English are also well above average compared with similar schools. Standards in mathematics are in line with similar schools. Schools are categorised as similar according to the number of children known to be eligible for free school meals. Although the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or higher in science was well above the national average, the average attained per pupil was in line with that attained nationally but was below the average for similar schools.

Pupils are attaining above national expectations in information technology, art, geography, physical education and music. In all other subjects, pupils' attainment in both key stages is at least in line with national expectations for their ages. There are no subjects where standards fall below the expected standard.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	very good	very good	very good
Mathematics	very good	good	very good
Science		good	very good
Information technology		very good	very good
Other subjects	good	good	good

Teaching is good or better in 69% of lessons. In 36% it is very good or excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. "Under fives" includes the nursery and reception class.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. There have been no exclusions.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
Ethos*	Very good. Pupils are keen and interested, relationships are very good and the school is a Catholic Christian community committed to high standards.
Leadership and management	Very good overall. Subjects are well managed, the headteacher provides strong leadership and the governing body is effective, but there is insufficient long-term planning.
Curriculum	Good. Planning for pupils' progression is a very good feature.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Support is well planned and pupils make very good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good. Children have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, show sensitivity to others, work well together, and have many opportunities to learn about their cultural heritage.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Experienced, well-qualified staff. Resources for information technology are very good. The accommodation is good, but the library is inadequate and the toilets need upgrading.
Value for money	Very good. Pupils make good progress and receive a very good quality of education through very effective teaching, even though the cost per pupil is low.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school helps children achieve well. • The school encourages positive values and attitudes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school encourages parents to play an active part in its life. • The school keeps parents well informed about children's progress and about what is taught. • The school maintains good discipline. • Their children enjoy going to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approachability of the school when parents have

Inspectors' judgements support the parents' positive views. Although the majority of parents feel the school is approachable with problems or complaints, the school could do more to ensure that it is also seen as accessible by the minority of parents who express concern.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To maintain and further improve standards and ensure that all pupils are able to make consistently good progress, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

A. Improve the library so that it offers an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction books for the size of the school and enables pupils to fully develop their library and research skills and opportunities for them to broaden their range of reading (*paras 8, 56, 82, 88*);

B. Extend the governors' long-term strategic planning by preparing a more detailed school development plan which can be used to plan the management of the school over a three to five year period and which ensures that the reserves which the school has built up are fully utilised for the benefit of the pupils (*paras 48, 61*);

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

review the school's procedures for dealing with parents' suggestions and complaints to better ensure that parents feel the school is accessible when they have concerns (*paras 46*);

refurbish the boys' toilets so that they no longer detract from the pleasant learning environment of the school (*para 57*);

continue the development of target setting and pupil self-assessment (*paras 33*);

make better use of sketch books in art for assessing pupils' progress (*para 114*);

ensure that the good practice in explicitly identifying cross-curricular literacy is fully extended to numeracy (*paras 11, 92*);

ensure that all individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs include clear and assessable targets (*para 24*);

review the means by which the governing body carries out its responsibilities for pupils with special educational needs (*para 51*);

ensure that the governors' Annual Report to parents fully complies with reporting requirements (*para 52*)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. St Cecilia's currently has 391 full-time pupils with a further 52 pupils attending the nursery part-time. This makes it a school of above average size. With new buildings, it has recently been able to expand to have two classes in each year group. In accordance with the policy of the local education authority, half the children join the reception year in September and half at Easter, so that an additional 30 children will be joining the school at Easter to form a second reception class. At the time of the inspection, in addition to the nursery pupils, all but 7 reception children were under five. St Cecilia's is located in a suburban area in the London Borough of Sutton. The school draws from a relatively wide geographical area and includes pupils from a mix of social backgrounds. Pupils come from supportive homes with parents who share the school's aims and values. As the school is popular and oversubscribed, pupils from Catholic homes fill almost all places at St Cecilia's. There are about 10% more boys than girls in the school. Relatively few pupils come from minority ethnic groups although there are currently 17 pupils whose first language is not English. 5% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average. About 16% of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is broadly in line with the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need. Baseline assessments completed on children's entry to the Reception classes indicate that pupils' attainment on entry is about average.

2. St Cecilia's describes the school's mission as being "*to create a Catholic Christian community and to develop in our children sound Christian principles through the provision of educational excellence*". The school sees its Catholic Christian ethos as central to its educational role and it seeks to combine high academic attainment with a caring Christian community where teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, parents and governors work together with shared aims and values.

3. The school's current priorities for improvement, as set out in the school development plan, include the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the continued development of information technology, the consolidation of arrangements for assessment and the need for further building works.

Key Indicators

Attainment at end of Key Stage 1¹ (infants)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	35	29	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	32	31	34
	Girls	28	29	28
	Total	60	60	62
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	94 (94)	97 (97)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	32	32	33
	Girls	28	29	29
	Total	60	61	62
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	94 (92)	95 (94)	97 (95)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at end of Key Stage 2² (juniors)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	22	26	48

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	21	19	21
	Girls	24	23	23
	Total	45	42	44
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	94 (66)	88 (71)	92 (68)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	44	45	45
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	92 (95)	94 (98)	94 (85)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.1
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.5
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	36
Good or better	69
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

4. When children start school, their attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally. By the age of five, children have made good progress overall and attain standards that are above those expected nationally. Most exceed the desirable learning outcomes for children by the time they reach the age of five. They have well developed speaking and listening skills, and a sound range of strategies to help them with their reading. Pupils can copy words from the board, and higher-attaining children can write simple sentences. They can identify shapes such as “*circle*” and “*square*” and are able to use numbers to ten. Children can sort objects using simple criteria such as colour and size.

5. The results of the national assessments for seven year olds in 1999 show pupils attaining well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results from previous years show that the school has been able to maintain a consistently high standard. National tests for seven year olds do not currently include science, but teacher assessments indicate pupils also achieving well above the national average in this subject. As compared with schools with a similarly low proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils attain well above average in writing, above average in mathematics and at the average level in reading and in science.

6. During their time in the infants, all pupils make good progress in reading. Children use a good range of strategies to help them with new words, such as their knowledge of letter sounds, blends and picture clues. By the end of the infants, most pupils can write simple sentences. A significant number are beginning to write longer pieces, with higher-attainers using interesting content, phrasing and vocabulary. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and in mental arithmetic. They move from calculating accurately using small numbers to calculating money and measurements. Their progress in the use of appropriate mathematical language is very good. Infants make steady gains in knowledge and understanding in all aspects of science.

7. In national tests for eleven year olds in 1999, pupils attained well above average in English and mathematics. Attainment in mathematics was in line with that of similar schools, but in English it was well above the average for similar schools. Although the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or higher in science in the National Tests was well above the national average, the average attained per pupil was in line with that attained nationally but was below the average for similar schools. 1999 results were significantly better than those achieved in 1998 in all core subjects. There is no evidence of any significant difference in progress made by boys and girls. Although in the 1998 test results boys performed considerably less well than girls, particularly in English, this does not represent a general trend in the school since boys slightly out-performed girls in the national tests in 1997 and 1999.

8. By the end of the juniors, most pupils are accomplished readers although their reading is narrow in range. They make very good progress in writing, so that their extended writing, both in English and in other subjects, is of a high standard, and pupils learn to present and punctuate their written work with care and accuracy. Similarly they make very good progress in mathematics. Pupils learn to answer mental arithmetic questions quickly and accurately, and higher-attaining pupils can convert fractions into percentages in their head using known mental strategies for halving and finding the equivalent values. Pupils make good progress in the understanding of scientific facts and processes and in recording and presenting their work appropriately. They learn to plan and carry out their own experiments effectively.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. By the time they leave the juniors, many are achieving close to or within the national average. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress supported by the high expectations of teachers. Pupils with statements of educational needs make very good progress in both numeracy and literacy skills. For example, one pupil had noticeably increased tracing skills over a short period and another had moved from a very limited knowledge of words to confident reading of a quite

demanding text.

10. Among other subjects of the curriculum, pupils are now achieving high standards in both key stages in information technology, with attainment now above national expectations due to the very good progress being made in lessons. Standards also exceed national expectations in art, physical education, geography and music. The school has made excellent progress in raising standards of attainment in these subjects, the latter two of which had been identified as among the key issues for action in the previous inspection. In all other subjects, pupils' attainment in both key stages is at least in line with national expectations for their ages. There are no subjects where standards fall below the expected standard.

11. Literacy and numeracy are well supported by other curriculum subjects in both key stages. Data handling and the use of spreadsheets in information technology contribute to pupils' numeracy, as does work on measurement and calculation in science, geography and design and technology, although these subjects' links with numeracy are not always made explicit. The use of extended vocabulary in most curriculum subjects, and word processing and publishing programs in information technology, contribute to pupils' progress in literacy. Good use is also made of extended writing in other subjects, including history.

12. A high proportion (89%) of those parents who returned the questionnaire indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the school enables their children to achieve a good standard of work. The inspection supports their view.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

13. The good standards of behaviour and positive attitudes of pupils noted in the last inspection report have continued and have improved so that behaviour now is very good. The good relationships in the school and the positive fostering of the personal development of pupils has a very significant impact on the quality of learning and standards attained by pupils.

14. Pupils show a good attitude to their work and have a positive approach to classroom studies. Parents like the positive attitudes and values fostered by the school. Pupils listen well and remain on task even on those occasions when lessons sometimes lack pace. Pupils show a pride in producing good work and enjoy praise for what they do well, both in class and in the weekly celebration assembly. Pupils work together well in groups and are also encouraged to develop the confidence to work positively on their own and to explore ideas especially through class discussions. Discussions are often stimulating and enjoyable. Pupils like sharing their ideas and listen well to each other. Good attitudes were especially a feature of junior classes where pupils concentrate well and show a mature approach towards their learning. Pupils like school and this is appreciated by parents.

15. The behaviour of pupils is very good. In class pupils are polite and attentive to their teachers and to other adults in the school. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors. They listen to each other and appreciate the need to take turns in talking. Good listening skills are progressively fostered through the school. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and show respect for the feelings of others. In and around the school, behaviour is also very good and even when pupils are at play they still show care and respect to each other. There have been no recent exclusions. Although there are a few pupils who can be challenging in their behaviour, these are well managed by staff. The behaviour policy is clear and consistently applied by all staff. Bullying does occur from time to time and is mostly of a verbal nature. At the time of the previous inspection there was no formal policy against bullying. The school have addressed this matter and there is now a clear anti-bullying policy which is well understood throughout the school community. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are well managed by the school and parents are fully involved. There are clear sanctions and rewards which pupils know and respect. Classes also agree their own simple set of rules. Parents are pleased with the behaviour standards in school.

16. Very good relationships are a strong feature of the St Cecilia's. Pupils mix well in lessons and at play and show a good awareness of the needs of others. Lunchtimes especially are a happy and social occasion. In class, pupils listen well to each other and value all contributions made to discussions. In lessons they often

respond to the contributions of others with spontaneous applause. The whole school celebrates good work and effort each week in the celebratory assembly. Pupils value the kindness and respect shown to them by all adults in the school. There have been no recent reported incidents of racial disharmony. Good relationships form an important part of the positive ethos of the school and the warm sense of community.

17. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss and share concerns in class. In reception, children shared circle time and talked about happy things and things which worried them with the class teacher. Such opportunities help to promote good personal development. Pupils show a good ability to solve problems and think through their ideas clearly. For example in a Year 5 class, pupils looking at the melting of ice had to design their own experiment to test their hypotheses and make sure their test was fair. The school library is unsatisfactory and does not provide pupils with adequate resources to support independent study and research. Within all classes pupils undertake special tasks and do so with enthusiasm. Older pupils have special responsibilities such as acting as house captains and monitors and helping at lunch time to organise games for the younger children. They perform their tasks with pride and dignity. Pupils are generous in their support of charities, such as the Catholic Association For Overseas Development, the Poppy Appeal and Lifeboats Appeal. Pupils also remember the needs of others in the community especially at Christmas and Harvest Festival time.

Attendance

18. Attendance is good and the attendance profile of the school has improved since the last inspection. Attendance is 95.4% and this compares favourably with the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Absences have been mostly for minor ailments. The school strongly discourage absences for family holidays in term time. Registers are taken promptly at the start of each session and attendance information is correctly reported to parents. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time and lessons begin promptly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

19. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teaching is consistently sound or better in all classes, with no unsatisfactory teaching seen. In more than two thirds of lessons, teaching was good or better, and it was very good or excellent in more than a third of the lessons seen. The teaching helps all pupils to make good and often very good progress in lessons. The improvement in teaching since the previous inspection has been excellent. In the previous inspection, a third of the teaching in the infants and nearly half the teaching in the juniors was judged to be unsatisfactory.

20. Almost all the teaching of under fives was good or better, and half was very good. Work is well planned between teachers and nursery nurses. Staff establish effective relationships with the children and know them well. Teachers use detailed and useful checklists of skills to monitor effectively what children know, understand and can do. As a result, although expectations are routinely high, they are almost always appropriate to children's needs.

21. In the infants and juniors, two thirds of the teaching was good or better and around a third was very good or excellent. Lessons are always appropriately and often very well planned. Often where teaching is most effective, teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils at the start of the lesson. In lessons where teaching is best, teachers have high expectations of the children, so that, Year 2 children, for example, are asked not only to identify but also to define terms such a "*phoneme*" and "*digraph*". In the most effective lessons, activities are clearly structured and well suited to children's needs and teachers use questioning well both to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and to encourage children to think and apply their knowledge. Older pupils are expected to justify their opinions and assertions, so that in, for

example, a Year 6 discussion on books, the teacher rejected a criticism that a book “*was boring*” because the pupil had not explained why, and the class chanted as a mantra “*everything in Year 6 comes with a because*”.

22. Praise is used to encourage positive responses but is not given out indiscriminately, and younger pupils are encouraged to value one another’s contributions with applause, which by the juniors becomes spontaneous. The best lessons are invariably categorised by a brisk pace with varied activities with which pupils quickly engage. Pupils are very well managed and very good use is made of both of teaching time and of the resources available. In the most effective lessons, teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge. The training which every teacher has undertaken on information technology, for example, has considerably raised teachers’ confidence and this has contributed to the consistently high standard of teaching of this subject. Homework is well used throughout the school to extend learning.

23. Where teaching, although satisfactory, was relatively less effective, teachers’ expectations were not made clear to pupils and as a result they were slow to start their tasks. In other less effective lessons, the pace of the lesson was slowed because the teacher kept interrupting the flow to correct minor failures of pupils to comply with instructions. For example, a mathematics lesson was stopped by the teacher on several occasions merely because a child was holding a pencil while they were listening. In a minority of lessons where teaching was less effective, pupils found that the tasks set for them were initially too difficult and they lost concentration as a result.

24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Special needs are identified early on in the school and work is planned to address these needs and to help pupils progress. In lessons, teachers modify activities for pupils with special educational needs. In both key stages, pupils are well supported by class room assistants using good resources. Pupils with specific learning needs are withdrawn and receive specialist support through outside agencies such as the Primary Support Service which helps pupils with speech and language enrichment. High expectations are set by all staff supporting these pupils and this helps children make very good progress. Satisfactory individual education plans are produced for pupils with special educational needs who require additional support. These set out learning targets which are assessed and reviewed at the end of each term. Some targets are very precise, indicating clearly what pupils should be able to do or understand over a term. In a minority of these plans, however, targets are too broad which makes it difficult for teacher to assess progress with accuracy.

25. A notable feature of the school is the very effective use made of specialist teachers who are mostly part-time. These cover the teaching of music and some of the teaching of physical education, as well as French which is taught as an extra subject in the juniors for a 30 minute session each week. Although some of them do not have teaching qualifications, much of the teaching and coaching seen by these visiting specialists was good or very good.

The curriculum and assessment

26. For under fives, the curriculum is based in the nursery on the areas for learning identified in *Desirable Learning Outcomes*, and in reception children follow the *National Curriculum*. The school's curriculum for both key stages includes all *National Curriculum* subjects, Religious Education and, in the juniors, French. The curriculum throughout the school is broad and balanced and promotes the pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It prepares them very effectively for the next stage of education. There is an appropriate balance given to the various subjects, in line with the government's recent recommendations for a greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy within the English and mathematics curriculum. The time allocation is satisfactory for all subjects. The government's recent relaxed requirements for non-core subjects have been taken into account but the school provides good coverage of these subjects. Policies are in place for all subjects including sex education and personal, social and health education. The policies do not all include clear guidance for teaching but this guidance is available through other means, to all teachers. For example through the National Literacy Strategy and Numeracy Framework folders and through published subject guidance for each subject.

27. There are detailed schemes of work across the curriculum, although those for physical education are in a period of transition as teachers move from the existing schemes of work to a new framework for planning based on advice received from the local education authority. Most schemes have been put in place since the last inspection and teaching has improved substantially. Throughout the planned curriculum there are good opportunities for pupils to research background information, for example on history topics such as the Victorians or festivals in other religions, such as the Jewish Passover. In English, art, and music, activities are included which fuel the imagination and encourage creativity. The curriculum provides problem-solving opportunities in most subjects, for example, in science and design technology. Pupils set up and carry out experiments. They plan their designs for pop-up toys and learn how to overcome problems with materials and tools when turning the designs into products. Pupils learn how to apply their knowledge to new situations. When working out the perimeter of a rectangular field, for example, they find that knowledge about the properties of a rectangle makes for speedier calculation. There has been a very good improvement in these aspects of the curriculum since the last inspection and this high quality provision is consistent across the school. Teachers' planning systems are good. The long and medium term schemes of work show clearly how activities will progress as pupils move through the school. They are used effectively as the basis for weekly planning and they provide a means of ensuring the progression of knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the school. To promote consistency, share ideas and discuss issues teachers meet weekly in year groups to plan together, as well as half-termly as a wider group to monitor practice and ensure continuity across the age groups. It is a good feature of the school that teachers regularly evaluate their lessons. Planning and lesson evaluations are monitored by senior members of staff. Learning objectives are clearly defined for pupils and a good recording system exists to track pupils' achievements. Provision for higher-attaining pupils is good and is integrated within each class.

28. There are good opportunities for extra-curricular activities. These include football and netball for both boys and girls, kwik cricket, choir and recorders. Computer and maths clubs also successfully run during lunch times. Other extra-curricular activities are made available on a fee-paying basis, including Le Club Francais for infants, instrumental lessons and short tennis. The school enters the Borough District Sports each year, and sports teams participate in the local leagues, knock-out cup competitions and a swimming gala. There has been considerable success in recent years, particularly in football, athletics and netball.

29. The school is effective in ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Work is planned in a way that enables pupils with special educational needs to participate fully in lessons. Additional support is provided so that pupils with statements of special educational need can follow a similar curriculum to other pupils; for example individual help was given to one child to enable her to complete the same work within the class history topic and care was taken to ensure that the task was completed to an appropriate standard. Good use is made of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs so that pupils receive appropriate support and are encouraged to achieve high standards. Additional support and specialist advice helps teachers to prepare work for pupils with special educational needs within their class planning. Within the *literacy hour* special needs pupils were given additional support through a classroom assistant using resources which fully engaged the pupils' interest and enabled them to share what they had learnt with the rest of the class at the end of the lesson. Parents and teachers are fully involved in the reviews of individual education plans and in the formal reviews of statemented pupils as required by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

30. Procedures for regular assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good. The local authority baseline assessment is used on children's arrival into the nursery and, combined with information gathered during home visits, is very well used in planning pupils' work. Good records are kept of test results, and of pupils' achievements in the core subjects. Teachers also monitor pupils' learning in non-core subjects. Reports to parents include the results of these assessments. There is good analysis of all test results, including the national standard assessment test results. This is used to help with planning to raise standards by identifying weaknesses and action for remedying these. The analysis of test results in the juniors in 1998 has made a significant contribution to the clear improvement seen in the results achieved in 1999.

31. Statutory assessment requirements are met and teachers' assessments of each pupil's attainment at the end of each key stage are efficiently maintained. Test results are used for the basis of grouping in some subjects but it is good that this grouping is not rigid and allows for pupils to move between groups. Pupils'

individual records are passed to their new teacher prior to the beginning of the school year in order to maintain good continuity between classes.

32. The school has been developing a database showing examples of pupils' achievements at different levels. This is to be available to teachers when they are assigning *National Curriculum* levels to pupils' work. This is a good initiative which will encourage consistent assessment across the infants and juniors and which should help avoid the disparity between teacher assessments and test results which occurred in 1998. The school recognises that further work is needed to ensure that the now effective assessment procedures are fully used in teachers' daily plans to meet the needs of individual pupils as well as groups. It is good that targets are set for individual pupils and this encourages pupils' involvement in the assessment of their own learning. The introduction of target setting and pupils' self-assessment are in the early stages. Pupils can evaluate what they have done in practical lessons and a minority are beginning to be able to explain what they have learned so far in a lesson and what they still need to work on to meet the learning objectives the teacher has set for them. This information is sometimes, but not always, used to inform the pupil's homework and the teacher's plans for the next lesson. Where this assessment strategy is less strong, the targets or objectives are set with pupils but then not reviewed in a way which makes it explicit to the pupils why they have been successful in meeting their target. For example, a pupil learning to distinguish a cube from a cuboid, may know the mathematical name for the shapes but will only have met the target when they can also explain in what ways the two shapes are the same and in what ways they are different.

33. Since the last inspection the school has developed assessment practice which is accurate and consistent, which largely informs planning and is manageable. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

34. This is a notable strength of the school which has further improved since the previous inspection. The provision made for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies are well planned and delivered to engage and involve all pupils. Even when they do not focus on an overtly Christian story, assemblies carry a clear moral and an opportunity for thoughtful reflection. Mass is celebrated in the school, and parents are invited to join their children in communion. Prayers at the start and end of the day and at lunch-time are made relevant and reinforce the ethos of the school. Pupils respond with reverence and conviction. Spirituality is central to the life of the school and pervades all that it does. The headteacher and her staff have created a strong sense of caring and mutual respect, which leads to a very positive atmosphere and a feeling that everyone is part of the school family.

35. All adults in the school provide very good role models in how to treat others. Pupils are taught a strong sense of right and wrong. Assembly themes emphasise moral responsibility, as, for example, where juniors reflecting on the story of Llewellyn and Gelert agreed that it was important to do the right thing even if this made one unpopular. Pupils have been involved in drawing up their own class rules, and in some classes they each sign their name to them. The Catholic Diocesan religious education syllabus '*Here I am*' includes very clear moral and social teaching.

36. In addition to class monitor duties throughout the school, pupils in Year 6 take on a range of wider responsibilities, including as house captains and helping younger pupils in the playground. Pupils are very well supported in the playground and encouraged to play constructively together. Excellent use is made of discrete areas in the playground to enable pupils to share together in quiet activities such as board games as well as more boisterous ball games. In Year 6 pupils take part in a residential trip to Cliftonville in Kent. In Year 5, pupils visit Sayers Croft. Such residential experiences help to develop both pupils' academic knowledge and their social skills and this experience makes a good contribution to their social development.

37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also very good. As is appropriate in a school named for its patron saint, music is given a prominent place in the curriculum, with specialist teaching and many opportunities for pupils to take part in singing and other musical activities. Assemblies include a focus on a composer which goes beyond superficial identification to include some consideration of the instruments and techniques used in the composition. Good use is made of both devotional and secular art in display around the

school, and pupils study and imitate the styles of a range of Western artists. Pupils have also benefited from the opportunity to look at art and artefacts from other cultures, with, for example, Japanese illustrations used to inspire seascape paintings. Pupils respond with interest when learning about other faiths and cultures, both ancient and modern. They have studied the culture of ancient Egypt and Greece. In reception they have been looking at life in India including Indian art and music. Pupils also take part in a range of competitions and local sporting events which extend and develop their awareness of the world beyond school.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

38. Parents and pupils value the care and guidance provided by the school. Pupils' progress and personal development are well monitored and the promotion of their well-being, health and safety is also good. There are satisfactory procedures in place to monitor behaviour and attendance. The support and guidance provided for pupils makes a valuable contribution to the personal development of pupils and the standards they attain.

39. Monitoring of personal progress and development is good. Pupils are well known to staff who assign importance to their pastoral role. Although there are no formal procedures for monitoring personal development the very good knowledge that all staff have of pupils is well used to promote pupils' progress and provide a high level of personal care. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore areas valuable to their personal development through many areas of the curriculum and in assemblies. They are encouraged to talk about and share concerns with staff and feel confident of a positive response from all adults in the school. Monitoring of progress is developing well throughout the school. The school have begun to implement target setting for pupils, as well as some pupil self-assessment. This is in the early stages and not yet consistently applied throughout the school but a very positive start has been made. Monitoring of academic progress is beginning to be used to inform planning and in target setting for individual pupils. Although this is at an early stage, having only been very recently introduced, it is beginning to have an impact on promoting good progress. Pupils are encouraged to develop high self-esteem and to always do their best and produce work of good quality and they respond positively to these expectations.

40. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported by well-qualified staff. Additional guidance in planning work is provided by external agencies such as the Learning Support Unit. The educational psychologist visits the school regularly and provides advice, guidance and training to help staff in supporting these pupils. Individual educational plans are monitored regularly and pupils' progress is recorded. The very good level of support given to pupils with special educational needs makes a significant contribution to the progress they make.

41. There is satisfactory monitoring of behaviour. There is a clear behaviour management policy which is set out in a simplified code for all pupils. The policy is consistently implemented by all staff. Good records are kept of any incidents of poor behaviour and parents are informed quickly where there are concerns. Pupils are clear about the standards of behaviour expected in school and they value the rewards that are used to recognise good behaviour and work. The house points in the juniors and table-top awards in the infants are especially popular.

42. Monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. Registers are checked on a regular basis. Although little follow up is necessary, the school are alert to any problems of attendance or punctuality that may develop. Parents are involved in these concerns at an early stage. The Education Welfare Officer is also available to support the school and her help is used appropriately.

43. The school has effective and good procedures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. There are clear guidelines for health and safety both in school and off site during visits. Regular checks are made of the site and premises and risk assessments have been carried out. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and are understood by staff. Arrangements for pupils who are unwell in school are sensible and there is medical room with a waiting area that pupils may use. Two staff have full first aid qualifications and a number of other staff have attended short courses in first aid. Satisfactory arrangements are made for serving school meals and lunch times are a happy and social experience for pupils. The school have been without the services of a caretaker for some time. In spite of this and because of the efforts of all staff the

school is clean and well presented.

Partnership with parents and the community

44. The partnership between the school and parents has continued to be as positive and productive as noted in the previous inspection. The information which parents receive from the school is very good and the good involvement of parents in their children's learning together with good community links have a positive impact on the quality of learning and standards achieved in the school.

45. Information provided for the parents by the school is of very good quality and is strongly valued by parents. The school prospectus is clear and informative and there are helpful regular newsletters. Information about what is to be taught in each class is provided for parents at the start of each year and the school produce a very helpful annual calendar of events. There is good information available to help parents support their children's reading and maths work at home and there are helpful meetings to explore areas of the curriculum. The good information provided by the school enables parents to provide good support for their children at home. Parents' meetings each term provide an opportunity for parents to discuss the progress their children are making and to look at the work of the school. Reports are clear and comprehensive, providing parents with a very good outline of their child's progress as well as setting out areas for development. The report is available to parents in the spring term and there is an additional supplementary report at the end of the school year. Parents are pleased with the way they are kept informed about their children's progress. The school makes good arrangements for the induction of new pupils and parents in the nursery and reception classes. There is a parents' information booklet for nursery parents and home visits are especially helpful to parents and teachers in ensuring a well organised start to school.

46. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning. Many parents help in school on a regular basis with such areas as information technology, reading and craft work, as well as with after-school activities such as netball. A few local residents also help in school on a regular basis. Parents are very supportive of school events and help out with school trips. There is good help with homework. The well organised *reading pact* and *Impact Maths* schemes enable parents to be productively involved in helping develop skills at home, particularly in the infants. Through the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) parents make a practical contribution in fundraising activities in support of the school. In the recent past the PTA have made valuable contributions to the resources in English and information technology with the purchase of new books and new computer equipment. Staff make themselves available to talk to parents, particularly at the end of the day. Some parents are not happy about the school's response to questions and complaints, however. Although most parents feel that the school is open and accessible, more could be done to ensure that it is seen as approachable by the significant minority of parents who express concerns.

47. Enrichment through links with the community are good. There is an appropriate range of well-planned visits organised each year to extend classroom studies and to broaden the experience of pupils. These include residential visits in Years 5 and 6. These visits help extend not only academic work but foster pupils' social skills. Classroom studies are enriched also by visitors to the school including the Magic Lantern great painters talk, and the Planetarium visit to the school. St Cecilia's participates enthusiastically in a good range of local sporting and musical events and are supportive of local elderly residents and also the patients at St Raphael's Hospice. There are appropriate links with the secondary schools to which the majority of pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. The school makes sensible use of the expertise provided by local agencies. The school is used on a regular basis for motor cycle classes each weekend but the number of lettings has decreased because of the decommissioning of the hall during the recent building works. The school make good use of the local swimming pool and public library and pupils enjoy these out-of-school visits. Naturally, St Cecilia's has well developed and productive links with the parish churches which almost all the children attend. The local priest is a regular visitor to the school and conducts a Mass in school where parents are invited to join their children in communion.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

48. St Cecilia's is led by an experienced headteacher who provides strong and effective leadership with a clear educational direction for the school. Education developments are well planned and the senior management team have clear ideas about how they want the school to improve. However, these priorities are not identified through a well-structured long-term school development plan that identifies the relevant priorities and costs involved enabling the school to set targets for improvement in attainment. This is a weakness which was also identified in the previous inspection. The governing body are supportive of the school, have an effective committee structure and are kept well informed through regular meetings and detailed reports written by the headteacher. Development targets have been identified in the school's annual school development plans. These have proved useful in identifying many issues and areas for future progress by teachers and governors. However, detailed school development planning does not project further than the end of the academic year. The previous report stated that the school "*needs to improve its strategic planning*". Although the school is successful in its short-term planning there is little recorded evidence of formal medium or long-term strategic planning.

49. Co-ordinators manage their subject responsibilities well. There are detailed policies in place for all subjects and schemes of work to help plan pupils' continuous learning and progress and meet *National Curriculum* requirements. Subject co-ordinators see class teachers' termly plans to check on continuity and progression within and across key stages. They are also involved in monitoring standards in teaching and learning for their subjects. Overall, the subject documentation currently in place provides a good framework for the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

50. Teachers are fully involved in decision-making and are aware of all school issues through regular staff meetings. The headteacher is very supportive of staff in their work and ensures that appropriate training is provided. There is a positive ethos in the school, which provides a safe and secure environment for learning. Equality of opportunity is safeguarded for all pupils, and good attitudes and very good relationships are successfully fostered and these are a significant strength of the school.

51. St Cecilia's has a strong commitment to pupils with special needs. Special educational needs are effectively managed by the co-ordinator who provides good support to pupils and is available to advise staff about the identification and assessment of these pupils. Record keeping is detailed and effective. Pupils' files are up to date and the level of detail recorded ensures that pupils' individual needs are met. The register of pupils with special educational needs is up-to-date and has been analysed according to need. The special needs co-ordinator is a member of the governing body and also acts as governor with responsibility for special educational needs, although another governor helps to support special needs work. It would be more appropriate if a governor who was not a member of staff was the nominated special needs governor. Although all practice within the school meets the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, the governing body has not clearly set out how it evaluates the success of its special needs teaching.

52. The equal opportunities policy, rooted in the mission statement of the school, expresses a strong commitment to providing a school environment which fosters the achievement and well-being of all pupils. This positive ethos is reflected in the day-to-day running of the school, where individual pupils are valued and supported, pupils are encouraged to achieve well and to respect and value one another. The impact of the policy is monitored mainly informally, though the school has in place procedures for analysing individual pupil achievement in tests so that the progress being made by individuals and by boys and girls can be followed. The Governing Body has improved disabled access to the school though it has not reported this in the Annual Report to parents as is legally required.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

53. The school has sufficient teachers and classroom assistants with appropriate qualifications. Good

specialist teaching in subjects such as music, French and physical education, although in some cases by part-time staff without formal teaching qualifications, makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning. The expertise of all staff has improved over the last few years through a good school approach towards in-service training in targeted areas of the curriculum. Training has been successfully provided to the whole staff, linked to priorities identified in the school's annual development plan. The entire teaching staff attended a computer course which resulted in all teachers obtaining a certificate. This initiative has led to increased staff confidence and enthusiasm for teaching information technology which has had an impact on raising standards. A few teachers have attended other long courses to develop specialist expertise, for example in mathematics, special educational needs, science and assessment. There is an expectation at St Cecilia's that subject co-ordinator's lead whole staff in-service training following their attendance at courses. This works well, is appreciated by other teachers and contributes to improving standards of teaching. Newly qualified teachers have mentors during the induction year. They receive good pro-active support from colleagues.

54. There is a very high level of expertise in the teaching of special needs in the school. Non-teaching assistants are deployed well and have good expertise and high expectations of the pupils they support. Good use is also made of educational psychologists and other visiting specialists. Classroom assistants are deployed well and provide valuable additional support. There is no whole school policy for training all classroom assistants but some have pursued courses to good effect. The expertise of the support staff enables them to work successfully with small groups of pupils with special educational needs. The administrative staff are experienced, have received recent training and make a much appreciated contribution to the smooth running of the school.

55. The school's accommodation has been extended recently and there are now sufficient classrooms to support two classes in each year group. The building programme has been very successful and the new facilities, particularly the computer suite, have enhanced the provision significantly. Despite the long-term absence of a caretaker, the building is cleaned and maintained to a high standard. Classrooms are mostly of a good size and displays help to create a welcoming purposeful atmosphere in the school. The specialist music room is very well used and contributes to high quality of music provision in the school. There is no spare classroom space however, so this facility is not available to the school in the Summer term when the room is instead used to house the second reception class. Storage areas are adequate and well organised. Sheds protect outside play equipment and the resources for physical education.

56. Although books are available in classrooms and use is made of topic boxes of non-fiction books bought in from the local education authority, the library itself is inadequate. This lack of facility restricts pupils' opportunities for practising their research and library skills.

57. The boys' toilets are in need of refurbishment. The persistent smell which is present detracts from the pleasant environment which surrounds this area.

58. Two small rooms are used for teaching groups of pupils with special needs, one of which is used to store special needs resources. Good use is also made of small corridor areas for withdrawal groups. The school has improved disabled access through the building of a ramp and the modification of toilet facilities.

59. Resources in the school for teaching the *National Curriculum* are good. They are particularly good for geography, music, information technology and mathematics. The organisation of resources both in the classrooms and storage areas is good. Their accessibility encourages good use to be made of them across the curriculum, including for pupils with special educational needs. The outside play areas are well resourced with attractive new equipment for exploratory play and a "parachute" which encourages co-operative activities. There is a very good safe surface near the climbing areas to protect pupils from injury if they fall over. There is space on both hard and grass surfaces for play and physical education. Since the last inspection the provision and use of resources have both improved.

60. Some parents expressed concern over the narrow front gate which opens onto the main road. Although not of itself a safety issue, the gate is narrow and does demand a degree of patience and care from both parents and children to avoid collision between those entering and those leaving the site.

The efficiency of the school

61. St Cecilia's has built up reserves of more than £75,000. In part this was due to cautious budgeting against the contingency that money would be needed to meet the cost of building works on the school's new classrooms. Current projections are for a small budget overspend this year, but, other than further medium-term building plans, governors do not currently have a fully costed school development plan projecting more than one year ahead. More formal long-term planning would assist the school in ensuring that funds, including those built up as reserves, are best utilised for the benefit of pupils.

62. As compared with other London borough schools, expenditure per pupil is very low. Efficient use is made of staff, including specialist teachers and learning support staff, accommodation and resources. The budget for special educational needs is spent appropriately and used mainly to fund specialist support staff. Although the amount of administrative support in school is relatively high, the school's day-to-day and financial administration is unobtrusive and is carried out very efficiently by the office staff. The school has implemented all of the recommendations made in the recent borough audit report.

63. There are satisfactory systems in place for annual budgeting which involve subject co-ordinators, and the school has monitored areas of expenditure to ensure that it receives value for money. For example, after evaluation, governors took the decision to accept the risk of funding supply cover within the school budget rather than subscribe to a pooling scheme. The school took the decision to fund from its own resources the installation of a new computer suite rather than await delayed funding through the local education authority. The very good progress which pupils of all ages have made in information technology as a result of this investment in equipment and in the training of staff, and the very efficient and effective use which is made of the network demonstrates excellent value for money.

64. Pupils' attainment on entry is about average and their attainment at eleven is well above the national average in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In all other subjects it is at least in line with national expectations, and in many subjects, including information technology, art, geography, physical education and music, it is above average. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and those with special educational needs make very good progress. Relationships throughout the school and pupils' behaviour are very good, and children have a positive attitude to their work. The quality of education provided overall is very good, with very good teaching and very good provision made for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The expenditure per pupil is very low, being well below the average for similar schools, and the school has been able to demonstrate exceptional improvement since the previous inspection. Overall, therefore, St Cecilia's provides very good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

65. The school admits children part-time into the nursery class and full-time into the reception classes in September and at Easter. At the time of the inspection, there were 23 children aged under five in the reception class.

66. Attainment on entry to the school is in line with that expected nationally for children of this age. From this starting point, all children make good progress. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. By the time they are five, children meet and surpass the desirable outcomes for learning in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and personal and social development. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

67. A very good induction programme allows children to be gradually introduced to the school and so to full-time education. This helps them to settle in well. Staff in both the nursery and reception class make useful home visits to most families. The school undertakes an initial assessment of children when they start in the nursery and these records are passed on to the reception teachers.

68. Children aged under five make good progress in their personal and social development. They develop in confidence, playing with friends in the playground and conversing spontaneously with familiar adults. They enjoy short periods of being left to play by themselves. They listen and show respect to adults as well as other pupils, and learn to play co-operatively. They take turns, and are able to queue quietly and sensibly at lunchtime. They can follow simple instructions, and work independently after initial teacher guidance. Children recognise the difference between right and wrong, and respond appropriately to adults' comments on their behaviour.

69. Children make good progress in language and literacy by the age of five and their attainment is above that expected for children of this age. Children with special educational needs also make good progress. The children have well developed speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively to stories, anticipating the next part. The higher-attaining children are beginning to discuss their preferences of stories, and can recognise rhyming words. All children make good gains in their acquisition of vocabulary in areas of learning such as mathematics. In their reading, the higher-attaining children are working within level 1 of the *National Curriculum* in English, reading simple texts mostly correctly. The lower-attaining children remember words in a familiar story. They are developing a sound range of strategies to help them with their reading, including recognition of initial sounds. The children's writing is of a good standard for their age. They competently copy words from the board. The higher-attaining children can write simple sentences, spelling accurately words such as "cat" and "ran", and make good attempts at spelling independently using their phonic knowledge. They are learning to write in different styles, such as personal accounts and some can identify speech bubbles in books.

70. Children make good progress in mathematics so that by the age of five their attainment is above national expectations. They are provided with a good range of practical activities for the development of their mathematical skills and good quality direct teaching of mathematics. They gain a secure foundation for future work through play in the hospital corner and with activities involving pattern making. They can name shapes such as "circle" and "square". They make good progress in recognising and using numbers to ten, and use this to create a number pattern using coloured cubes. The children draw the correct number of objects for numerals up to ten, and can sort objects, using simple criteria such as colour and size. They benefit from well-planned opportunities to play with number games, puzzles and construction kits, which help their problem solving skills.

71. Good progress is made in children's knowledge and understanding of the world, with attainment above national expectations by the age of five. There are notable strengths in children's early scientific learning, particularly in their explanation of the working of cogs and in their observation, designing, and making skills. The children benefit from a good range of experiences to support their scientific learning. In particular, they

have good early knowledge of plants, animals and growth, and are beginning to know about the senses of hearing and sight. They record their findings in pictures and writing, with the higher-attaining children producing neat work. The children successfully use materials and tools such as glue, scissors, paper, material and card to make individually designed boats, producing artefacts of good variety. In their play, the children explore sand and water, experiment with the computer mouse and effectively extend their learning in these areas.

72. The children's attainment in all aspects of their physical development exceeds the national expectation by the age of five. Through their play with tabletop games and jigsaws, using modelling materials, pencils and brushes, they show a growing ability to manage small items. In their physical education lessons, children demonstrate good skills in balancing and they make good progress. They have good awareness of space and work together successfully in team activities. There is good provision outdoors for the children to practice their motor skills using equipment such as climbing frames and wheeled toys.

73. In their creative development, the children's attainment, by the age of five, is above the national expectation, and they make good progress. They are building up a repertoire of nursery rhymes and songs and very much enjoy experimenting with musical instruments. They explore colour and texture using a variety of materials, and are beginning to explain how things look, feel and smell. The children make attractive large-scale pictures using pastels and coloured pencils. They are able to print with paint using two dimensional shapes and design mosaics using coloured pencils or sticky paper.

74. Children aged under five make good progress in their personal and social development. They develop in confidence, playing with friends in the playground and conversing spontaneously with familiar adults. They enjoy short periods of being left to play by themselves. They listen and show respect to adults as well as other pupils, and learn to play co-operatively. They take turns, and are able to queue quietly and sensibly at lunchtime. They can follow simple instructions, and work independently after initial teacher guidance. Children recognise the difference between right and wrong, and respond appropriately to adults' comments on their behaviour.

75. The quality of teaching for the under fives is very good. Termly planning is clearly based on the *Desirable Learning Outcomes* and lesson plans are detailed. Class teachers and nursery nurses work very well together to ensure that sessions are carefully organised and meet children's individual needs in a secure and supportive environment. All the staff establish effective relationships with the children and know them well. Teachers use detailed and useful checklists of skills to monitor effectively what children know, understand and can do. There are good expectations of the children's ability to make choices of activities and to work independently, with the result that they show good responsibility in their play and learning, developing good concentration for their age. Expectations of attainment in all of the areas of learning are good. For example, the children are expected to write independently and form letters correctly so that they make good progress in these skills.

76. The children benefit from a good combination of teacher directed and self-chosen activities, and an appropriate balance of class, group and individual activities. Explanations of work are clear and good use is made of nursery nurses and the teamwork in the nursery and reception class is good. The nursery nurses work well with the children, with good awareness of the purpose of activities and so enable the children to make good progress. They have regular involvement with assessing and recording children's progress. The children are well managed, and they enjoy good relationships with the adults in the class. The classrooms are attractive, with pleasing displays of children's work and readily accessible resources to support the children's learning in lessons. The records for the children under five are based on the six areas of learning defined in the *Desirable Learning Outcomes*.

77. The co-ordinator for early years works very hard to ensure that there is a cohesive and suitable philosophy and policy informing practice consistently in the nursery and reception classes. The management and leadership for this area is good.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

78. The results in the National Tests at the end of the infants in 1999 show pupils' attainment in reading and writing to be well above average. As compared with similar schools, standards in reading were average, but in writing standards were well above average. More than half the pupils attained level 3 in reading and spelling. This maintains the trend of above average performance over the last three years and shows distinct improvement in the number of pupils achieving level 3. In the National Tests at the end of the juniors in 1999, results were well above average both in comparison with national results and as compared with those of similar schools. This exceeded the literacy targets set by the school. This represents a very significant improvement on the previous year's results and maintains the trend of ongoing improvement.

79. Evidence gathered during the inspection reflects this picture of attainment. At the end of the infants, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above average and their attainment in reading and writing is well above average. At the end of the juniors, pupils' attainment is above average in speaking and listening and well above average in reading and writing. Standards in both the tests and work samples represent a marked improvement on those reported at the time of the last inspection.

80. Pupils' work shows good progress during both key stages as a result of the systematic teaching of both reading and writing skills in the school. In lessons seen, pupils made at least sound progress and in over half their progress was good or very good. Progress was best where teachers provided challenging tasks which enabled pupils to develop a range of English skills and where teachers had high expectations over what should be achieved in the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make very good progress throughout the school because work is matched well to their needs and good additional support is given to them where appropriate.

81. Pupils generally listen attentively to their teachers and respond well to questions. They listen to each other and engage well in class discussion. They speak with growing confidence and use standard English. Year 1 pupils were able to comment on aspects of a simple text and share what they had learnt with the rest of the class. In Year 2, many pupils were able to read aloud their work on "fire" confidently while the class listened with interest and applauded spontaneously. In Years 5 and 6, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their reading and were able to explain with clarity some of the work they had done at school. Speaking and listening skills are extended through opportunities in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils were able to take on roles effectively in drama linked to the Fire of London. Year 6 pupils participated effectively in a class debate on the government's response to the poor in the 1930s, exploring the language of persuasion.

82. Throughout the school most pupils read fluently and accurately at their own level. Many spoke of their enjoyment of reading. Year 2 pupils can select books with independence and enjoyed the opportunity to browse. Younger children use a good range of strategies to help them with new words, such as their knowledge of letter sounds, blends and picture clues. They show good understanding of what they have read by retelling the story. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 can talk simply about some of the characters in the books they have read and in Year 2 understand elements of the structure of books - for example, the purpose of the blurb, the index and the contents. Older pupils can read aloud with confidence and increasing expression and are beginning to understand where an author is making inferences or writing to persuade. Year 6 pupils read books such as *Black Beauty* and *Goodnight Mr Tom*, commenting on the characters and what motivates them, and are beginning to identify some of the themes in the books - such as patience. By the end of the juniors, most pupils are accomplished readers, although those spoken to were only able to comment on a fairly narrow range of books which they had read. Pupils' skills in finding information in non-fiction books are satisfactory. They can use an index, scan text, extract information from a CD-ROM and take notes. The absence of a proper library in the school, however, limits the development of library and research skills. Pupils clearly enjoy reading and most read regularly at home, but there is still a need to extend their range of

reading further in the juniors.

83. By the end of the infants, most pupils can write simple sentences. A significant number are beginning to write longer pieces, with higher-attainers using interesting content, phrasing and vocabulary. An above average pupil in Year 2, began a piece of extended writing with the phrase “*A funny thought opened up in my head*” and another at the beginning of Year 2 described firework sparks “*like a flower dropping petals*”. Most pupils spell common words accurately and some pupils are able to spell or make reasonable attempts at more complex words. By the end of the infants, punctuation is well developed with most pupils showing good understanding of sentences. Most pupils are also able to write legibly, many with a well-formed joined style. In the juniors, pupils write for a wide range of purposes using different styles. A feature of the juniors is the good quality poetry displayed in the school, and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils produce very good extended writing by the end of the juniors. A story entitled “*The Realm of Magic*” was developed in chapters and had a contents page, and vocabulary was used effectively to create pace and atmosphere in the story. There were other good examples of sustained writing in the juniors, although such writing was not consistently developed in all classes. By the end of juniors, most pupils develop neat joined handwriting. They organise their work in paragraphs, use punctuation such as speech marks, and many are able to spell more complex words. Both dictionaries and thesaurus were seen being used confidently.

84. Pupils' literacy skills are very good. Opportunities are provided in other subjects for pupils to use and develop them. Pupils are encouraged to develop technical vocabulary for science, maths and art – appropriately using terms such as “*process*” and “*Cubism*”. Pupils in Year 4 had written reports on scientific investigations and, as part of their history work, pupils in Year 3 had written letters imagining themselves to be Roman legionaries away from home. Pupils are encouraged to use the technical language of literacy; pupils in Year 5 understood alliteration and onomatopoeia and pupils in Year 1 knew about and could define and give examples of phonemes and digraphs.

85. Pupils' responses to teaching and learning are very good. In most lessons they listen attentively and respond readily to instructions, pursuing tasks with good concentration. In Year 1, pupils worked quickly at exercises on sounds and were eager to share and demonstrate the words they could make at the end of the lesson. Good levels of independence were seen in Year 2, where pupils could set out a list clearly; one pupil using bullet points. When required to do so, pupils collaborated well in pairs and small groups. In a minority of lessons pupils took time to settle into an activity because expectations had not been made clear by the teacher.

86. The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages. In the best lessons there was lively whole class teaching with searching questions which made pupils think and which drew upon previous learning. Most teachers showed a good understanding of the literature they used and were able to use this to extend pupils' understanding. Lessons were planned to take account of different abilities, with a strong emphasis in the infants on the teaching of sounds. High expectations were set at the start of the lesson with the intended learning shared with the pupils. In most lessons, the teacher constantly checked during the lesson to ensure that pupils understood and were working, though in a minority this was less effective and slowed progress. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection.

87. St Cecilia's provides a broad and balanced English curriculum which meets *National Curriculum* requirements. The school has implemented the *National Literacy Strategy* effectively, structuring lessons according to the Strategy's expectations but also using some flexibility, particularly for writing. There is a scheme of work which enables teachers to plan the step-by-step development of skills and which ensures an appropriate range of experiences. This is supported by commercial schemes for reading and the literacy strategy which provide a secure structure for the teaching of literacy skills and which are supplemented by other material. An assessment policy has been developed. Although insufficient use was made of the ends of lessons to evaluate what pupils had learnt, because teachers know their pupils well they are able to match work to their needs. Test scores are analysed and used effectively to plan the groupings of pupils and the level of support needed.

88. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to maintain this. The management of the subject is very good. The standard of pupils' work is evaluated and teaching is monitored.

This has led to greater accuracy in teachers' assessment and improvement in the quality of lessons since the last inspection. The co-ordinator's action plan is firmly rooted in the need to maintain high standards and sets out clear and appropriate priorities. Resources are good. Additional books have been purchased to support the introduction of the literacy strategy. The library remains poor however. The school still needs to increase the level of information books in the school and provide appropriate facilities for pupils to fully develop their research and library skills.

Mathematics

89. Pupils' results in 1999 in National Tests at the end of the infants were well above the national average and were above average as compared with similar schools. Standards over time are continuing to improve. During the inspection week, from pupils' work in lessons and an examination of last year's work, attainment of pupils in Year 2 is above that expected for pupils' ages. Attainment in numeracy is good. As an example, in mental mathematics pupils in Year 1 can count in 2's and work out simple calculations in their head. Year 2 pupils can count in 10's up to and beyond 100 starting from different numbers such as 20 or 18. Higher-attaining pupils can explain what they are doing when measuring with cubes or counting the faces on a shape without getting muddled. Pupils' progress is good during the time they are in the infants. They move from calculating accurately using small numbers to calculating money and measurements. In the lessons seen, pupils' progress was good overall. It is a strength that they make very good progress in the correct and confident use of mathematical language, so that Year 1 pupils talk confidently about "*measuring*" not just about something being bigger or smaller.

90. Pupils' results in the 1999 National Tests at the end of the juniors were well above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. Standards in the juniors continue to improve over time. Attainment in numeracy is very good. Pupils can answer mental arithmetic questions quickly and accurately. Pupils in Year 4 can manipulate four digit numbers with confidence, making the largest or smallest possible numbers. Many can explain why, for example, 9430 is the largest and 0349 the smallest. In Year 6, higher-attaining pupils can calculate three eighths as a percentage in their head using known mental strategies for halving and finding the equivalence of fractions. The majority of pupils have effective strategies for solving problems. In Year 4, they can work out the length of a perimeter fence by measuring all the way round or by using their knowledge that rectangles have opposite sides of equal length. They can explain their mathematical thinking so that other pupils can understand.

91. Pupils' progress during the time they are in the juniors is good. They collect and present data using an increasing range of graphical representation, including frequency tables, line graphs and spreadsheets. Pupils' progress in lessons in the juniors is very good. Year 4 pupils develop their accuracy in estimating before measuring and by the end of a lesson are surprisingly accurate in estimating the length of an outside play area. Year 6 pupils who were initially unclear about calculating percentages when seen in a lesson early in the inspection, were seen making such calculations speedily and accurately later in the week. In both the infants and juniors, pupils with special educational needs are well supported so that they too make very good progress against targets which have been set for them.

92. Throughout the school the teaching of numeracy is making a good contribution to pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils apply their knowledge and skill in measuring to design technology, their ability to represent and interpret data to science and technology and their understanding of the passage of time to history. Teachers do not make explicit links between subjects and numeracy although pupils do occasionally notice the link themselves. This means that pupils' skills in numeracy may not be helping their learning in other subjects as much as they could be.

93. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. On the few occasions where pupils' responses were sound or unsatisfactory they took a long time to be quiet, did not work well in pairs and lacked concentration for parts of lessons. This happened when the task was too hard or when younger pupils were not given sufficient support. When their attitudes are very good, they listen attentively and carry out instructions. They are enthusiastic, cheer when they do well and are prepared to take risks and challenge another's result, explaining why it is wrong.

94. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, with a high proportion of good and very good teaching. In the infants, teaching is good overall, with half of the teaching seen good or better. In the juniors, half the teaching was good or better, with about a third of teaching judged as very good. There is good use of questioning in all teaching of mathematics. Teachers encourage pupils to think mathematically, to consider alternative ways of working out answers and to "have a go" even if they are wrong. These high expectations contribute to raising standards in the school. In lessons where teaching is very effective the pace is brisk but nevertheless gives pupils time to resolve difficulties. For example, in a Year 4 class a pupil realised he had made a mistake when demonstrating how to use a piece of string to work out the perimeter of a field. He was given time to reconsider and adjust his explanation so that all the pupils consolidated their understanding by his explanation. In some of the best lessons, time was planned at the end of the lesson to assess what had been understood. This was done by asking the pupils searching questions, giving them the opportunity to discuss what they had learned, and helping them to see what they still needed to practise. Where teaching was relatively less effective, pupils found the initial activity too hard and as a result they lost concentration and it took the teacher longer to regain their interest in the rest of the lesson. Work is mostly well matched to pupils' ability, and mathematics is currently the only curriculum subject where children are set according to ability.

95. Teachers plan a variety of activities for lessons with a good balance of oral work, practical activities and written work. All classes do mental mathematics as part of each lesson as is suggested by the *National Numeracy Framework*. Very good use is made of number cards, number "fans" and pupils' individual "white boards". These resources in particular are used to give teachers excellent opportunities for assessing the whole class who hold up their answers to questions, allowing the teacher to see at a glance who is right or wrong. Such teaching methods make good use of the time available.

96. It is a strength that most teachers share the learning intentions of the lessons with the pupils and encourage them to develop more awareness of exactly what it is that they are learning. Teachers are beginning to encourage self-assessment and target setting but this is still in the early stages and is less effective when teachers do not make it clear to the pupils exactly how they will know if they have learned what was intended. For example, a pupil may think they know about perimeters if they understand the meaning of the word and do not confuse it with area. They can, however, be confident that they have understood how to calculate a perimeter if they can explain this to someone else so that they can also understand.

97. Homework is well used to reinforce learning and raise awareness among parents of what the pupils are learning in mathematics. The mathematics curriculum is well planned so that pupils have the opportunity to extend their knowledge skills and understanding across the different aspects of mathematics including the use of appropriate information technology. For example, younger pupils program electronic toys to help them learn about giving accurate directions and older pupils use the software package, *Excel*TM to set up and manipulate a spreadsheet.

98. The management of the subject is very good. The subject co-ordinator has benefited from recent in-service training and provides staff development in school. She monitors the teaching and assessment procedures, has good communication with colleagues and offers support which is much appreciated. Her enthusiasm and interest in promoting higher standards of teaching and attainment has helped in developing a positive attitude to teaching mathematics among the staff. There are plans in place to continue the development of mathematics teaching, review the marking policy and in particular promote pupils' involvement in assessing their own knowledge, understanding and skills.

99. Since the last inspection there have been very good improvements made in teaching and in the planning and assessment of the mathematics curriculum and in the integration of using and applying mathematics. This has contributed to raising standards.

Science

100. In the 1999 teacher assessments for seven year olds, the pupils' results overall were well above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3

was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. At the end of the juniors, although the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or higher in the National Tests was well above the national average, the pupils' average score was only in line with that attained nationally and was below that of similar schools. From the lessons and work seen, standards in both key stages were judged to be above national expectations. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, particularly in experimental and investigative science which were then identified as weaknesses.

101. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge across a broad range of science topics and a good understanding of various aspects of investigative science. They know about different materials and have a good understanding that applying heat will change some materials. They also understand that with some materials the process can be reversed, for example when heating ice cubes. Higher-attaining pupils are able to make simple predictions, such as those relating to the size of the ice cube. They also know where light comes from and that a shadow changes size depending on how near the object is to the source of light. They understand simple circuits and that when a circuit is broken the bulb will not light. They can describe and record their observations in pictures, in writing and on worksheets. Their drawings are often of good quality and accuracy for children of this age.

102. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good understanding of the concept of a food chain and recognise that all food chains start with a producer and finish with a consumer. They also know and understand that plants produce food for others and that they need sun in order to grow. Higher-attaining pupils understand that environmental change, such as acid rain, affects food chains. They have studied forces and understand that the gravitational pull is greater in air than water because in water there is an upward force. Pupils record their experiments in words, pictures, graphs and charts, occasionally using the computer for this purpose. Higher-attaining pupils are able to draw conclusions and account for their observations. The lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are able to record their work through more structured support with their writing. The pupils' presentation of their scientific work is of a good quality with a clear structure and accurate drawings. The previous inspection report identified weaknesses in pupils' progress in the skills associated with undertaking scientific tests. The school now ensures that pupils are given opportunities to plan their own experiments and this weakness has been effectively addressed.

103. In the infants, all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, making steady gains in knowledge and understanding in all aspects of science. In the juniors, progress is also good and is at its best in Year 6 where pupils' work is very well matched to their current attainment. They have an increased understanding of electricity and magnetism and of forces such as gravity. Pupils successfully build on earlier learning through lessons which extend their investigative skills through opportunities to apply them in different contexts.

104. Pupils enjoy their science lessons and their attitudes to learning are good because the activities provided are interesting and motivating. They listen carefully and are attentive in whole class sessions. They handle materials and tools sensibly and safely. The older juniors organise themselves well and work collaboratively in pairs.

105. The quality of teaching in science is very good overall, with a particularly high proportion of very good teaching seen in the juniors, where nearly half of the lessons seen were very good or better. Lessons are well planned, with well-prepared resources and worksheets, and activities that engage the pupils' interest. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Expectations are high. Activities are clearly explained and demonstration is successfully used to help the pupils' understanding. Teachers express clear expectations of sensible independent working, discipline is firm and calm, and relationships are very good. Good use is made of classroom assistants to help the pupils' learning, and teachers maintain a sound overview of work in groups, sustaining a good pace in the learning. Ongoing assessment during lessons is good and helps pupils make good progress, with links between learning objectives and assessment procedures in weekly and longer term planning rigorously identified. In the majority of lessons, the written tasks given to pupils successfully develop their language and literacy skills. Science also contributes well to pupils' developing numeracy skills.

106. The co-ordinator for science manages the subject very effectively and has an overview of teachers' planning. There is a good policy and scheme of work supported by national recommended guidance for the

subject. The co-ordinator successfully supports her colleagues in the science curriculum through policy review and discussion in staff meetings. She has a good overview of standards and quality of work as a result of her monitoring of the subject. There is a rigorous analysis of strengths and weaknesses in standards to inform improvement strategies and this information is used well to improve the attainment and progress of pupils. Resources are good and pupils' learning in science is enhanced through educational visits to places linked to geography field trips.

OTHER SUBJECTS

Information Technology

107. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages has improved since the previous inspection and is now above national expectations. Infants can log on and log off the computer system, select a program, and store and retrieve work with only a little assistance. Juniors are able to select particular files from different directories and can save and print their work. Infants word process book reviews and their work for science. They represent survey data as pie and bar charts. They are learning and applying skills such as the use of the mouse and return key. Older juniors are able to use desk top publishing programs to produce newsletters. They use word processing to write good quality chapter books and spreadsheets to answer "what if?" questions. There is a computer club for older, higher-attaining pupils and they produce a school newspaper "Junior Jabber" which is of a very high quality.

108. In the lessons seen at both key stages, pupils made very good progress. For example, Year 2 practised using the computer system and almost all could do this without help. They were able to position the cursor accurately using the mouse and learnt the function of the return key. Year 6 pupils created bar charts, added labels and then edited both charts and labels in a short time. Year 3 pupils integrate graphics and text, Year 4 create their own data files as part of work on science, and Year 5 use *Powerpoint*TM to create slide shows. Pupils with special educational needs were fully involved in lessons and also made very good progress. Over time, pupils have made sound progress in the past. However, the progress pupils are making over time is improving significantly because of the weekly lessons in the new computer suite, the very good teaching, and the comprehensive scheme of work.

109. Pupils' response to their information technology lessons was very good at both key stages. There are very good relationships. Pupils help each other and teachers help pupils who are experiencing difficulties in ways that reinforce self-esteem and help children solve the problems for themselves. Pupils settle quickly to the tasks set and follow instructions carefully. They learn quickly from demonstrations and apply their new skills to solve problems.

110. Teaching is very good at both key stages because all teachers have a good level of expertise in working with computers and can, for example, control the computer network so that they can demonstrate software to pupils on each of the network's screens. Lessons are very well planned with clear, appropriate learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and then reviewed at the end. Lessons are based on a very good scheme of work and so show clear progression in the skills pupils learn and then apply. Lessons have a very brisk pace so pupils learn much in a short time. When pupils are working individually, staff closely monitor and support individual pupils. In most lessons, there are extension activities for high-attaining pupils who complete the main task quickly. Each class is divided into two for information technology lessons because of the size of the computer network. Each group has one lesson each week for 30 minutes. There are also computers in each classroom that are linked to the network.

111. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. The very good scheme of work ensures that information technology skills are used in different subjects, including literacy and numeracy. Skills are taught for half a term and then applied in planned tasks which are linked to *National Curriculum* levels. There is a good plan for assessing pupils although it has not yet been fully implemented.

112. The management of information technology is excellent and has resulted in significant improvements to pupils' progress and standards. Developments have been planned very effectively so that a great deal has been achieved in a short time. Some governors and parents have made essential contributions to all that has been achieved. All staff have been committed to the improvements and have taken part in in-service training which has led to the high level of confidence and expertise which result in the very effective teaching. There is a clear understanding of the improvements that need to be made to further raise pupils' attainment. The good monitoring work of the co-ordinator is effective. The good level of staff expertise mean that the computer suite is used very efficiently and effectively and has helped to make information technology a strength of the school.

Art

113. Pupils' attainment is above that expected for their ages in both key stages in both investigating and making and in knowledge and understanding of art. They produce good work in a variety of media including paint, printing, pastels, collage and clay. A particular strength is the understanding which pupils develop of different styles of artists and their ability to use this understanding in their own drawing and painting. For example, Year 4 pupils had responded to a tropical forest picture by 'Douanier' Rousseau, using oil pastel to capture a similar mood and style. Year 6 pupils produced paintings recognisably in the style of Picasso and were able to perceptively discuss features of his work.

114. Pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress in both key stages. They improve skills in sketching, colour blending and clay modelling as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 1 are able to make and paint simple clay plaques and pupils in Year 3 produce well-formed and decorated clay bowls. By Years 4 and 5, they are able to produce more intricate clay plaques using painted flower designs in relief. In samples of work there is less evidence of progress in the use of textiles, although some weaving and printing of a satisfactory standard was done by pupils in Year 3. Pupils do not develop their visual ideas or experiment with techniques at sufficient depth in their sketch books. As a result teachers have insufficient evidence of pupils' ongoing development from what could be a useful source for assessment.

115. Only a small number of art lessons were observed. In these, pupils enjoyed art and showed pride in their work. They concentrated well and used materials with confidence and care. They showed a lively interest in the work of artists. Teaching was good. Teachers showed secure knowledge of art, had high expectations and conveyed their enthusiasm for the subject to the pupils. They gave clear guidance over techniques and encouraged the use of proper terminology, such as '*Cubism*' in Year 6 and '*obscuring*' in Year 5. Probing questions were used effectively in one lesson to sharpen pupils' observation of a painting. Opportunities were sometimes missed at the end of lessons, however, to evaluate what pupils had learnt.

116. A detailed scheme of work provides a secure basis for teaching. Resources are good and the specialist expertise of several staff also contributes to the good progress pupils make. Pupils' cultural understanding is promoted through the displays of famous paintings around the school, visits to the National Gallery and an annual visit from an art group to explore particular art themes such as symbolism. The subject is effectively and enthusiastically managed. Informal monitoring of standards enables the co-ordinator to identify appropriate priorities within an action plan. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Design and technology

117. Although no design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection week, inspectors were able to see the work which pupils had produced and discuss their work with them. In each key stage, pupils' attainment is in line with that expected for their ages. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school. In Year 1, pupils can design and make coasters and decide how to produce their own doilies. The majority of pupils can produce detailed designs, and make individually patterned clay objects such as bowls, figures and plaques. As they get older, pupils' cutting, fixing and measurement skills show clear improvement with practice in using a range of flexible and rigid materials. When work is completed they carry out effective evaluations. Pupils with special educational needs generally attain standards not significantly different from

their peers, and make steady progress when technology is not an area of their identified need.

118. Older pupils, studying the Tudor period in history, make Tudor houses. They research the construction thoroughly and then design the houses working co-operatively in pairs. They cope satisfactorily with problems of construction, such as fixing the roof to the main part of the building, by selecting different materials and adhesives to secure their models. Many of the pupils interviewed during the inspection can discuss the process confidently and explain how they would advise someone else about the safety considerations when using saws and hot glue. They showed interest and pride in their achievements.

119. The school has an appropriate and well-organised range of materials to support learning in the subject. The staff have received in-service training in some aspects of the subject since the last inspection. This has contributed to the increased breadth in the design technology curriculum offered to pupils. Overall the school has made a good improvement in design technology since the last inspection.

Geography

120. No geography teaching was seen during the inspection, but the evidence from pupils' work is that in both key stages most pupils attain standards that are above that expected for their ages. Progress, including that made by pupils with special educational needs, is good, and the standards attained in geography have improved since the previous inspection. In the infants, the subject is largely cross-curricular topic based and the pupils are involved in practical work with the emphasis on oral skills and the use of the local environment. They know that maps represent real locations and develop an understanding of direction by using terms such as north, south, east and west. By the end of the infants, they know how an island is different from the mainland and are able to compare North Cheam to St Lucia and know that the latter is an island in the Caribbean. They are also able to highlight similarities and differences between their way of life and the life of a child from St Lucia. They undertake fieldwork activities in North Cheam and develop an understanding of housing types and how the area has changed.

121. Pupils in the juniors expand on their geographical skills, explore places, and study themes at greater depth. By the end of the juniors, pupils are able to locate Thanet and the school on a map of the United Kingdom and can plot their route from school. This study enables pupils to learn about the main physical and human features and the environmental issues that give each locality its character. They make comparisons, identify similarities and differences between the life in Thanet and their own surroundings, and learn how certain features such as farming can influence the human activities. Pupils make good progress in mapping skills and have a clear understanding of how to identify physical land features by interpreting contours and other map symbols. Cross-sections are carefully constructed. Their work includes using co-ordinates and four figure grid references to follow a route and identify the points of reference on maps.

122. Pupils benefit from a practical, enquiry approach and the stimulus of well-planned fieldwork visits. The planning for geography is designed to ensure that all pupils are taught the appropriate skills and are given opportunities to investigate places and themes as laid out in the *National Curriculum*. Geography makes a useful contribution to work in other subjects, such as mathematics, which ties in well with mapping skills and makes a good contribution to pupils' developing literacy and numeracy skills. Learning resources are good, with a suitable range of maps, videos and atlases.

123. Leadership and management of the subject is good and this contributes to the high standards which are attained. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. She monitors standards in each year group against the school's targets, completes an evaluation sheet about work covered through the school, and records work that was monitored for standards.

History

124. Most of the pupils' work was appropriate for their ages with some that was of a higher standard.

Infants use terms connected with the past and are beginning to understand that there are reasons why people in the past acted in the ways they did as they study, for example, Mary Seacole and Neil Armstrong. Through their study of the Fire of London, they know of the way of life of people beyond living memory and develop their sense of chronology as they sequence five events connected with the Fire. They make distinctions between aspects of their own and past times as they make detailed comparisons between kitchens now and in the past.

125. Younger juniors “re-enacted” the Roman invasion of Britain, and then wrote letters to their families in role as Romans. These were of a good standard, capturing the mood and some of the main ideas of the invasion. Pupils studying the Anglo-Saxons complete a wide range of work to a good standard, including the use of artefacts to ask and answer questions about the past. Older juniors also use artefacts but not as effectively as sources of evidence about life in the past. They use matrices to record their research findings from different texts but do not usually combine these into a piece of writing. Their knowledge and understanding of Britain since the 1930’s and of the Victorians are good. For example, pupils know how the lives of women in the 1930’s differ from women’s lives now, and the reasons for the abdication of King Edward VIII. However, their grasp of the skills of history are not so strong, although there are some sound examples. For example, pupils used census data from 1841 and 1881 to compare occupations in North Cheam, and they identified changes that took place in North Cheam during Victorian times and the consequences of those changes. Pupils generally make sound progress at both key stages with some good progress for particular sections of work.

126. There are some good links with literacy. For example, Year 4 pupils wrote good newspaper stories about the discoveries at Sutton Hoo, and Year 6 pupils conducted a lively debate about whether or not the government did enough to help the unemployed in the 1930’s. Good use is made of visits to places such as the Museum of London and the British Museum, although full use is not yet made of the historical sources they provide.

127. There is some imaginative teaching that grips pupils’ interest. For example, younger juniors studying Boudicca learnt about her from a story and video before one pupil took the role of Boudicca and answered questions from the rest of the class. Older pupils followed a good sequence of activities as they prepared for a debate on unemployment in the 1930’s and pupils were allocated to the roles of shipbuilders or members of the government.

128. There are useful schemes of work to guide teachers as they plan their lessons. The learning objectives focus on knowledge and understanding and it would be helpful to integrate the key elements of history with these. Pupils have very good self-assessment sheets which are also completed by teachers. These are linked to learning objectives which are based on the key elements. As well as providing a useful assessment system, they should help to ensure that pupils’ learning in one year builds on and extends earlier work. The co-ordinator has only held the responsibility for a short time. She is very knowledgeable and has already taken some steps to help raise standards.

Music

129. In the infants, pupils attain standards which are above that expected for their age. By the end of the juniors, attainment is well above the expected standard. This is a considerable improvement from the position as reported in the previous inspection. Pupils of all ages develop a good sense of rhythm and by the age of seven, they can repeat rhythms either vocally, with instruments or by clapping. They are able to identify and name a range of percussion instruments and discover different ways of playing them. When playing the instruments most pupils keep a regular beat and distinguish between long and short, and high and low sounds. Older juniors use instruments to play a short *12 bar blues* melody and understand various musical terms, such as “*ostinato*”, “*chord*” and “*coda*”. Most pupils are able to read simple standard notation.

130. Pupils make good progress in the infants and very good progress in the juniors. Listening to music and singing is incorporated into assemblies, and through listening to both recorded and live music on these

occasions as well as in lessons, pupils increasingly identify that music communicates meaning and mood. They learn the words and tunes of an increasing repertoire of songs that include European and American folk music as well as hymns. Their singing develops well and is tuneful and well timed.

131. Pupils respond very well in their music lessons. They willingly participate and perform sensibly. They handle the instruments with care. When they are working in small groups, pupils are well behaved and concentrate well. By the age of eleven, pupils' are able to work in small groups away from the teacher with impressive maturity and commitment to the activity.

132. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned, prepared and resourced. There is a good range of activities to extend pupils' understanding and skills. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Expectations of all pupils are high and made clear to them. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator is a specialist teacher and the scheme of work has a clear structure of ideas and materials, which provides good progression in skills throughout the school. The resources are good both in quantity and quality. The teaching of the subject benefits from being able to use a discrete music room, although this room is only available for the Autumn and Spring terms as it is taken into use as a reception class in the Summer term. There is opportunity for private tuition for learning a variety of instruments and the school benefits from a choir and small orchestra.

Physical education

133. In both the infants and juniors, pupils' attainment is above that expected for pupils' ages. In gymnastics, pupils can perform a variety of skills and develop sequences of movements quite well, both individually and in groups. They are able to evaluate each other's performance. In games, pupils practise their ball control and goal shooting and then apply these skills satisfactorily during matches. A substantial minority of both girls and boys attain high standards when competing in the borough's annual sporting events.

134. In the lessons seen during the inspection week, pupils made good progress overall. They refine their gymnastics and games skills through regular exercise and most pupils strive to improve their efforts, following the evaluation part of the lesson when teachers use the good example of some pupils to demonstrate what is required. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.

135. Pupils are well motivated. They change quickly and are keen to work hard. The vast majority listen carefully to instructions which they then carry out with confidence. Most pupils do this with due attention to safety. They work co-operatively when required to do so and share apparatus sensibly. Pupils throughout the school take care of the resources and show a sense of responsibility when selecting appropriate equipment for the class and putting it away tidily at the end of lessons.

136. Use is made of some specialist teachers, including coaches who do not have formal teaching qualifications. Teaching in the six lessons seen was good overall. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, are enthusiastic and have high expectations of the pupils. Almost all teachers set the pupils a good example by dressing appropriately. Pupils are well managed and in almost all occasions this is done with awareness of health and safety issues throughout the lesson. Pupils are assessed half-termly and their attainment is reported to parents. This is a good feature. There are sound plans in place for developing the physical education curriculum so that all pupils will have the opportunity to participate in more games and physical activities during their time at the school.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

138. The inspection was undertaken over a five day period by six inspectors, including a lay inspector, for a total of 24 inspector days. For the majority of their time in school, the inspectors visited classes and talked with staff and children. 85 direct observations were made of teaching and these totalled more than 65 hours. In addition to these lesson observations, inspectors observed assemblies, registration sessions and a number of extracurricular activities. The work of a sample of six pupils from every class was evaluated, and a sample of children from each year group was heard reading. Planned discussions were held with teachers, the headteacher and governors, in addition to ongoing discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff. Many policy documents, teachers' plans and assessment records were scrutinised, and inspectors examined a sample of pupils' reports and the records of pupils with special educational needs. A parents' meeting was held during the month preceding the inspection; 10 parents attended and their views were considered by the inspectors along with the responses and comments received from parents who completed the 45 questionnaires which were returned.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	391	4	62	18
Nursery	26	0	0	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

14.72

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

27

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff

8

Total aggregate hours worked each week

95

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

1

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

26

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff

2

Total aggregate hours worked each week

65

Average class size:

30

Financial data

Financial year:

1998-99

	£
Total Income	663,325
Total Expenditure	655,137
Expenditure per pupil	1,724
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,570
Balance carried forward to next year	76,758

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

290

Number of questionnaires returned:

45

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	30	57	2	9	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	27	53	-	20	-
The school handles complaints from parents well	11	43	36	2	7
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	27	45	18	5	5
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	27	56	11	2	4
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24	62	4	7	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	49	22	2	-
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	16	67	2	11	4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	40	53	4	2	-
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	33	56	11	-	-
My child(ren) like(s) school	53	44	2	-	-

(figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding)