

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST GILDAS' ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

London

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102151

Headteacher: Mrs Irene Rincon

Reporting inspector: Jane Wotherspoon
22199

Dates of inspection: 2nd - 6th October 2000

Inspection number: 225325

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Gildas' Roman Catholic School Oakington Way London
Postcode:	N8 9EP
Telephone number:	020 8348 1902
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Appropriate authority:	Haringey
Name of chair of governors:	Father Kristian Paver
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jane Wotherspoon 22199	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art and design; Music; Equal opportunities; Provision for English as an additional language.	The school's results and achievements; How well are the pupils taught? Staffing, accommodation and resources.
Moira Eminton 18565	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and behaviour; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? The use of financial resources.
Margaret Lygoe 23805	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Information and communication technology; Design and technology; Physical education.	How well is the school led and managed? Assessment; Special educational needs.
Shelagh Halley 8203	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; History.	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to the pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated on the borders of Islington and Haringey and serves a socially and ethnically diverse area that extends beyond the immediate surroundings. It is average in size, with 234 boys and girls on roll. Most pupils are Catholic. A high proportion of pupils (36 per cent) speak English as an additional language. The economically disadvantaged circumstances of many pupils are reflected in the above average numbers (42 per cent) eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (22 per cent) is average and this includes pupils with a Statement of Special Need. This figure has doubled since the last inspection. Over half of pupils are eligible to receive support through the ethnic minority achievement grant (EMAG). The school has a fairly stable population. The standards achieved by pupils, who join the school in Year 3, vary slightly from year to year. Many pupils in the current Year 3 have below average skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective. It provides very well for the diverse learning needs of its pupils. Standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked well together to maintain these standards by continuing to secure improvements in the quality of education provided. Teaching is good and pupils achieve well because the whole community has high expectations of them. In comparison with similar schools, standards are well above average and the cost per pupil is slightly below the London average. The school provides very good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership for the school and its community.
- Good teaching challenges pupils to work hard and achieve their best; as a result, standards are above average by the age of eleven.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is very effective in ensuring their good progress.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is excellent.
- The school recognises the value of each individual and encourages an ethos of mutual respect and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they get on well with each other.
- A strong partnership with parents and the wider parish community is fostered successfully.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The standards achieved in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The planning for and provision of class music lessons.
- The allocation of time to some subjects following the latest changes to curriculum requirements.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996 when it was judged to be a good school. It has maintained all the positive features noted then and addressed the areas identified as weaknesses. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment have improved considerably and the information is used well to ensure that pupils' learning needs are met. Subjects are well led by co-ordinators who, in general, give good guidance and support to their colleagues. However, the school has not kept pace with developments in ICT. Difficulties with resources are restricting pupils' opportunities to reach the standards expected nationally. The good emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the developments in science have helped to raise standards, but restricted the time available for other subjects.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by eleven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	C	A	A	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> <i>B</i> <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
mathematics	A	C	B	A	
science	B	C	C	B	

Test results in all three subjects have improved since the last inspection. In 2000, the number of pupils achieving expected levels in English remained high, and in science, improved on the figures of 1999. Although the number of pupils achieving the expected standards in mathematics was lower than in 1999, the school was close to its own targets. In English tests, the school exceeded its targets. Annual test results indicate that pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress during their time at St Gildas. Pupils achieve well. During the inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were above what might be

expected for the time of year. The standard of handwriting and presentation of most pupils is

consistently good. Standards in some elements of ICT are below what might be expected for pupils' ages. This is because pupils have not had enough opportunity to develop their skills. Standards in music are inconsistent. Singing is taught regularly, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop skills in composing and performing their own music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very keen and interested in the activities that school has to offer. Older pupils in particular take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall. A few pupils, particularly younger ones, find it hard to behave well consistently.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well with each other. Pupils from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds are exceptionally well integrated.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Figures are slightly below the national average.

The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are strengths and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning and achievement in the school. Homework is very effective in developing pupils' capacity for personal study and is well supported by parents. Attendance levels have shown recent improvement, but much absence is due to term time family holidays. The majority of pupils are punctual, but a small number are repeatedly late.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Teaching is consistently good with some very good features. It was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons, and very good or excellent in over a quarter. In over 70 per cent of lessons, teaching was good and in only 2 per cent it was unsatisfactory. This level of consistency ensures that pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and in applying their skills to new learning. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and in science it is very good overall. Teachers have embraced the principles of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and these skills are taught well. Staff provide good models of correct speech and pay very good attention to teaching and reinforcing specific subject vocabulary. The exception is in ICT. The quality of

relationships is a strength and teachers provide a secure environment where pupils are given the confidence to attempt new work without fear of getting it wrong. Teachers are very skilful at asking the right questions to check what pupils know, and to deepen their understanding. Explanations of new knowledge are clear. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. A brisk pace of work is evident in most lessons and this helps to maintain pupils' concentration. However, in some mathematics lessons, the pace is not maintained when pupils' work independently. Just occasionally, an over emphasis on behaviour management obscures the purpose of the lesson. Teachers make very good use of assessment information when planning interesting activities that are pitched at appropriate levels to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers give high priority to ensuring that all pupils are included in class activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and very relevant to the needs of all pupils. It is enriched by a wide variety of other learning opportunities, including a very good range of clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good support from class teachers and support assistants enable these pupils to make very good progress. They have full access to the curriculum. The provision is managed very well
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils make very good progress in developing the language skills they need to be able to take a full part in class lessons and in the life of the school. They receive good quality targeted support from the specialist teacher and day-to-day support from their class teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is excellent. Spiritual and moral development are underpinned by a strong common purpose. Social development is extremely well supported. The school celebrates the wide diversity and richness of all cultures represented by pupils and the community in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are looked after very well. They are encouraged to work hard and feel good about their achievements. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' academic progress means that staff know pupils well.

The school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy has reduced the teaching time available for some subjects. This needs to be reviewed in the light of the latest changes to the National Curriculum. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good. The information is used very well to plan work at just the right level for pupils' needs. As a result, all pupils make consistently good progress during their time at the school. The school's partnership with parents is very successful. As a result, the whole community shares a common sense of purpose. Parents are very supportive of the school and of their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides an excellent lead in promoting high standards in all aspects of school life. Senior staff and subject co-ordinators share this commitment and there is a strong sense of teamwork.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is well informed and well organised. They take an active interest in monitoring closely the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is rigorous in analysing teaching and learning. Pupils' achievements are monitored in detail to identify what needs to be improved.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are targeted carefully towards the action that will help to raise standards of attainment. The governors seek to gain value for money when planning expenditure.

An adequate number of teachers and support staff are available to support pupils' needs. The accommodation benefits from additional rooms devoted to specific subjects and to the teaching of small groups of pupils. However, the site is difficult to manage and movement around the building is time consuming. Learning resources are adequate, with the exception of computers for information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy and well cared for in school. • The staff of the school are approachable and listen to their views. • Behaviour is good. • The school has high expectations and helps pupils' to make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps pupils to be responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more activities to be provided outside of lessons.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents who returned the questionnaire. Similar views were expressed at the parents' meeting. Whilst acknowledging the school's readiness to meet parents informally at any time to discuss their child's progress, some parents would like an additional formal meeting in the spring term. Although the school does make

appointments with the parents of pupils whose progress is causing concern at this time, this opportunity could be extended to all parents. Inspectors consider that the number, range and quality of activities offered outside of school are very good. However, in common with many schools, more opportunities are provided as pupils get older.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The standards achieved by the youngest pupils in reading, writing and mathematics before they start at the school vary slightly from year to year. By and large they are close to or below what is achieved nationally. Although the proportion achieving the expected level, Level 2, is often close to the national figures, few pupils achieve higher levels. By the end of their time in the junior school, pupils' attainment is similar to, or above, the national average in English, mathematics and science tests. This was the case in 1999, when results were well above the national average in English, above in mathematics and close to average in science. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science.

2. Overall, the school has kept pace with national improvements in test results since the last inspection although there have been variations in each year. Closer analysis of results indicates some variations in the achievements of boys and girls but this pattern is not consistent, or significant, between subjects or over time. The school analyses results by ethnic group but, in the case of some groups, the proportion is so small that any comparisons have to be made with extreme caution. Once pupils become competent in English, their progress is similar to that of their peers.

3. National comparisons for tests taken in 2000 had not been published at the time of the inspection. The school's results rose significantly in science, were similar in English, but dipped in mathematics. The school had anticipated this and had set targets accordingly, because these pupils had weaknesses in mathematical knowledge and understanding. The school's own system for tracking pupils' attainment over time indicates that the vast majority made good progress. School records also show that all pupils are achieving well in comparison with their prior attainment. The school monitors attainment carefully and sets targets which are challenging. Assessment information is used very well to identify which pupils need support and which should have additional challenges. Additional staff has been funded to provide enrichment activities for higher attaining pupils as well as to target support for lower attaining pupils. However, at present, this position is vacant.

4. The standards of work seen from the oldest pupils during inspection were above what might be expected at this stage of the year in English, mathematics and science.

5. Speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils respond well to opportunities for discussions; they choose their words carefully and are quite articulate. Standards in reading are generally above those expected for pupils of this age. Most read silently with good understanding and a sense of enjoyment, although lower attainers occasionally confess they do not really like reading. Pupils have opportunities to read an interesting range of texts and develop satisfactory library skills. Standards in writing are above expectations, with some pupils achieving standards that are well above average. From an early age, pupils are taught drafting and editing skills. They produce a good volume and range of written work, including creative, factual, persuasive and reflective writing. Pupils use increasingly interesting vocabulary, especially in poetry. Punctuation and grammar are generally

accurate. The quality of handwriting and presentation is high by the age of eleven. Pupils use their literacy skills very well in other subjects. They write clear, well-organised factual reports, as well as reflective writing.

6. In mathematics, pupils have a good knowledge of number and multiplication facts. This helps them to work out quite demanding calculations using a mixture of mental strategies and paper and pencil methods. The skills of estimating and approximating are used well as a means of checking their answers. They are increasingly confident to manipulate large numbers mentally, and to explain their strategies to others. They apply these strategies when solving problems to produce accurate answers. Written work is clear and neatly presented to show their method of working. Higher attaining pupils are able to recall their learning from the previous year, including remembering the correct vocabulary.

7. In science, the school's focus on developing pupils' investigative skills has been very successful. There is a practical emphasis in lessons, and pupils enjoy conducting experiments. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are able to carry out investigations with increasing independence. They can draw conclusions confidently from the data, and explain their ideas clearly. They use correct terminology and subject specific vocabulary. They have a breadth of understanding and factual knowledge.

8. Standards in ICT are below those expected by the end of the key stage. Pupils have limited recall of past work and their knowledge and understanding of specific subject vocabulary is very limited. Word processing skills are at a basic level and the use of ICT in other subjects is not fully exploited. Weaknesses are due to unsatisfactory resources and provision, which reduce opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate what they learn

9. In other subjects of the curriculum, pupils' attainment generally meets the levels expected by the National Curriculum. In recent years the school took advantage of opportunities to reduce the allocation of time to some subjects of the curriculum in order to raise standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Many subjects are in the process of being re-established fully from the beginning of this term to meet new requirements. Provision for music is patchy and this is reflected in the standards achieved. Although pupils' singing is good, they have too few opportunities to develop their skills in composing and in playing instruments.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. They are well supported by learning assistants and by the adaptations that teachers make to their work. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are given particularly sensitive support within a structured framework of expectation which helps to modify their behaviour. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress. The support provided in small groups is successful in improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of language and, once mastered, pupils are able to make good improvement in their learning in other subjects. Good liaison between teachers and support staff ensures that pupils are able to take a full part in class activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are strengths and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning and achievement in the school.
12. Throughout the day, pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. They listen attentively, apply themselves to their tasks, and respond eagerly to challenges. Pupils take pride in their achievements and express ideas with confidence and good reflection. This was evident during the inspection in a Year 4 class. Pupils asked to rewrite stories in the form of play scripts, listened intently to instructions; were keen to contribute ideas and showed great pleasure in performing before the rest of the class. During a quick-fire mental mathematics session, Year 5 pupils responded eagerly. Year 6 pupils, creating collages of landscapes, were engaged in well-focussed discussions to negotiate the choice of materials.
13. Pupils are highly motivated and respond well to questions. This willingness to work hard and to contribute to lessons has a significant impact on their achievements. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils investigating which materials conduct electricity, showed great persistence in their experiments, which they carried out with high levels of concentration and interest. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are equally positive about their learning. They are encouraged to participate fully in all the school's activities.
14. Standards of behaviour are very good and have a significant effect on learning. Parents' views echo inspection findings and over 96 per cent responding to the inspection questionnaire are confident that pupils are well behaved. Pupils are responsive to adults, have a sense of occasion and know when they need to be quiet and attentive. This was witnessed throughout the inspection at the school assemblies, when the behaviour of pupils was exemplary. Year 4 pupils, on a visit to Hornsey Library, also displayed an awareness of the need to set a good example for the school and walked along the street with the utmost consideration for other road users. With the exception of a minority who find it hard to behave well, pupils know and understand that good behaviour enhances learning and that rules are to be followed. Pupils spoken to during the inspection did not feel that bullying was an issue and that, if disagreements occur between pupils, they are dealt with quickly. There was one fixed-term exclusion during the previous year.
15. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Mutual respect permeates all areas of school life and the pupils' ability to form constructive relationships with each other parallels the good example set for them by the adults in the school. Pupils help each other; they share resources, work agreeably in groups, accept differences of opinions and feel able to express themselves without mockery. This was evident during the inspection in a Year 6 physical education lesson when pupils, asked to observe their peers working in pairs performing twisting and turning movements on the apparatus, were appreciative of their success. Year 5 pupils, in pairs, worked with care and concentration to build boxes and Year 6 pupils, revising poems to read them aloud to the class, spontaneously applauded each other's efforts.
16. The school is an exceptionally well-integrated multi-racial community. Pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds are treated as equals. Pupils show a high respect for the other faiths

and many cultures represented by the school, and the encouragement offered to them to celebrate difference is resoundingly successful. This was demonstrated during the inspection when pupils, asked what they like about school, commented glowingly about the exciting range of cultures, customs and nationalities to be found there.

17. Pupils' personal development is very good and they are actively encouraged to reflect upon their actions. Pupils take advantage of a range of experiences offered in accordance with their ages. Throughout the school day they are also invited to examine their feelings and emotions. Pupils appreciate the opportunities provided for them to use their initiative and promote responsibility: for example, at lunchtime during the reading club when older pupils elect to read to younger ones, or when they are invited to respond to questionnaires which seek to gauge their opinions on school life. Pupils look forward to the 'star of the week' assembly where all achievements are recognised and celebrated in an atmosphere of collective pride. Three pupils, the recipients of the headteacher's award, were applauded by all for recognising that the marigolds, in the garden dedicated to a former pupil, were in need of attention.

18. Pupils are given a range of responsibilities throughout the school, from setting up the hall to circulating messages. Some volunteer for tasks, such as helping at lunchtime. These duties, together with the pupils' participation in a wide range of activities after school and fund raising for charity, add much to their personal development. The mature way in which pupils, particularly older ones, approach the routine of homework is an indication of their capacity for personal study.

19. Attendance levels are satisfactory and fractionally below national comparisons. They have fallen for the past three years but have shown recent improvement. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Although the rate of authorised absences has fallen since 1996, it is still above the national average. The school is very methodical in following up absences and staff have a good knowledge of the reasons for non-attendance. They are also aware that more parents are taking their children on holiday in term time and that while the majority of pupils are punctual, a small number are repeatedly late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good. It is consistently so in English and mathematics, and in science it is very good overall. This reflects the emphasis that the school has placed on developing teachers' expertise in these core subjects. Many strong features in teaching enable pupils to make continually good progress across the key stage. Teaching in other subjects is largely satisfactory with many good features. Of the 53 lessons seen, teaching fell below a satisfactory level in only one; this was in music. In all other lessons teaching was at least satisfactory, and in over 70 per cent it was good. Over a quarter of lessons were very good or excellent. A strength of the teaching is its consistency across all year groups.

21. The quality of teaching in English is good and occasionally inspirational. Literacy skills are taught well and opportunities to use these in other subjects are plentiful and relevant. The literacy framework has been adapted to meet the particular needs of the pupils and tasks are matched well to pupils' varying abilities. Texts are well chosen to promote interest and a love of reading.

Teachers value pupils' contributions and use them to make teaching points or to generate further discussion. Their very good subject knowledge ensures that explanations are clear. The plenary sessions at the end of literacy hours are very well used to make clear to pupils the strengths and weakness in the work they have done, and to give pointers for future improvement. Teachers pay good attention to correct, grammatical speech and consistently reinforce the conventions of standard English; this good model is particularly helpful for those pupils learning English as an additional language.

22. The quality of mathematics teaching is good, with some very good features. Lessons start briskly with a good focus on learning and practising mental strategies. At its best, this part of the lesson encompasses a wide range of questions directed at individual pupils to maintain a good level of participation and attention. The good focus on learning and using mathematical vocabulary correctly is especially valuable for those pupils whose first language is not English. Pupils are encouraged to explain their mathematical thinking and to explore different ways of arriving at the same answer; this helps to clarify their understanding. Teachers give clear explanations and work is set at a realistic but challenging level. Tasks are pitched at several levels to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those who are able, and this ensures that all pupils make good progress. However, the pace of learning often slows as pupils work independently and the sense of urgency present in the first part of lessons is lost. The final section of the lessons, when learning is reviewed, is sometimes too brief. In the very best examples, teachers refer back to the learning intentions and ask pupils to evaluate whether or not they have been successful in their learning.

23. The quality of teaching is very good in science. Lessons often start with a brief review of previous learning to remind pupils of what they already know. Well-planned and interesting activities include clear demonstrations from teachers. A high emphasis is placed on learning through experimentation and investigation and this promotes pupils' independence and social skills. Teachers organise and use resources efficiently and the pace in most lessons is very good. Teachers are very effective in emphasising the use of correct subject vocabulary both during direct teaching and when pupils are writing up experiments. As a result, pupils use technical words and phrases confidently when explaining their work. Pupils are taught to present their work neatly and coherently and, as a result, standards of presentation are high.

24. A strong and notable feature of teaching in English, mathematics and science is the very skilful use of questioning. Teachers explore pupils' understanding, and extend their thinking through probing questions. These are often pitched at different levels to match pupils' attainment and to ensure a high level of inclusion for pupils of all abilities. Pupils are encouraged to have a go even if they are unsure, and they are not afraid to make a mistake. Teachers use wrong answers sensitively and effectively as a means of reinforcing and checking pupils' understanding. They give pupils time to answer and this instils a sense of growing confidence.

25. Teaching in the other subjects was at least satisfactory, with several strengths and few weaknesses. However, the quality is more variable and more dependent on teachers' individual expertise, enthusiasm and confidence. This was most noticeable in music, where the teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson. This was mainly because the expectations of work were too low and the tasks did not present an appropriate level of challenge. Where teachers have very good

knowledge of the subject, as in a very good music lesson and a very good physical education lesson, they are able to intervene to help pupils improve their performance. Where teachers' enthusiasm bubbles over, pupils sense this and respond with a good level of interest concentration and participation.

26. Lesson planning is consistently good; it is detailed and firmly based on teachers' good knowledge of their pupils. Clear objectives are set for lessons and often, though not always, shared with pupils. Teachers make very good use of assessment information when planning activities so that tasks match pupils' different needs as closely as possible. This is an aspect of teaching that has improved considerably since the last inspection. Skilful adaptations are made to lessons, where necessary, depending on pupils' response and on emerging problems. Any weaknesses in pupils' attainment, or any misunderstandings noted in a lesson, are addressed as soon as possible so that pupils do not waste time repeating errors. Equally, when pupils are achieving well, teachers provide additional challenges to extend their knowledge.

27. Work is suitably adapted for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is a good recognition by all staff of the difference between specific language needs and learning needs. Good liaison between class teachers and the teacher providing specialist support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is effective in ensuring a consistent approach to language teaching. These pupils also benefit from the teachers' clear explanations, their emphasis on correct subject vocabulary and opportunities for practical demonstrations. Additional adults work effectively, under the guidance of teachers, with pupils who have special educational needs.

28. Resources are used well, except that teachers do not make enough use of ICT in other subjects. There is little direct teaching of ICT skills in lessons. Although pupils often learn how to use programs from each other, they do not always learn to understand the processes behind the program and this method of learning does not provide enough reinforcement of technical vocabulary.

29. Homework contributes significantly to pupils' understanding in several subjects. Teachers give regular, relevant, and interesting homework to reinforce learning in lessons. It is well conceived, well marked, followed up, and used with a greater level of consistency than is found in most schools.

30. The management of pupils is a significant strength. Teachers are especially patient with pupils who display challenging behaviour and those who have emotional problems. All teachers have high expectations, both of good behaviour and of work, and instil in pupils a sense of pride in their achievements. This helps most pupils to sustain a good level of interest and concentration in tasks, even when they find them challenging. Very occasionally there is an imbalance between behaviour management and direct teaching which slows down learning and creates more restlessness. Teachers are keen to create the right kind of atmosphere for learning, and they work hard to promote pupils' self esteem and confidence by using praise and encouragement judiciously. Relationships are very good between adults and pupils. The inclusion of all pupils and the recognition of the value of each individual underpin the school's ethos. Pupils feel safe and comfortable about expressing their feelings and concerns. This is a key factor in promoting positive attitudes to learning and in maintaining good levels of achievement.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

31. The school offers a good range and quality of learning opportunities. The curriculum is broad, mainly balanced and very relevant to the needs of individual pupils. The basic curriculum is greatly enhanced through a wide variety of other activities, including after-school and lunchtime clubs. These include chess, speech and drama, French, music and sports, and are very well supported and much appreciated by pupils and parents. Some parents voluntarily give their time to running these activities, which are open to pupils from all year groups and abilities. Italian lessons, sponsored by the Italian Consulate, are taught to all classes, and this adds to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Visits are made to museums and places of interest connected with topic work, and the school welcomes many visitors, including authors, poets, illustrators, musicians, dancers and theatre groups. Several residential visits, to Pendarren, and Osmington Bay support learning in other subjects, and contribute much to pupils' personal and social development. The school's football (both boys and girls), netball and basketball teams benefit from the coaching in skills and games discipline given by the Haringey Sports Development team and compete in local events with regular success. Homework, enthusiastically supported and supervised by parents, extends and deepens the learning in everyday lessons.

32. The school is yet to adjust fully to the new curriculum requirements that became statutory from September. Planning for music and geography requires some development. However, all subjects are taught sufficiently to meet statutory requirements, and religious education lessons fulfil the recommendations of the national Roman Catholic curriculum and Westminster Diocese guidelines. The developing programme for personal and social education incorporates teaching on sex education and drugs awareness. The school has recognised the importance of literacy and numeracy in its adoption of both national strategies and these are having a positive impact on raising standards. The use of literacy skills is very well planned throughout the school and across all subjects of the curriculum. This is implemented consistently, and the appropriate vocabulary is carefully developed through all subjects. Numeracy skills are used well in science, geography and design and technology but underdeveloped in ICT.

33. Although adequate time is allocated to all subjects in theory, in practice the relaxation of national curriculum requirements and the emphasis on literacy and numeracy has reduced the actual time devoted to some subjects, such as music. The time allotted to information and communications technology through other subjects is insufficient to allow pupils to develop the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills for this important learning tool. The requirement to reinstate all subjects to their full entitlement offers an ideal opportunity to review the balance of time, the timetabling of the day, and to evaluate the effectiveness of some long literacy and numeracy sessions in the mornings. The physical limitations of the building mean that allowances must continue to be made for the length of time needed for pupils to return in safety to their classrooms at the start of sessions.

34. Long, medium and short term planning takes account of national guidance, and is suitably adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The curriculum is socially inclusive through the adaptation of

lesson plans to match the needs and abilities of pupils with special educational needs, and the more able, and those with English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with individual education plans and the appropriate support is available, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The support teacher from the ethnic minority teaching and achievement group plans lessons jointly with class teachers to meet the particular needs of her target groups. Provision for these pupils is very effective.

35. Issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been thoroughly addressed. There is now a whole-school curriculum map and teachers plan jointly in year groups. Although the scheme of work for music still lacks sufficient detail to help teachers' lesson planning, other schemes have been revised and are currently in the process of being re-aligned with the new national requirements. Targets in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are now more tightly focused and reviewed regularly. Co-ordinators monitor their subjects well. These are good improvements.

36. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is excellent and is a real strength of the wider curriculum. Pupils' spiritual development is underpinned by the common purpose of the strong Christian atmosphere, which pervades the school. Religious education lessons and the very high quality of acts of collective worship make a very good contribution. Pupils are encouraged to explore their thoughts and feelings, and to consider others, in the ample opportunities offered for discussion and reflection in most lessons, in personal and social education and circle time, and through their activities in the expressive arts of creative writing (including poetry), dance, music and the visual arts. Their studies of other major religions, and the customs of the varied nationalities within the school, inform their thinking and encourage toleration and respect for the feelings, beliefs and values of others.

37. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The shared commitment of parents, parish, staff and pupils ensures that the school fulfils the aims stated in its Mission Statement. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. All adults within the school set excellent role models for pupils and reinforce consistently the few rules, based on self-respect and consideration for others. There are many opportunities to discuss moral and social issues in assemblies, religious education and personal and social education lessons and in circle time. The majority of pupils conform happily to the school's code of conduct, and understand and appreciate the very good system of rewards, being very proud when selected as 'Stars of the Week.' There is rarely any need to use the sanctions available. The participation of older pupils in the local Junior Citizenship scheme run by the police helps them to understand their role in society.

38. Provision for social development is excellent. Pupils have many opportunities to raise awareness of the needs of, and their own responsibilities in, the wider community, both at home and abroad. The quality of relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults in the school, is very good. The oldest pupils take on numerous responsibilities as monitors for corridors and staircases, the library, looking after younger children at playtimes and general help for teachers in the classrooms. There are very good links with the local parish which helps the school to participate in the sacramental preparation for this age group. Local clergy visit frequently and pupils regularly attend Mass in the nearby church. Pupils visit the residential home for the local elderly at regular intervals and learn to 'bridge the gap' between generations. There are reciprocal newsletters

between parish and school, so that the whole community is aware of concerns and events. Links with a former teacher now working in Ghana contribute to pupils' awareness of those less advantaged than themselves. Their social awareness is further increased through their many fund-raising activities for charities locally, at home and abroad, for example, the Breast Cancer Appeal, Blue Peter Appeals, the Red Cross, the Poppy Appeal and many more besides. A notable contribution was made to the community two years ago when the school organised an 'awareness' day for the whole area, which resulted in 130 new names being added to the register kept by the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust. This was in response to the death of a pupil from leukaemia.

39. Provision for cultural development is excellent. As can be easily seen from the ample displays around the school, all pupils celebrate the richness and diversity of cultures represented within the school and are very well prepared for living in a multicultural society. They learn to appreciate the cultural heritage of Europe through their studies of artists such as Van Gogh, Edvard Munch, Picasso and Mondrian, or through the poetry of William Shakespeare and the music of the great composers. Music, art and literature from other cultures figure largely in lessons such as history, environmental studies and religious education and all are valued highly, adding to the self-esteem and confidence of pupils.

40. This excellent provision pervades the whole of the curriculum and the wider life of the school in its community and is a source of justifiable pride.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Since the last inspection the school has continued to provide very good standards of care for its pupils. The high quality of this support has a significant impact on learning, progress and achievement.

42. Pupils are well supported in a caring, stable environment, which places great emphasis on raising self-esteem as a means of raising general attainment. Pupils' personal development is monitored very effectively. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. Routines are well established and pupils have a clear idea whom to contact if a problem occurs. Throughout the day, there are many examples of positive praise and encouragement for different pupils. The "star of the week" assembly acknowledges personal and social skills as well as academic achievement. Teachers ensure that all pupils get an opportunity to be included and pupils respond well to encouragement and support. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are happy at school and are well looked after on a daily basis.

43. There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs. The school makes very good use of assessment information to identify any problems at an early stage and individual education plans are written very carefully. Progress is monitored through formal testing and also on a day-to-day basis in the classroom. Effort and achievement are praised and pupils respond well to the support. There is good liaison with outside agencies. Groups of pupils speaking English as an additional language also have good support from a specialist teacher who works closely with class teachers to identify specific individual needs.

44. Since the last inspection, the school has made considerable efforts to address the concerns raised regarding the safety of the buildings. A high fence now surrounds the playground, entry to the main entrance is electronic and phones are used to link the outer buildings to the office. The pond has been demarcated. Safety in the school is guided by a detailed health and safety policy. The governing body's health and safety committee is alert to potential issues by regular risk assessment of the site. Areas have been identified for improvement and continual efforts are being made to keep the site well maintained. Very good arrangements are made to cater for the pupils' medical needs and all members of staff have a high level of commitment to the personal needs of the pupils. Lunchtime staff are a well-informed and valued team, who ensure comfort and security for the pupils in a warm, friendly and well-supervised environment. Good child protection arrangements are in place and are appropriately followed. Staff are well trained and fully aware of the procedures. Contact with external support agencies is well established.

45. High expectations of good behaviour are well promoted throughout the school by a range of measures, shared by the community. Continual emphasis is placed on good behaviour and strategies are used well to support pupils who struggle to behave appropriately at all times. The success of these strategies ensures that the school is a place of respectful calm. Pupils say they feel that the school is a non-threatening place and that any differences between pupils that do occur are dealt with fairly.

46. Attendance is efficiently monitored and staff are very aware of the link between dips in attendance and dips in progress. Absences are rigorously followed up and the school tries hard to encourage good attendance and punctuality. However, although parents are diligent in informing staff of the reasons for their child's absence, weekly inspections of the registers have indicated that a small minority of pupils are regularly late and that the schooling of others is being interrupted by a rising trend of holidays being taken in term time.

47. Procedures for assessment are very good. The school tackled the key issue in the last inspection report vigorously and effectively. Assessment now underpins teachers' planning and is playing a significant role in raising standards. Assessment information is used very effectively to monitor the progress of individuals and of groups of pupils. Target setting is based on firm data, and co-ordinators analyse results of assessments, in detail, to identify and address weaker aspects in the curriculum. Assessment is used effectively to target specific support for individuals and groups of pupils. This support is exemplified by additional literacy support in Years 3 and 4, Year 6 booster classes in English and mathematics, and enrichment activities for higher attaining pupils.

48. Assessment procedures in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are particularly good. In English and mathematics, teachers use a range of formal tests in addition to regular classroom assessments. In science, investigative skills are assessed each term, and pupils complete written assessments at the end of each unit of work. Records are comprehensive. Teachers use the information very effectively in planning work and this enables pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. Assessment in other subjects is less formal, but teachers do note significant progress in all aspects of the curriculum. There are some excellent examples of individual target setting, but this practice has not yet been developed in all classes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Since the last inspection the school has maintained very good links with parents. The success of the school's partnership with parents has been emphatically endorsed by those responding to the questionnaire, expressing views at the parents' meeting and spoken to during the inspection. All have indicated that they are very satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. They resoundingly support the work of the school in raising standards and the quality of the pupils' learning.

50. Parents understand the school well and have a good idea what is being taught there. They are kept informed by regular, helpful newsletters and year group leaflets and meetings, which provide them with information about the school and the curriculum being planned. Additional information, on display at the entrance to the school, presents the broader perspective of education. Parents are set clear expectations about the ethos of the school from their meetings with the governing body before their children start school and from the prospectus, which provides useful information about the day-to-day life of the school. Non-English speaking parents are also kept well informed by access to translated information in the key dialects about the central issues of the school.

51. The involvement of the parents in the life of the school is significant, and is recognised as pivotal to raising achievements. Parents come in to school as and when they can to assist with a range of activities, including extra-curricular activities and trips to the local library. They are encouraged to attend class assemblies, as many did during the inspection. Parents' involvement in learning is also invited by home-school homework books, which provide them with informal contact points with teachers. They are encouraged to have a better understanding of the curriculum by attending meetings on specific initiatives such as the numeracy strategy. Pupils' reports, which meet requirements, also provide a satisfactory picture of a child's achievements. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are equally well informed of their child's progress and invited to attend review meetings.

52. Parents have indicated their appreciation for the approachability and sensitivity of the staff informally, at the beginning and end of the day. However, they would welcome further formal opportunities to discuss their child's progress. Parents have indicated that they would like an additional consultation evening during the spring term to further consolidate their involvement in their child's learning.

53. Parents are consulted widely for their opinions about school life and these are taken into account in formulating the school development plan. Consultation is seen in the school as an effective way of keeping parents informed, while using their views to shape its future.

54. Homework is very well used throughout the school to extend the work being done in the classroom. The inspection confirms that homework is a prominent feature of school life and that its quality and use are high. Parents spoken to during the inspection were equally conclusive about the relevance of homework as an important and well-considered aspect of their children's education. For Year 6 pupils, in particular, it provides good preparation for the next stage of learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The overall quality of leadership is very good. The senior managers and governing body have a shared sense of purpose and a strong commitment to raising standards in all aspects of school life. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has a very clear vision for the continued development of the school, and is very successful in motivating pupils and staff to give of their best. The school's mission statement is central to her work; she values every individual in the school community and is committed to high achievement and the personal development of each pupil. She leads by example through her own teaching and contact with the pupils, and has gained the wholehearted support and respect of the staff, governors, and the overwhelming majority of parents.

56. The school's aims are reflected in every aspect of school life. There is a very strong sense of community and of shared Catholic values. The staff work very hard as a mutually supportive team, and are committed to the welfare of every pupil. Relationships are very good and the commitment to equal opportunities is excellent. Very effective planning ensures that all pupils have full access to activities. Throughout the school there is an outstanding level of respect for the feelings and efforts of others. Expectations are high and behaviour is very good. Teachers are able to teach and pupils to learn in this supportive and purposeful environment.

57. The quality of teaching and learning is evaluated very thoroughly. The headteacher monitors teaching through focused classroom observations. This is in addition to a programme of appraisal and target setting. The role of the subject co-ordinator has been developed very well since the previous inspection. Established co-ordinators are very effective, both in monitoring their subjects and in providing support and guidance to colleagues. The management of special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator is highly conscientious and thorough, and records are detailed and very well organised. The number of pupils with special educational needs has risen since the previous inspection. The school has recognised the increasing burden of administration which falls on the co-ordinator, who is also a class teacher. The newly qualified teacher is well supported by all staff but particularly by her nominated mentor, with whom she meets regularly. A number of co-ordinators are currently very new to their roles and have not yet had the opportunity to influence their subjects. The school has been without a co-ordinator for music for two years, and until recently the governors have been unable to recruit a musician. Provision for whole-class music lessons has shortcomings at present. A teacher with musical expertise has just been appointed and the school is now in a better position to improve the quality of music teaching.

58. A significant factor in the school's success is a readiness to identify areas for improvement and to take highly effective action. The key issues from the previous inspection were tackled vigorously. Curriculum co-ordinators now play a greater role in monitoring the curriculum. Assessment procedures are now very good and information is used extremely effectively in raising attainment. Co-ordinators undertake detailed analysis of assessments in English, mathematics and science. This assessment data is used to set targets, improve provision and to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The school has maintained and extended the areas that were noted as strengths

59. The three-year school development plan reflects a very good balance of school and national priorities. There is a close attention to detail and each aspect is tackled thoroughly. Programmes of staff training underpin curriculum development. The school has recognised the need to raise standards in information and communication technology and a three-year development plan is underway to improve provision and to increase staff expertise. The recent dip in results in mathematics has been analysed, and additional support is planned. Funding is targeted well to support these priorities.

60. The governing body makes a substantial contribution to the effectiveness of the school. Governors are well informed, conscientious and ensure that statutory requirements are fully met. They are very supportive and committed to the success of the school, but take their role seriously. Challenging targets are set and progress towards the targets is monitored. For example, when the mathematics results fell short of the target, the school was asked to explain the shortfall. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, gained through visits to the school and through a programme of presentations from co-ordinators. This good knowledge and understanding enables governors to be fully involved in helping to set the school's priorities and in making budgetary decisions in order to finance school development. For example, in the last financial year the governors specifically elected to use contingency funding to retain an additional member of staff to target areas of weakness and to raise levels of achievement. While governors are aware that the contingency funding was low and that balances brought forward from one year to the next should be within acceptable limits, the funding has been used to good effect. Levels of academic achievement have risen. Anticipated reserves for the current year are projected to be higher.

61. The principles of best value are well understood, and the governors seek to achieve value for money before making any financial commitments. The financial control and administration are good. The recently appointed administrative officer is in the process of taking over financial matters and is following well-established procedures. The last local authority audit of the school's finances took place in 1996, before the last inspection. The recommendations have long since been implemented.

62. Resources at the school's disposal are used well. The school has a satisfactory level of staffing, but has, for the first time, faced difficulties in recruitment. Previously, the school employed an additional staff member without class responsibility who supported groups of pupils and provided enrichment activities for able pupils. However, the school was unable to appoint a suitable replacement and a further attempt at recruitment will be made for January. Funds allocated for special educational needs and from the ethnic minority achievement grant (EMAG) are spent on staff who provide a very good level of support for these pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in meeting their agreed learning targets. Staff have a good level of expertise and are well deployed and targeted to the areas of greatest need. Good liaison between support staff and class teachers ensures that the benefits provided by these additional staff are maximised.

63. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. It benefits from additional rooms for teaching small groups, a music room and a space to develop information and communication technology. However, the main playground is small and uninspiring, as well as having an uneven surface. The school has no grass area for leisure or games activities. The accommodation and site are clean and well kept. Stimulating displays of pupils' work and artefacts, borrowed through the local

authority's loan service, add interest to pupils' learning. Subjects' resources are adequate overall. A useful number and range of 'big books' support shared reading activities in literacy but the school has identified a need to enhance the range of other texts for older pupils. The main weakness is the availability of resources to support pupils' learning in ICT. Significant problems with the new computers have led to considerable frustration for staff and pupils. A computer suite is being developed, but in the meantime pupils have too few opportunities to consolidate their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. This is a very effective school. The school has identified the need to continue to raise the already good standards in English, mathematics and science and action is being taken to achieve this. The school should also:

- Raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
(paragraphs 8, 28, 33, 59, 63, 73, 91, 95, 102, 109, 111-117)
 - * ensuring that pupils receive direct teaching so that they become familiar with relevant subject vocabulary and skills;
 - * improving the school resources, both hardware and software, as funding allows so that pupils have more regular opportunities to use computers;
 - * improving teachers' confidence;
 - * developing all pupils' independence in using ICT in their learning.

- Improve provision for music so that pupils have more regular and diverse musical opportunities. Improve the co-ordination of the subject, and enhance the planning so that teachers have more guidance about what to teach.
(paragraphs 9, 32, 57, 118-121)

- Review the allocation of time to each subject, and the structure and organisation of the timetabled day.
(paragraphs 33, 112, 114, 120)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language

65. The school's provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is very effective. This is due to a combination of factors. There is good support from the specialist teacher funded by the ethnic minority achievement grant (EMAG) for target groups of pupils. This includes both those who speak English as an additional language, and other groups of pupils who may be underachieving. The partnership between this teacher and class teachers assures a consistent approach. Pupils' achievements are monitored very carefully, and this information is used effectively to evaluate pupils' needs and to plan appropriate support. The school is careful to distinguish between specific language needs and more general learning needs. Good liaison between the EMAG teacher and the special needs co-ordinator ensures that pupils are receiving the right kind of support for their need.

66. In addition to the targeted support, class teachers give good support to pupils on a day-to-day basis by, for example, adapting the language used in teaching materials or providing modified tasks. A good feature of general class teaching is the repetition of specific vocabulary, which serves to enhance language learning.

67. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity means that all pupils are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school. A key element of the mission statement is to recognise the value of each individual as a member of the school community. This important message was reinforced very simply but effectively in the assembly led by Year 5 pupils. This serves to boost pupils' self esteem and confidence. The school constantly seeks ways to enhance provision, including the involvement of parents and the wider community, and the co-ordinator has plans to strengthen these links. The school is involved in a project to develop curriculum links with a school in Ghana.

68. As a result of the school's provision, pupils make very good progress in acquiring the language skills to enable them to be able to learn in other areas of the curriculum. Once pupils have become competent in English they begin to make good progress in other subjects such as mathematics and science that is on a par with their peers. Towards the end of their time in school, some of these pupils are among the higher achievers.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	23	45	26	2	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N / A	236
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N / A	98

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N / A	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N / A	49

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	85

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.05
National comparative data	0.05

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	1999	27	21	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	22	22
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	41	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85	83	85
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	22	22	23
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	41	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85	88	90
	National	68	69	75

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	43
Black – African heritage	27
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	143
Any other minority ethnic group	14

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	30

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	88.5

FTE means full time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	461597.00
Total expenditure	469737.00
Expenditure per pupil	2007.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	9182.00
Balance carried forward to next year	1042.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	234
Number of questionnaires returned	166

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	22	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	68	27	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	32	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	39	4	3	4
The teaching is good.	67	29	1	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	24	5	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	16	5	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	19	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	66	25	5	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	70	26	1	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	26	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	39	7	4	4

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

69. Standards of attainment in the 1999 tests were well above the national average, and well above the results achieved by similar schools. The most recent national test results are similar, and taking account of the national rise, are likely to be above the national average at both the expected and the higher levels. The standards seen during inspection were above average overall at this stage of the school year.

70. In speaking and listening, pupils improve their average skills on entry to above and well above the average by the time they are 11. Most pupils listen attentively and display these good listening skills in the answers they give to questions and in the contributions they make to discussions. Year 3 pupils quickly pick up the idea of speaking one at a time. All pupils speak clearly and confidently, although pupils with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language do not always find the words they need so easily. In a 'circle time' session, where pupils took turns to express their feelings about life at St Gildas', only one or two pupils were reluctant to speak at all. Pupils are beginning to expand their spoken vocabulary and are attempting more ambitious words and structures. Older, higher attaining pupils choose their words carefully to express exactly what they want to say and are quite articulate. All pupils respond well to discussion opportunities and work hard at their oracy in the many occasions for practice, such as assemblies and school productions.

71. Pupils enter the school with reading skills, which are often slightly below those expected for their age. In particular, few pupils achieve above the levels expected at the age of seven. However, by the time they are 11, standards in reading are generally above those expected for pupils of this age. When pupils read aloud as a class, they are generally clear, fluent and expressive. Occasionally, pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language find it difficult to keep up, and they read a little haltingly but they clearly understand what they are reading most of the time. Pupils in their last year at the school read silently and their answers to questions show good understanding of the texts they read. Higher attaining pupils read accurately and expressively with good understanding, using a variety of clues to work out the pronunciation of particular words. They talk thoughtfully about their favourite authors, different types of fiction, and the characters within stories. They read a great deal for enjoyment and teachers occasionally prompt them to try more complex and challenging texts. These pupils have no problems retelling stories they have already read, and make sensible predictions of what will happen next based on their wider reading experience and knowledge of similar stories. Average readers find prediction more of a problem, although they retell stories previously read in great detail. They appreciate the humour in the texts they read and most use phonic skills effectively. They pay appropriate attention to punctuation, and to rhythm and rhyme in poetry. Lower attainers occasionally confess they do not really like reading, but they recognise it as a necessary tool for further learning. They read haltingly and with little expression, and their lack of facility sometimes restricts their understanding and enjoyment. The school has recognised that some pupils have problems, and it provides

additional support and practice through the additional literacy strategy and the use of the ‘volunteer reading scheme’. Texts used for studies in the literacy hour successfully broaden reading horizons, and by the age of eleven, pupils read an interesting range of texts such as, *Macbeth*, *Moonfleet*, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *101 Dalmatians*. Homework notes show that texts for guided reading are well prepared before the class session. This helps pupils to become familiar with the context, structure and vocabulary before the lesson and enhances their progress during it. All pupils have satisfactory library skills and use dictionaries and thesauruses appropriately, but need much prompting to recall that computers can be used to find things out.

72. Standards in writing improve from below average on entry to above and sometimes well above the average by the age of 11. From their first days in the school, pupils begin to make good use of a book especially for drafting and editing their work. They produce a good volume and range of writing for different purposes and audiences, including creative, factual, persuasive and reflective writing. By the age of 11, they write summaries of a Shakespeare play, and show clear knowledge and understanding of the skills of story planning and structure. They make increasingly interesting use of vocabulary. Occasionally, lower attainers and those with special educational needs have difficulty completing written tasks because teachers’ expectations are so high, but their output increases as the year progresses. Work on display around the school shows good attempts at using more interesting and exciting adjectives and the poetry has some good imagery, for example, ‘the first sparkle from a baby star’ and ‘tranquil ripples of marine blue whisking softly around my ankles’. Standards of handwriting and presentation improve from barely satisfactory in Year 3 to above and well above average by the age of eleven. Appropriate vocabulary is spelt correctly; punctuation and grammar are generally accurately used. In Year 3, however, the good handwriting seen in practice books is not always transferred to everyday work.

73. Pupils use their literacy skills very well in all subjects of the curriculum, developing the appropriate vocabulary in all subjects. Reports in mathematics and science are well-argued and organised, reflective writing in religious education shows much consideration, and the writing in history gives a good flavour of the period being studied, for example, an eviction notice from Henry VIII to a monastery, or a newspaper giving information for evacuee children. Pupils benefit greatly from the many opportunities for role-play and interviewing offered across the curriculum. However, their use of information and communications technology is less well developed, with pupils word-processing to improve presentation of their work but still cutting and pasting manually even by the age of 11.

74. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. In some cases, teaching is inspirational. This good teaching is built upon year by year, with increasingly high expectations of work and behaviour, resulting in good progress overall, and very good progress for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and pupils work hard to meet teachers’ expectations. Teachers encourage their pupils to make reading as interesting as possible and to contribute observations, for example, a Year 3 pupil commenting, ‘poems have short lines and some of them rhyme.’ Teachers involve pupils in their own learning as soon as possible so that they are eager to concentrate and make contributions. They use praise and encouragement judiciously to raise self-esteem and confidence, and to generate further effort. Teachers match work to their pupils’ abilities very carefully and check their progress by very skilful questioning. They value all pupils’ contributions, using them to

make teaching points or to generate further discussion. Their very good subject knowledge and understanding enable clear explanations of the mysteries of phonemes and synonyms. Teachers' good classroom procedures enable pupils to take some responsibility for their own learning by understanding the purpose of their tasks and collecting their own resources. They pay good attention to correct, grammatical speech and lose no opportunities for reinforcing the conventions of Standard English. The brisk pace of most lessons keeps pupils motivated and keen to learn, with time targets set to sustain concentration and effort. Most pupils are sufficiently motivated, for instance, to write at length, even if they find the task demanding, and many go on to extension tasks set. Teachers use their support assistants very well, especially the special needs assistants and the support teacher for pupils with English as an additional language. They promote high standards and create very good learning environments, relating all new learning to pupils' previously acquired knowledge, understanding and experience. The plenary sessions at the end of literacy hours are very well used to make clear to pupils the strengths and weakness in the work they have done, and to give pointers for future improvement. Very occasionally, teachers concentrate too much on behaviour management at the expense of direct teaching and this slows down the lesson, leading to more restlessness and thus even more emphasis on management. Not all teachers let their enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject show, so that some lessons are not as exciting as they could be.

75. The curriculum for English is broad and balanced, and enriched with a variety of other activities, such as speech and drama and reading clubs. Planning is clear and detailed, taking excellent account of pupils' levels of attainment, of what has gone before, and what is to follow. It is based on the national literacy framework, which has been adapted successfully to meet the particular needs of this school's pupils. There is a good choice of texts to supply cross-curricular links, and plans for further development of this area are good. The co-ordinator has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the role, which is very effectively exercised. He is a very positive influence on provision and classroom practice throughout the school. Resources are good, especially big books and stories from around the world. The library stock is satisfactory but the range of all books needs widening, especially dual-language books, pre-twentieth century and classic children's literature.

76. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved at the higher levels of attainment. The good progress identified has been maintained, and assessment is very much improved. The good teaching has also been maintained, but now there is a greater proportion of good and very good lessons.

MATHEMATICS

77. Results in National Curriculum tests in 1999 were above the national average. The proportion attaining the expected Level 4 was well above the national figures and those achieving Level 5 was similar to national. In comparison with schools having a similar context, results were well above average.

78. The results of tests taken in 2000 were lower than those of 1999. This was not unexpected by the school because the cohort had been identified as having weaknesses in mathematical understanding. Comparisons with results at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils' progress was

at least satisfactory over time; the majority of pupils made good progress. No national figures have been published yet, but early indications are that the proportion achieving the expected level, Level 4, was similar to the national but that only a small proportion achieved higher levels of attainment.

79. Standards achieved in National Curriculum tests by the youngest pupils who have just joined the school are below expectations. Whilst there are capable pupils who demonstrate quick recall of number facts and the ability to use this knowledge when solving problems, several pupils have some way to go to reach the standards expected for their age. Several individuals with behaviour problems find difficulty in settling to activities and need much encouragement from adults to achieve an acceptable pace of work.

80. Standards seen among the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are above what might be expected at this stage of the year, especially in their knowledge and application of number skills. The majority of pupils in Year 6 are already achieving at, or close to, the levels expected by the end of the key stage. The school predicts that more than 80 per cent will attain Level 4; this is realistic and achievable. These standards are a clear indication of the good progress that pupils have made during their time in the school.

81. Pupils in Year 5 are developing strategies for multiplication and division, including using the inverse operation, and apply this knowledge to check their answers. Higher attaining pupils are learning paper and pencil methods for recording these strategies and use calculators to check calculations involving large numbers. Calculations are mainly accurate and the teachers' emphasis on clear, neat presentation minimises the possibility of making errors.

82. In Year 6, pupils' quick recall of multiplication facts aids the accuracy of paper and pencil methods of calculation. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' knowledge of number facts needed extending. They are generally confident to manipulate large numbers mentally and apply the strategies that have been taught. During the week of inspection, Year 6 pupils made good progress in developing skills in handling data. At the beginning of the week pupils took a long time to draw a frequency chart, and several pupils had some problems choosing an appropriate scale for the vertical axis. A slow pace to the task of constructing graphs restricted the time available for the all-important task of interpretation of the information. However, by the end of the week, pupils' confidence and skill in constructing accurate and neat graphs had grown so that the pace of work had increased and pupils were able to answer questions about the information presented. Higher attaining pupils tackled competently the challenging task of plotting information to produce a conversion chart and then used it to convert temperatures. These pupils were able to recall and explain what they had learnt in data handling during the previous year, including specific vocabulary such as mode, median, mean and range.

83. The quality of mathematics teaching is good, with some very good features; as a result, pupils' learning is consistently good. Teaching was good or very good in almost three-quarters of lessons, and at least satisfactory in the remainder. Of particular note, is the skilful way in which teachers ask questions to check that pupils have understood what is taught. The constant checking and repetition are used successfully to reinforce learning and to assess where pupils might have problems. They also ensure that pupils are attentive and participating fully. The good focus on using specific vocabulary correctly is especially valuable for those pupils whose first language is not English. They

are also well catered for by the regular opportunities for pupils to explain how they have worked out an answer. There is an expectation that questions will be answered fully in sentences and this reinforces good language learning. Another strong feature is the sensitive way in which teachers use pupils' errors as opportunities for further explanation and to enhance pupils' understanding. Pupils are not afraid to answer because there is never any shame in being wrong; they recognise that getting answers wrong sometimes is just part of the learning process.

84. Lessons start briskly with a good focus on learning and practising mental strategies. In several lessons, but notably in Year 5, this was very carefully managed to ensure that all pupils were fully involved and answering questions at a level matched to their prior understanding. The mental practice for older pupils reinforces a mixture of strategies involving prior knowledge. These include, for example, understanding of equivalent fractions and decimals, and addition of decimals. The coherence of lessons is often enhanced by opportunities to practise mental strategies that will be used in the later part of the lesson or later in the week. The quality of the final section of the lessons, when learning is reviewed, is sometimes too brief, as in a lesson in Year 4. In the very best examples, teachers refer back to the learning intentions and ask pupils to evaluate whether or not they have been successful in their learning. This was a positive feature of a lesson in Year 3 where teaching was very good; pupils left the class feeling good about their learning. Praise is used well throughout the school, but is a particular focus for some of the youngest pupils as they settle to new routines and expectations.

85. The weakest part of lessons occurs when pupils work independently; many lessons lost the sense of urgency at this point. Although pupils are interested in their work and maintain positive attitudes, only in the very best lessons is the high pace maintained throughout. Although teachers set expectations for what should be achieved, and some even give time targets, these are not adhered to firmly enough. Many lessons actually extend beyond the recommended allocation of time and this does not encourage pupils to work quickly.

86. Teachers' planning is uniformly good. Teachers make sensible adaptations to the numeracy strategy objectives in order to provide the right level of challenge for all their pupils. Activities are well conceived to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills over the week and skilful adaptations are made where necessary, depending on pupils' response. Tasks are pitched at several levels to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. As a result, pupils make consistently good progress in their learning. Class work is reinforced well by a general requirement to learn number facts, and with regular homework that is both relevant and interesting.

87. The school's commitment to implementing the numeracy strategy is high, and the rigour with which staff have embraced the principles can be seen in their careful and comprehensive planning. Numeracy skills are used well in other subjects. The headteacher, numeracy governor and previous co-ordinator have monitored its implementation. The new co-ordinator has a sound knowledge of achievement across the school and further monitoring is planned. She has made a good analysis of Year 6 test papers to look for general areas of weakness that might indicate the need to improve provision. There is scope for extending this good practice to annual test results. Mathematics remains a key priority for further development this year. In particular, the school is considering ways

in which to target support for pupils in Year 3 who enter school with lower than expected attainment.

88. The school has maintained the positive elements reported at the last inspection and improved the quality of teaching and, in particular, the quality and use of assessment information.

SCIENCE

89. Science has been a focus for development in the last two years, with an emphasis on investigative skills. Results in the national tests in 1999 were similar to the national average, and above average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level was below the national average, but close to that found in similar schools. Results in the latest tests in 2000 rose significantly, and the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level also rose. Inspection evidence shows that standards by the time pupils leave the school are above average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

90. The focus on the development of investigative skills has been very successful. Pupils benefit from the practical emphasis in lessons, and enjoy conducting experiments. For example, pupils in Year 4 worked with great enthusiasm and concentration as they tested different materials to find out which would conduct electricity. They used terms such as 'circuit' and 'insulator' with confidence. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are able to carry out investigations with increasing independence. They can draw conclusions confidently from the data, and explain their ideas clearly. For instance, a group of pupils experimenting with sugar and water concluded, 'the hotter the water, the quicker the sugar dissolved'. Scrutiny of past work indicates a wide coverage of scientific knowledge pitched at the higher levels of expectation for pupils of this age.

91. The quality of teaching is very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. One excellent lesson was seen, and one lesson was satisfactory. Of the remainder, half were good and half were very good. A common feature throughout all lessons is the very skilful use of questioning. Teachers explore pupils' understanding, and extend their thinking through probing questions, which are matched accurately to the pupils' attainment. This enables all pupils to make progress and ensures that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons. Pupils are given time to answer without being interrupted, and this gives them confidence. Teachers value their answers and this is effective in raising their self-esteem and motivating them to work. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils of all attainment levels were eager to explain their ideas using the correct words for materials and their properties. Teachers are very effective in emphasising the use of correct subject vocabulary, both during direct teaching and when pupils write up experiments. As a result, pupils use technical words and phrases confidently when explaining their work. All teachers have high expectations, both of behaviour and of work. Standards of presentation are high. Pupils are taught to present their work neatly and coherently, and literacy skills are used well. However, the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. Behaviour is generally very good, pupils have a good attitude to the subject and most are keen to answer questions. Occasionally, lower down the school, pupils become over-excited and the pace of the lesson slows as the teacher patiently establishes rules for working.

92. Teachers make very good use of assessment information in their planning. Work is accurately matched to pupils' needs and as a result all pupils learn at a similar rate. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from working on adapted tasks and from very good support from class teachers and from special needs assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the teachers' clear explanations, the emphasis on correct subject vocabulary and the practical work and demonstrations in all lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils gained much from a very good demonstration when a teacher used a globe and a light to explain the apparent movement of the sun across the sky. Lessons are well planned, beginning with a recap of previous work to focus pupils' thoughts. Teachers organise and use resources efficiently and the pace in most lessons is very good. Homework contributes significantly to pupils' understanding. Learning is reinforced and, in some instances, pupils gain an understanding of how their work in science is related to everyday life. For example, following work on filters, one pupil found out about the filter in the family washing machine.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Standards in art are similar to those found in many schools but there are also examples of artistic achievement that are good for pupils' ages. This is similar to the judgement made in the last inspection. Two lessons were seen along with evidence from samples of work, display and photographs of past work. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time in developing a broad range of techniques and skills and in using a wide range of media.

94. Examples of work on landscapes in Year 6 show that pupils are developing their own ideas about how to represent a rural, coastal or town landscape by drawing on their previous experiences and selecting an appropriate medium. A particularly vibrant piece used oil pastels because the pupils wanted to capture a "Caribbean mood", and the watercolours chosen by another pupil convey his intention to create a calm sea. All pieces show good attention to detail, a high level of care and pride in the presentation, and an understanding of perspective. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils worked effectively in pairs to create a collage landscape. This lesson was so well prepared and organised by the teacher that the minimum of management was then required because pupils were so motivated and interested. There was a good level of concentration on the task and good quality discussion about which textures would convey the texture of a rural landscape. High levels of enjoyment and a purposeful working atmosphere contributed much to pupils' learning, as did their ability to make adaptations as their work progressed.

95. A wide range of media is represented in pupil's current and past work. The work of European artists is well represented, as are examples from other cultures and times. Aboriginal art, African masks, Caribbean artists, Yoruban embroidery, Roman mosaics and Greek border patterns have, in the past, been used as a stimulus for pupils' work. There is some evidence of the use of computer art packages, but this is acknowledged as an area for development. A criticism from the previous inspection about the extent of three-dimensional work is being addressed and there is evidence of clay work and plaster sculpture.

96. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and evidence from samples of pupils' work indicates learning that is at least sound. Of the lessons seen, one was satisfactory and one was

good. The content of lessons is well managed to balance instruction with opportunities for creativity and experimentation. However in one lesson, the over-emphasis on managing pupils' behaviour detracted from the artistic purpose of the lesson. Work in sketchbooks shows that specific drawing skills are being taught through a systematic approach and pupils have many opportunities for observational drawing of interesting and unusual artefacts. Careful observation is encouraged and pupils learn to create texture in their drawings by shading. Pupils are taught to experiment with colour to create moods, and also with shades of colour to create a background. Pupils are learning to evaluate their work, although there is scope for this to form a more significant focus in lessons.

97. Following a review of the provision for art, the school decided to organise the curriculum into half termly themes. There is a good focus on the skills that will be taught systematically through each theme, but also is plenty of flexibility for teachers in the choice of content. Themes are well planned by teachers to develop pupils' knowledge of different techniques, styles and media, and to provide good breadth of experience over time. However, visits by artists and to galleries are not a regular feature of the school's provision.

98. The co-ordinator has a good awareness of the subject's coverage and the demands of the new curriculum. She monitors standards through collecting samples of work and has been influential in supporting colleagues and improving their knowledge of artistic techniques through staff training. Adequate resources are supplemented by local authority loans of artefacts to provide a stimulus for pupils' work. Formal assessment procedures are not in place but sketchbooks are used informally as a measure of pupils' progress over time.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Standards achieved in designing, making and evaluating are in line with those expected for their age by the time pupils reach the top of the school. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Only two lessons were observed, but evidence is also drawn from photographs and samples of pupils' work.

100. Pupils learn to plan their work carefully. There are very good examples of written work produced by some Year 3 pupils as they studied different styles of slippers and subsequently designed their own. This standard of recording was not evident across the school. However, pupils do have suitable opportunities to examine artefacts before beginning their own designs. Year 6 pupils used pictures and their existing knowledge of bridges as they made models. They could identify some features of different bridges and were beginning to use relevant technical terms. When testing their newspaper models they could identify strengths and weaknesses in their own designs. Finished wooden models from last year show that pupils improve their designs and use tools carefully and with suitable accuracy. Year 5 pupils worked slowly, but with care, as they learned techniques for making a box. They measured and sawed wood, and used wood glue to assemble a basic framework. Pupils benefited from the teacher's very clear explanations and systematic teaching.

101. The overall quality of teaching is good. Samples of work indicate that skills are taught systematically with attention to detail. Of the lessons seen, one was satisfactory and one very good.

Strong features in both lessons included skilful questioning, good use of subject vocabulary and very good support for pupils with special educational needs. The pace dropped frequently in one lesson, which was nevertheless satisfactory, because the teacher had to remind pupils to listen to each other and to her. This affected the impact of some very good teaching points.

102. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has worked hard to promote the subject. All classes complete one project each term and the scheme provides for the progressive development of skills. Little use is made of information and communication technology in the subject at present. Although the co-ordinator has not monitored lessons, she takes in samples of work each term and ensures that the scheme of work is being covered.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Standards of attainment by the age of 11 are broadly in line with the national expectation, although coverage has been limited in the recent past because of increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The subject is now being successfully re-established and careful planning is in process of being aligned to the new curriculum requirements.

104. Most pupils at Year 3 understand compass points, and know the meaning and use of the terms direction and view. Pupils of all abilities in Year 5 find co-ordinates and grid-references confidently and competently, appreciating the importance of knowing exactly where you are if you need to make a rendezvous. Most pupils in Year 6, are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the course of a river, and use the correct terminology with precision. They explain erosion as 'wearing away.' The scrutiny of past work shows that most pupils at the age of eleven have made a comprehensive study of the Amazon Rainforest, which includes work on the environment, tourism, farming, its people, and the voyages of discovery and their consequences. For homework, pupils make an extensive study of a country of their choice, for instance, Goa and Sri Lanka. These studies incorporate the use of maps and the signs and symbols associated with them. Pupils make use of the Internet and of CD-Rom to make their researches but often, they simply print out the information instead of absorbing it for themselves.

105. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall, although in one of the three lessons seen teaching was very good. In this very good lesson, the teacher gave very clear instructions and worked well with the pupils to demonstrate that the compass rose painted on the playground was painted accurately. Pupils were intrigued and interested in the direction-finding activities, particularly when they were embodied in a game, taking turns to call compass points for classmates to identify. The teacher's very good relationship with pupils allowed the use of humour without threatening discipline. Pupils moved to activities with great delight, helping each other to decide the direction in which they were facing for drawing. Even when the lesson was 'rained off' and the class had to go back inside, their new knowledge and understanding were reinforced by direction finding in the classroom. Most of the pupils were interested and attentive right to the end of a very good, productive lesson in which all abilities learned something new. In the other lessons, planning was thorough with clear lesson objectives shared with pupils. Key questions for reviewing new knowledge and understanding were included in the planning and were used effectively at the end of the lesson. A few pupils were very fussy moving to their activities, taking a long time to settle

until the teacher called them to order. Teachers give extra support to small groups of pupils with special educational needs before sending them away to complete their tasks independently. None of the pupils with English as an additional language found much difficulty in the tasks set. Most pupils took care with their work, but a few copied words for labels incorrectly, for example, 'sorce' for 'source' and 'trubutary' for 'tributary.'

106. The co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of the role and is looking forward to the opportunity of exercising it more effectively by monitoring and evaluating provision and classroom practice. The mini-action plan incorporates appropriate procedures for assessment, but this is likely to be informal, based on a skills progression. Useful links with other schools, for example in Ghana, are being developed. A good collection of videos and books supports teaching, but there is a need for artefacts since teachers have to rely on pupils to bring items from home. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

HISTORY

107. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with those expected nationally by the age of eleven in the context of the reduced curriculum over recent years.

108. The youngest pupils have a clear knowledge and understanding of archaeology as 'digging up the past', and know that much can be gleaned from critical observation and sensible questioning about the artefact being studied. They are developing a sense of chronology through detailed study of their own personal time-line in pictures and writing from birth to the age of seven years. Most formulate sensible questions about a 'mystery building' set as a challenge by their teacher, and show awareness of the sources for research, for example, television programmes, museums and the Internet. They make a very good beginning in methods of historical enquiry and investigation, and in the use and interpretation of primary sources. Pupils in Year 5 have a good recall of the basic events of Henry VIII's reign and the break with Rome in Tudor times, although one or two were confused about his queens! The written pieces at the end of the lesson – a letter to a Tudor 'agony aunt' from Henry or Catherine of Aragon – show some empathy and a flavour of the period, but little reflection on the moral and social issues involved. Pupils with special educational needs sequenced events correctly with support from a classroom assistant working under the teacher's direction. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the evacuation policy in World War II and how the lives of children were affected. Some had previously done some research of their own to add to the sources available in school. A few first attempts at empathic writing show that they relate their new learning to their own experience. Pupils compare and contrast life now and in Britain in the 1930s or 1960s, and use their old and new learning to draw conclusions about the historical impact on subsequent lives and societies, for example, the advantages and disadvantages of the 'swinging Sixties.' Their skills of interpreting historical resources are developing well, as when pupils write the diary entries of a Roman magistrate.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Of the lessons observed, two were good and two satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour and most pupils respond well, concentrating and persevering even when they find tasks challenging.

Teachers make satisfactory use of a range of artefacts to give pupils real choice in selecting which to use and talk about. Good use is made of fiction books. For instance, in the lesson on wartime evacuation, group readers such as 'Room for a Stranger' and 'Goodnight, Mr. Tom' were available. The school's adequate stocks of books and artefacts are supplemented with loans from libraries and museums. However, the use of ICT is very much underdeveloped. In the lesson on Tudor England, the teacher gave a clear and simple explanation of the break with Rome, but did not give pupils the opportunity to research information for themselves. Teachers use very skilful questioning techniques to check and extend pupils' knowledge, understanding and vocabulary, and successfully convey their own good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Planning is consistently sound and good links are made with literacy skills such as note taking and role-play. In Year 4, effective joint planning by the class teachers and support teacher for pupils with English as an additional language meant that these pupils were able to participate fully in appropriately adapted activities. Teachers' displays enhance the classroom environment by providing interest, but are not always used as a resource for extending learning.

110. The curriculum is based on national guidance and is in process of being aligned to the new requirements of Curriculum 2000. Very comprehensive new guidance on integrating history with speech and drama, information and communications technology and literacy, is designed to develop investigative skills and recording techniques. The curriculum is enhanced through visits to places of interest to expand pupils' experience of resources, and an annual visit from a Theatre Group extends and deepens pupils' learning in particular topics, such as the Tudors or the Ancient Greeks. The co-ordinator has an impressive knowledge and understanding of the role, which is effectively exercised by monitoring and evaluating provision and classroom teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Information and communication technology has been identified as a major focus for development over the next three years. The school has drawn up an action plan to raise standards, increase resources, develop teacher expertise, and support the introduction of Internet and e-mail applications. There is a positive determination to succeed and the subject is beginning to develop.

112. No Information and communication technology lessons were observed, but pupils were observed using computers, receiving guidance from teachers and working independently. Judgements are also based on discussions with pupils, teachers and co-ordinators. At present, Information and communication technology is taught within other lessons, and pupils in most classes have only sporadic access to computers. Standards of attainment in Year 6 are currently below expectations because pupils have too little opportunity to practise and consolidate what they learn.

113. Samples of pupils' work and a scrutiny of teachers' planning indicate that pupils have access to the full programme of study. However discussions with older pupils show that they have limited recall of work covered. Knowledge and understanding of specific subject vocabulary is very limited. This contrasts with most other subjects where this aspect is a significant strength. Some pupils benefit from using computers at home, and in general they have better skills although many do not use correct subject vocabulary. Attitudes to the subject are good, and pupils are particularly eager to begin to use the Internet in school. At present, because of the problems with the new

computers, Internet use is at an early stage. With guidance, pupils in Year 5 used a search engine to locate information about the solar system. All pupils have some basic word processing skills, although these are not used extensively for work across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 could explain how to type, amend and save text, but not all are confident in printing their work independently. Most could change the font and font size, but few could explain how to ‘cut and paste’. Only a few pupils had combined text with a simple picture. They understand how to enter data and generate graphs, although not all can do this independently. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the use of Information and communication technology in everyday life.

114. In general, pupils have too little opportunity to have ‘hands on’ experience. There is some very good practice in a Year 3 class, where the computers are used at every available opportunity, but this is the exception. Teachers do ensure that pupils have equal access to computers, but they often do not have time to work with pupils. Teachers explain procedures clearly when they work with individuals and pairs of pupils and they enable pupils to move forward. Some teachers have useful strategies for enabling pupils to work independently. For example, in a Year 4 class, a pupil had prepared a flow chart to guide others through a program. In some classes, higher attaining pupils use a program first and subsequently use their knowledge to help others. While this promotes good personal and social skills, it does not ensure that all pupils understand the process they have used. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers. They are given appropriate help while working with the computer, but do not have enough opportunity to consolidate their learning.

115. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used across the curriculum and teachers are identifying opportunities for research and to reinforce learning. Pupils in Year 4 used a simple program to test their understanding of simple electrical circuits, and Year 5 pupils entered data on a spreadsheet during a science lesson. At present the school has limited commercial software. In one Year 3 class, the teacher himself prepares work to support pupils of different abilities in science and across the curriculum, but this is very time-consuming.

116. The school has recently equipped all classes with new computers and installed cabling so that all classrooms have an Internet link. Significant problems with the new equipment have caused considerable frustration. Some teachers who have planned to use the new computers within lessons have been unable to do so. Time has been wasted, and new machines have had to be returned to the supplier for maintenance. The newly appointed co-ordinator spends time “trouble shooting” rather than supporting colleagues in developing their skills. The school has recently acquired 21 computers from a school which is updating its systems. A computer suite is being developed and the school will be using this for whole-class lessons.

117. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and of the school’s needs. He is already working with the rest of the staff to raise standards. The school has introduced national guidelines as a scheme of work. Once this is fully established, the school intends to develop subject assessment procedures.

MUSIC

118. The school's provision for music is patchy and not as good as at the time of the last inspection. This has led pupils to make inconsistent progress over time and standards vary widely in aspects of music and between year groups. Approximately 40 pupils currently receive music tuition from peripatetic teachers and some are reaching a good standard of musicianship for their age. They are beginning to read musical notation and time signatures and are gaining confidence in playing their instruments. A significant level of enjoyment and good sense of achievement are evident among these pupils. All pupils have regular singing practices and, as a result, sing well with good diction and attention to the pace and rhythm of songs. Singing is tuneful and well controlled. Annual musical productions capitalise on the singing and acting ability of the oldest pupils and are much appreciated by parents. However, standards in the three class music lessons varied widely, depending on the focus of the activity and the quality of the teaching.

119. The quality of teaching and learning seen depended on the confidence and knowledge of the individual teachers and on their ability to develop pupils' understanding and level of achievement. In one lesson teaching was very good, in another it was good, and in the third it was unsatisfactory. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils had little opportunity to show what they were able to do because of the limiting nature of an activity that offered too little challenge; this was unsatisfactory. By contrast, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in improving the accuracy with which they clapped and played complex African rhythms. This was because the teacher recognised their initial error, corrected it and then gave further opportunity for practice. The teacher's enthusiasm was infectious and the majority of pupils responded with a good level of concentration and participation. The teacher's very good subject knowledge resulted in a lesson which encompassed several aspects of listening and performing, introduced rhythm notation, and explained key vocabulary and musical terms in a seamless manner. In a similar way, the lesson in Year 3 developed the theme of long and short sounds through exploring voices, body sounds and instruments. Pupils made good progress in understanding the quality of sound. They were fascinated when listening to the length of the sounds made by different instruments and became totally absorbed in this activity. Several pupils demonstrated their scientific understanding of how sounds travel and knew that stopping the vibrations could alter the length of sounds.

120. Scrutiny of teachers' past planning indicates that the musical elements are taught mainly through opportunities for singing and that pupils have little experience of composing and playing instruments. The school was unable to provide any samples of pupils' musical compositions. There are planned opportunities to listen to, and appraise, music that reflects other times and cultures, but pupils have too little chance to appraise their own music and to seek ways to improve their performance. The time devoted to music teaching has been reduced to accommodate the school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the school acknowledge the need to review and enhance provision in order to meet the requirements of the new curriculum.

121. The subject has been without a co-ordinator for over two years. As a result, music has not enjoyed a high profile in the curriculum. A newly appointed teacher has the skills and knowledge to undertake this role and the enthusiasm to develop the subject in line with new requirements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Standards of attainment in lessons observed in the current Year 6 in gymnastics and games are broadly in line with those expected at this age. There are, however, variations in skills in different classes and year groups.

123. By Year 6, most pupils move with confidence and work collaboratively, to achieve levels of performance expected for their age in gymnastics and games skills. Pupils pass a basketball with appropriate pace and accuracy. They show an emerging understanding of tactics as they take part in team games. A few pupils have a good understanding of using space to their advantage, and they intercept and pass the ball skilfully. In gymnastics, pupils learn to develop and refine sequences of movements on the floor and on apparatus. By Year 6, they reach the expected standards and most improve their work after watching others. Pupils attend swimming lessons during the last term in Year 5, and the first two terms in Year 6. School records show that last year most pupils achieved the expected standard and could swim 25 metres, with some pupils achieving well.

124. The overall quality of teaching in lessons seen was good. One third of the lessons were satisfactory, half were good and one lesson was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Pupils were keen to take part and made most improvement where they were involved in physical activity for a good proportion of the lesson. In the good and very good lessons, teachers maintained the pace and balance of lessons well. They make effective use of demonstration and encourage all pupils to improve their performance. Pupils have ample time to consolidate and practise skills and sequences, and to respond to relevant teaching points. All teachers give pupils time to reflect and to evaluate their work. They encourage pupils to comment constructively on each other's work and this is effective in improving performance. In one lesson, which was nevertheless satisfactory, this part of the lesson was too lengthy, and pupils sat inactive for some time. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons. Teachers match their expectations to pupils' needs very effectively and have good strategies for encouraging all pupils to do their best. In a very good Year 3 lesson, one pupil with behavioural needs was fully involved in the final evaluation, because the teacher gave him a specific role.

125. Pupils have two physical education lessons each week and during their time in the school they have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities. However, in several lessons observed, one or more pupils did not participate because they had forgotten their kit, thus missing an important part of the week's activities. The school makes very good use of outside agencies to enrich the curriculum, and it provides pupils with a variety of opportunities to take part in extra curricular activities. Pupils also represent the school in team games. The residential trip for Year 6 pupils includes adventurous and outdoor pursuits such as fencing, climbing and abseiling.

126. The new co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to influence the subject, but has been involved in developing playtime activities. Although resources are generally adequate, the uneven surface of the main playground is unsatisfactory. Large puddles occur when it rains and they do not drain away. The governing body has been active in trying to get the playground properly resurfaced, so far without success.