

INSPECTION REPORT

EAST TILBURY JUNIOR SCHOOL

East Tilbury

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 115010

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Murphy

Reporting inspector: Lynda Maple
6435

Dates of inspection: 7 – 11 February 2000

Inspection number: 196775

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Princess Margaret Road East Tilbury Essex
Postcode:	RM18 8SB
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Osborne
Date of previous inspection:	08/07/96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Lynda Maple	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school it is
		ICT	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		French	How well is the school is led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Peter Berry	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Britt Parker	Team inspector	English	
		Music	
		English as an additional language	
Vicky Plotkin	Team inspector	Design & technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	
		History	
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	
Lyn Watkins		Science	How well are pupils' taught?
		Art	
		Physical education	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

East Tilbury Junior School is bigger than most schools. There are 337 pupils on roll, roughly similar numbers of boys and girls, and most transfer from the infant school on the same site. The school serves the local area and the majority of the pupils live in the village or nearby. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 14%, is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is very low; none are at the early stages of learning English. From time to time there are Traveller children in the school, though at present only one is on the school's roll. There are 60 pupils with special educational needs, four of whom have statements. This is broadly average. Attainment on entry to the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

East Tilbury Juniors is an effective school; its standards are at least average in English, mathematics and science and they are improving. Over half of the teaching is good and helps pupils make good progress from year to year. The school is well led and everyone works hard to help pupils do well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in National Curriculum tests for science are good, mainly because teachers understand the curriculum well and teaching is effective.
- The headteacher and governors manage the school well; they are committed to raising standards.
- There is a substantial amount of good teaching and most of the lessons are carefully prepared and interest the pupils.
- The teachers, with the help of parents, provide an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. The pupils participate in these enthusiastically and gain from the experience.
- The school cares for its pupils very well; everyone is valued and their efforts and achievements are celebrated.
- Pupils behave well; they get on well with each other and enjoy school.

What could be improved

- The effectiveness of monitoring in order to improve teaching. Some teaching is unsatisfactory and this has not been adequately addressed. The co-ordinators' roles could be extended.
- In mathematics, some lower-attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress. Their numeracy skills are not being systematically developed.
- Standards in information technology, design & technology and gymnastics are not high enough.
- Planning for the foundation subjects does not build sufficiently on pupils' previous experience.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made substantial improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved in English, mathematics and science. Standards in music are higher but they are still lower than expected in design & technology. The main reason for delay in developments in design & technology is the school's need to concentrate on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The percentage of unsatisfactory teaching is significantly lower and the amount of very good teaching has increased. Policies and schemes of work have been prepared in line with National Curriculum requirements. Effective assessment procedures are in place and further developments are underway. There are whole-school systems for monitoring pupils' work and these are contributing to the improvements in standards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	C	C	C
mathematics	D	B	C	C
science	D	D	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The schools' results have improved over the last three years. In the most recent National Curriculum tests, pupils' attainment in science was particularly good. Their results were above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining very low levels, was much lower than that nationally. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are satisfactory and are improving. The school sets realistic, yet challenging targets. In the last academic year, the school exceeded its targets in English and science and came very close in mathematics. Given that pupils' attainment on entry is below average, pupils' achievements are good. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In information technology standards are lower than expected. Pupils do well in French but the work seen in gymnastics and design & technology was of a lower than expected standard.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They persevere when faced with challenges. They respond positively to the work set and their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils know what is expected of them; and they are tolerant, courteous and polite. Pupils play harmoniously in the playground and there are very few examples of unsociable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They are encouraged to develop mature attitudes through involvement in the School Council, for example. Relationships are very good. Pupils work and play well together.
Attendance	Attendance is good. There is very little unauthorised absence and pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

89% of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. 14% was very good. 11% was unsatisfactory or poor.

Teaching is generally stronger in Years 5 and 6. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching was in one Year 3 and one Year 4 class. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory overall. Teachers give sufficient attention to all aspects of English; they have secure knowledge of the National Curriculum and a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Numeracy and literacy skills are, in the main taught well by most teachers. However, the numeracy skills of some of the lower-attaining pupils are not always accurately assessed and errors are not systematically dealt with. Additionally, in mathematics, not enough time is spent on solving problems.

Strengths in teaching include good subject knowledge in science and French. In general, in most lessons, teachers provide good levels of challenge and encouragement for pupils to do their best. They manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour. Throughout the school, homework is used effectively to support the work done in school. Over half of the teaching seen was good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate in most classes. They concentrate well, are interested in their work and develop independence. Pupils are encouraged to understand what they need to do to improve. There are a few weaknesses; some teachers do not have a firm grasp of the subject content to be taught in gymnastics and design and technology. Planning in history, geography, design and technology and art is inconsistent. The activities chosen for pupils to do in some of these lessons, do not always meet the objectives set. The school meets the differing needs of the pupils well in most areas. Pupils with special educational needs receive good additional support from the learning assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils. The inclusion of French greatly enhances their learning. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They often make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school successfully promotes pupils' personal development. There is an effective programme of support that includes health and drugs education. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Attention to their cultural development is sound, but needs to be further developed to enable pupils to develop their knowledge of other cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the pupils very well. Staff know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. Pupils are supervised very well and their safety and good behaviour is strongly promoted. The school places high priority on equal

	opportunities for all pupils.
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The school works well with its parents and most are happy with what the school provides for their children. Almost all the parents agree that the school expects the pupils to work hard and achieve well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and senior staff work well together. They provide good support for the rest of the staff and are committed to raising standards and improving the quality of education. They have improved substantially the school's results in English, mathematics and science. However, the monitoring programme is not sufficiently rigorous and some weaknesses in teaching have not been adequately addressed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are supportive of the school and fulfil their responsibilities with enthusiasm. They are involved in school development planning and help to provide a clear focus for the work of the school. Many of the governors are new and are keen to be involved in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school clearly understands what it does well and in the main knows where improvements are needed.
The strategic use of resources	The school's resources are carefully planned so it can work on its priorities and make the necessary improvements. At present a large balance has been accumulated to improve the accommodation. The school carefully considers value for money when taking decisions about the use of its resources. It provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's high expectations of their children their children are happy and enjoy school the range of extra-curricular activities the attention the school gives to pupils' personal development the good standard of teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the information they are given about their children's progress the way the school involves parents

The inspection team supports the parents' positive views of the school. The team agrees that the school should continue to find ways of involving parents and ensuring they are well informed about their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. By the age of eleven, standards in English and mathematics are satisfactory. In the most recent Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, the school's results in these subjects were broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' results in science were above the national average. In English, the percentage of pupils who attained the higher level, level 5, was as good as that found nationally. In mathematics and science, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was higher than the national figure and this indicates that the needs of the more able pupils are being well met by the school. The targets set by the school are suitably challenging and reflect its commitment to raising standards. The school's progress towards achieving its literacy and numeracy targets is good.
2. These results represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were average in science, well below average in English and below average in mathematics. Raising the attainment of the more able pupils was a key issue in the last inspection report. The school has addressed this issue very well. Since the previous inspection, results in English, mathematics and science have steadily improved. In comparison with the national picture, the results of the three subjects together are above the national trend. The improvements are the result of a concerted effort by the school to raise attainment and to improve the quality of teaching. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced. The teachers systematically work on each of the aspects of the strategies, at appropriate levels for the pupils in the ability groups. The school has focused well on developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills and greater attention has been given to teaching grammar for example. Extra classes were held in the school holidays to improve pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy and these succeeded in improving the pupils' performance. Performance in science is helped by the fact that the school devotes adequate amounts of time to science and it is systematically, regularly and well taught.
3. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment below average for reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection observations show that they are achieving well compared with their prior attainment and that they make good to very good progress during their time in the school. By the end of the key stage, standards are at least as high as those in similar schools in English and mathematics and higher in science. Reading and writing standards are as might be expected for their ages. Year 6 pupils read a range of texts and are familiar with the different conventions in different styles. Their literacy skills are used and developed well in some of their other work; for example they are developing a wide vocabulary in their mathematics and science lessons. They write confidently and the more able produce grammatical and well punctuated work in English and other subjects. Work in books shows much improvement throughout the school. The consistent emphasis on improving reading and writing skills has had a strong impact on achievement. In mathematics, pupils in the middle and top groups have a sound understanding of the number system and developing a range of computational skills. They understand how to gather and present information using tables and diagrams for example. Some of the lower-attaining pupils are not doing so

well. In some year groups, they are not making enough progress in numeracy because too little attention is paid to ensuring that they understand the work they are given. Their attainment in other aspects of mathematics is satisfactory; for example, they tackle work on shape and space competently. In science, most pupils at the end of the key stage have a good understanding of systems of respiration, circulation and digestion and use evidence they have collected to explain the results of their work. The teaching they have had, however, has placed insufficient emphasis on enabling them to plan and follow through their own investigations.

4. In religious education pupils' achievements are as outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. In most of the other subjects of the curriculum, standards are as expected but in information technology, design & technology and gymnastics they are lower than expected. In history, geography and music, pupils are gradually building up sound understanding and knowledge. Their interest in local history is strongly promoted and a good range of opportunities is provided for them to find out about the past. French is taught in all classes and pupils work in the subject is good. They speak confidently and enjoy learning. In information technology, pupils have frequent opportunities to use computers in their work in other subjects; in science and art for example. They are not yet properly developing all the skills and knowledge in the information technology curriculum. Nor do they use information technology enough to support their work in literacy and numeracy. In design & technology and gymnastics, some of the teachers are not knowledgeable about the specific skills and understanding to be taught in the subjects and as a result lack the confidence to teach them well. Pupils in some classes are not doing as well as they should in these subjects. In gymnastics, many of the pupils do not display good control or co-ordination of their movement. In design and technology pupils' work shows limited development and lacks accuracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Throughout the school the pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. They listen attentively and respond enthusiastically to the teachers' questions. Pupils sustain concentration well and they are eager to learn. When faced with challenging work they are able to persevere. The pupils' attitudes to school are typified by their very strong commitment to the many extra-curricular activities.
6. The standard of behaviour is very good. There has only been one fixed period exclusion in recent years. No instance of bullying, harassment or serious misbehaviour was observed during the inspection. Parents were in strong agreement about the good behaviour of the children at school. Pupils know what is expected of them and they behave accordingly. Movement around the school is orderly and this allows the school to function in an efficient manner.
7. The pupils are friendly, trustworthy and very polite. They show suitable respect for property and for the feelings of others. Relationships, between the pupils and between pupils and adults, are very good. Pupils of both sexes and of all ages integrate together harmoniously; for example, they share resources and take turns on the adventure playground equipment. They work well individually and collaboratively during the lessons.
8. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are given tasks to help in school and the classes vote each term for their School Council representative. The Council meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss matters of concern, such as the problems and dangers caused by some parents who parked cars on the driveway at the end of

the school day. Year 6 pupils act as school prefects. The community and charity work, together with the residential courses, greatly enhance the pupils' personal development. Pupils who have special educational needs are developing positive views of themselves as learners. They are keen to succeed and respond well to praise and encouragement. The pupils' very good behaviour in the assemblies and their well-planned participation are particularly noteworthy.

9. The level of attendance is good, being broadly in line with the national average for junior schools. There is a minimal level of unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of the school day and lessons start promptly.
10. The pupils are happy, confident and self-disciplined. Their attitudes, behaviour and good attendance make a positive contribution to the quality of education and to the standards that are achieved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. Teaching in the school as a whole is satisfactory and has improved considerably since the previous inspection where teaching was unsatisfactory in 25% of the lessons and only 1% was very good. Since then there have been changes in the staffing which have brought about improvements. In all, in this inspection, 62 lessons were observed, the great majority of which were in the core subjects. 89% of the lessons seen fell into the satisfactory or better category and this breaks down into 14% where teaching was very good, 43% where it was good and 32% where it was satisfactory. In 8% of the lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory and in 3% it was poor.
12. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good teaching. Pupils at Stage 3 of the Code of practice and those with statements of special educational need are particularly well served by excellent, well-trained learning support assistants. Some targets, however, in individual education plans are not sufficiently specific or practical enough for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. The pupils' progress is impaired in these situations.
13. Basic skills are well taught in English and mathematics and the teachers make good use of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy in setting objectives for the pupils' learning. In both literacy and numeracy, pupils are taught in ability sets and this helps teachers plan work that is, in many lessons, well matched to the pupils' needs. This is particularly effective for the higher-attaining groups where challenging work enables pupils to make rapid progress. Teaching of the middle and lower sets, however, though satisfactory or better in most of the lessons seen, is less assured. In numeracy, the work set for these groups does not always match their learning needs; in particular, teachers are introducing formal written methods of calculation too early. In literacy, the lower-attaining groups are too often given uninteresting written exercises and as a result make less progress than they should.
14. In English, teachers give appropriate attention to teaching handwriting, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Work in pupils' books shows they make really good progress from year to year in their development of skills. Teachers give close attention to helping pupils improve their spelling and handwriting and by the end of the key stage all pupils have fluent, legible handwriting and have few problems with spelling. In the best lessons, teachers bring the study of English alive with well-chosen texts. In a Year 4 lesson, with the lower attainers, the teacher used a beautifully illustrated and most captivating story to arouse and hold the interest of the pupils. They read with great

enthusiasm and joined in discussion eagerly. The lesson had pace and vitality and was very motivating for the pupils. In a small number of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory; the teachers did not give pupils sufficiently challenging work to do and they made very little progress.

15. In mathematics, teaching in most lessons was satisfactory and in half it was good or very good. Strengths include good structure and pace and an appropriate emphasis on mental and oral work. Teachers employ whole class and group teaching methods and this makes the best use of the available time. In the really good lessons teachers kept pupils interested and involved through clear instruction, explanation and demonstration combined with challenging tasks. In some lessons pupils are not given enough opportunity to talk about their own approaches to calculation so that any misunderstandings can be spotted and dealt with. In a lesson in Year 3, where teaching was poor the teacher did not explain the tasks so the pupils did not understand what they had to do and many spent the time simply playing with the mathematics equipment rather than using it to learn new things.
16. Teaching of science is good throughout the school and often very good. This is a significant improvement on the picture in the previous inspection where teaching was "satisfactory at best and often unsatisfactory". The teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and they provide interesting and demanding work in all year groups. Pupils make good progress in gaining new knowledge and understanding. In a Year 5 lesson on sound, for example, pupils were challenged to explain the effect of tightening or lengthening the strings of a guitar in raising or lowering the pitch of the sound. Well-framed questions, demonstration and practical work contribute well to the learning in this and many other classes. In science lessons teachers maintain a good focus on developing thinking and encouraging the pupils to make generalisations and draw conclusions from their work. Though practical, experimental work is done in all classes there is scope to provide a better balance between the teaching of factual knowledge and investigative science. Pupils are not learning to design their own investigations nor to plan how they will collect evidence in a systematic way.
17. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory and in one lesson it was good. In this lesson the teacher led a lively debate about Christian principles and values. In other lessons the methods used were less exciting for the pupils; these included a comprehension exercise, the purpose of which was to draw out similarities and differences in religious traditions. Where high quality discussion took place teaching was generally better.
18. Teaching of information technology (IT) is effective in the groups taught by the teaching assistant who works in the computer base with pupils across the school. But there should be more attention paid to developing pupils' IT skills as well as using it to support other subjects of the curriculum. Some teachers do not include IT in their plans, few use their class computers in lessons and few display IT work in their classrooms. However, the pupils have a very positive experience of work with IT and they use it confidently.
19. In the foundation subjects, in the lessons seen, teaching was generally satisfactory and on occasion it was good. It was generally satisfactory in geography, music and art. In history some of the teaching was good and made good use of local knowledge and local resources such as the Plotlands Museum. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in two physical education lessons, and some poor teaching in design & technology. In these lessons, pupils were not given enough to do and tasks were not clearly explained. Pupils were not sure how to improve their work and therefore could

not make much progress.

20. All pupils in the school learn French; the lower school classes have lessons from a Year 3 teacher and the upper school classes are taught by the co-ordinator. Only one lesson was seen; in the upper school. This teaching was very good; the pupils' confidence was evident, their knowledge was very good as was their pronunciation. Really good teaching has enabled them to make very good progress across the key stage.
21. In most of the lessons seen, teachers made effective use of their time and wherever possible they used direct teaching methods, keeping up a good level of interaction with the class. This kind of teaching was evident in all the successful lessons. In virtually all the lessons seen, teachers had very positive relationships with their classes and maintained a good working atmosphere. Pupils are almost always industrious and motivated in lessons and many say they have learned a lot in the school. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning; for example pupils in Years 5 and 6 compile a personal notebook of definitions and scientific vocabulary. Most of the pupils enjoy this activity and feel it helps them remember what they have learned. Most teachers give pupils regular feedback on their work and mark books thoughtfully and constructively. Teachers often ask pupils to make notes or record key points from lessons and this is a good opportunity for using and developing literacy skills. In fact, the pupils' confident, fluent writing supports their learning well in all areas of the curriculum.

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

22. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to all its pupils, meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The inclusion of the teaching of French in all years significantly enhances pupils' educational experience. Schemes of work, with the exception of that for design and technology which is unsatisfactory, are of good quality and ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning throughout the school. Where they are being revised, schemes draw on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Schemes for information technology and art are not yet fully in place and whilst the physical education scheme is followed it is not always interpreted effectively in short-term plans. Lessons are less effective than they might be.
23. Both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are in place. In English and mathematics all year groups are set by ability. This system makes sound provision for all pupils' needs except those in the lower mathematics sets where work is not consistently matched to ability. In addition to the daily literacy hour, provision is made for extra work on grammar, phonics and extended writing.
24. Able pupils are well provided for, although work in the foundation subjects is at times insufficiently challenging. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to make sound, and sometimes good, progress. It is particularly good for those pupils who have statements of need who are very well supported by trained, skilled learning assistants. The targets in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, although regularly reviewed, are often too many, insufficiently focused, not clearly measurable and are not time-limited. However, overall, all pupils' needs are identified well and the school has good day to day procedures to ensure that they benefit according to their needs.

25. The many and diverse opportunities for extra-curricular activities offered to its pupils continue to be a noteworthy strength of the school. The teachers' commitment in running lunchtime and after-school clubs is outstanding. The range of activities available to all pupils includes: gardening; team sports such as netball, rugby, football and cricket; tennis; debating, country dance, quiz club, homework, choir and orchestra. The school also runs two annual residential visits which add significantly to the quality of the pupils' experience of school.
26. There is no policy for personal and social education, but a sex education policy is in place and good provision is made for pupils in Year 6 to receive lessons about the dangers of drug taking, smoking and alcohol abuse which includes a talk from the police education officer.
27. The school has built up very good relationships with the community that broaden the learning experiences of its pupils. It has strong links with the vicar and local church. Members of The London Leopards basketball team visit the school to coach pupils. The Parent Teacher Association is actively involved in raising funds to purchase additional teaching and learning resources for the school. The links formed with Cory Waste have enabled the school to benefit from an urban regeneration scheme and develop an environmental area in the school grounds. The school also has links with Liege through the Comenius project.
28. Liaison between the Junior and Infant schools is good. Well-thought-out procedures have been established to ensure a smooth transfer for pupils going to the junior school involving support for Year 2 pupils from pupils in Year 3. Very strong links have been developed between the school and St. Cleres, the main secondary school to which pupils transfer. A teacher from St. Cleres regularly teaches French to Year 6; there are regular joint projects such as poetry days and book weeks. A good familiarisation programme is in place for transferring Year 6 pupils and their families. This includes a visit from the secondary special educational needs co-ordinator. Secondary schools receive appropriate information and records on transferring pupils.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Opportunities for reflection on their own and others' values and ideas are offered regularly in assemblies, circle time and in lessons, particularly in religious education. In one lesson, pupils used role play to focus on the need to listen to each other and imagine how they would feel if rudely interrupted; in another they were encouraged to be attentive to each others' needs, whilst in a third they explored the idea of silence. One pupil spoke of how, on holiday at Butlins, he associated silence with the sound of seagulls. A daily act of collective worship takes place which is overtly Christian in character and hymns are sung in assemblies. Grace is said by pupils at each sitting at lunchtime.
30. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. Rules for living are part of the religious education syllabus and pupils show awareness of the need for a moral code. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson, for example, discussed which five rules they would choose to live by and why the two rules in St. Mark's Gospel are considered to be the most important. Staff actively foster respect and honesty. In a lesson where a pupil tentatively described an adult pushing in front of her, the teacher responded immediately by acknowledging that adults too are guilty of impolite behaviour and children are entitled to expect people to behave well towards them.
31. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Staff are excellent role models for pupils: they are caring, courteous and considerate. Pupils are

encouraged to take responsibility. Prefects in Year 6 organise and assist in taking assemblies. There is a School Council and councillors are elected from each class by their peers and are specifically chosen for their ability to listen and respond to any problems their classmates may have. Many opportunities are given within lessons for pupils to work together in pairs or groups and these are used well. Pupils are very supportive and positive towards their peers who have special educational needs. Pupils have many opportunities to learn to compete fairly. When announcing the school's sports teams various successes, the headteacher took the opportunity to remind pupils that whilst it is easy to be well-behaved as victors, they should remember they also have a reputation for being gracious in defeat, which is much harder.

32. The provision for pupils' cultural development is sound but limited. The history and geography curriculum is used well to promote understanding of the cultural heritage of the local area. Pupils in Year 6 have some understanding of a very different culture through their study of St. Lucia. Western cultural traditions are well represented in the range of musical instrumental teaching on offer. Pupils' knowledge of English history is enriched through visits such as that to Hampton Court and through visitors such as the Education Officer from the local Plotlands Museum. Positive images of other cultures are projected through displays, artefacts and books. However, the school acknowledges a need to expand opportunities for pupils to learn about the art, literature and music of other cultural traditions and has plans to address this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides a happy, caring environment and has maintained the strengths identified in the previous inspection. The pupils are well supported by the dedicated staff. Good relationships ensure that pastoral matters are given prompt attention. The staff know their pupils well and provide good supervision. The parents' comments praised the high quality of support and guidance given by the school to their children. The school operates a house points system, which promotes friendships and teamwork. Pupils' achievements and attainments are celebrated in school assemblies. Teachers and other staff are quick to give praise and encouragement.
34. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic performance. It meets the statutory requirements in carrying out end of key stage tests and assessments and reporting to parents at the end of the year. New systems for assessment have been introduced since the last inspection and these include the setting of individual targets for pupils. There are effective screening arrangements for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. The staff analyse the results of tests and assessments and use the information to identify and meet learning needs. Work is regularly marked and inspectors noted good examples of diagnostic marking and helpful comments which supported pupils' learning. Learning objectives take account of teachers' assessments particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school has put in place an effective system for tracking the progress of each pupil across the key stage and this is helping to inform the setting of targets.
35. The school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. There are suitable systems for the promotion of good attendance and efficient registration periods. The school has very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The school places a high priority on equal opportunities for all pupils.
36. Care is taken to give pupils who have special educational needs maximum access to a

broad and balanced curriculum. The policy is reviewed annually. The school has recently strengthened its procedures for monitoring the movement of pupils on the special needs register and this year noted a reduction of pupils at Stage 1. Procedures for placing pupils on the register are thorough and effective and screening takes place regularly. Both statements and individual education plans are reviewed regularly and parents are included in these meetings. The provision outlined in pupils' statements is implemented well and the access to additional staffing and suitable disability-related resources is good. Very good communications with external agencies ensures pupils' needs are well supported.

37. Child protection procedures are very good and well supported by the designated governor. The school's provision for pupils' welfare is good. First aid training is suitably planned, but the pupil accident book needs to be completed more comprehensively, for example noting staffs' actions and signatures. Although welfare policies are generally in place, there is a need for more formalised approach, including a note of the governing body's adoption and systematic reviews. The school is well supported by external agencies, particularly the school nurse who holds drop-in surgeries. Pupils' safety is well promoted. The school is maintained in a clean and tidy state. Health and safety matters are given high priority by the designated member of staff and by the support governor. The use of risk assessments needs to be reviewed.
38. Overall, the school gives good care to its pupils, with attention to their individual needs. Based on its positive ethos the school provides effective support and guidance, which enhances the pupils' self-confidence and contributes to the standards that are achieved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school has a good partnership with its parents and it is their view that this has improved in recent years. Most parents feel that the school is easily approached and that their participation in the life of the school is welcomed. The vast majority of the parents are very supportive and they praise the hard work and dedication of the staff. Many parents help with the after-school activities. The Parent Teacher Association raises significant funds for the school and provides a valuable link into the community.
40. The effectiveness of the links with parents is satisfactory. The school arranges a drop-in session once a week for parents who have concerns. There is a parents' evening each term, although the early timing is unsuited to some parents; the school could be more pro-active in trying to achieve regular contact with parents of all pupils. Whilst the pupils' end of year reports are satisfactory, better details of progress and attainment could be included. The school has a detailed homework policy and parents are happy with the amount of homework for the pupils. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at home and at school. The school is trying to make parental links more effective by targeting home reading and improving the use of the home-school agreements and contact books.
41. Good information is provided to the parents, including a weekly newsletter. Some parents did, however, note a lack of information regarding recent staff changes. The school has a detailed brochure and a well-documented governing body annual report. The school has tried to give more curricular details to parents by holding information evenings, but these have met with only limited success. The school acknowledges the need to provide more information in writing.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership and management of the school are effective and provide a clear focus for development. The headteacher is valued and respected by staff, governors and parents. She has established a good team, and together they work hard to maintain the school's strengths and improve areas of weakness. The school's aims and values are clearly stated and are founded on the commitment to enable all pupils to achieve well in all aspects of their life. The school's monitoring systems are generally effective and all senior staff contribute to the regular review of the school's work. The headteacher and curriculum leaders sample pupils' work, observe lessons and make recommendations. This enables co-ordinators to gain insight into the work in their subjects but a more rigorous approach is required in identifying weaknesses and setting targets for improvement. In this way, specific weaknesses can be more effectively addressed.
43. The quality of education provided by the school has improved substantially since the previous inspection. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced and there is a much higher proportion of very good teaching. Standards in English, mathematics and science are much better than they were and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being used effectively to enhance pupils' learning. A significant factor in securing these improvements has been the determination of the headteacher, staff and governors to provide a good standard of education.
44. The school development plan reflects both national and the school's own priorities and is an effective instrument for guiding the work of the school. For example, due attention is given to the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The co-ordinators for these areas have conducted comprehensive audits and the activities identified in the plan are appropriate to the school's needs. The governing body has been reconstituted very recently and a number of the governors are newly appointed. However, procedures are in place to ensure they understand and are enabled to take up their responsibilities. Governors are involved in school development planning and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They are keen to support what the school does well and work together with staff to do things better and raise standards. Financial management of the school's resources is good, priorities are carefully costed and spending is monitored. The school has a large financial balance; this has been set aside for the construction and furnishing of new classrooms in the present school year. All staff with management responsibilities are responsible for funding in their own areas. Post holders take their responsibilities seriously and look for the most effective way of using their budget. The school's decisions are guided by the need to achieve best value for money.
45. The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are suitably qualified to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection the school also had three supply teachers. Whilst a number of the teachers are very experienced, half are relatively inexperienced. The teachers work hard and are well deployed; responsibilities for curriculum areas are effectively shared. There are a number of good learning support assistants, whose work is well planned by the teachers. The school has an efficient office administrator and a suitable level of trained midday supervisors. The school also benefits from the valuable assistance of parent and governor volunteers, particularly with the many extra-curricular activities.
46. All staff have job descriptions and although the teachers' subject co-ordinator roles are stated, their responsibilities are not described thoroughly enough. Arrangements for

staff development and training are satisfactory. This has a positive impact on the quality of teaching, for example in literacy. Appraisals are undertaken, although this process has recently been disrupted by the staff changes. Suitable procedures are in place for induction of new staff.

47. The school's accommodation is good overall. Most classrooms are adequate for the class sizes, but circulation space is restricted. There are currently three classes in temporary buildings, the condition of which is not good. There are plans to replace them and four new classrooms are under construction. The school has a good library, purpose built offices and two computer areas. The hall is small; it barely accommodates the whole school for assemblies and is restricted for physical education for the older pupils. It also suffers badly from its position as a thoroughfare to the classrooms. The school's internal decor and general maintenance is good, but it would become more attractive if better use was made of displays; for example, the hall walls could be used to celebrate pupils' art work.
48. The school has good grounds, including a suitable playground and an adjacent sports field. A very well constructed environmental area has been provided, funded by the school's links into the local community. The school's caring ethos is epitomised by the plaque and bench seat dedicated to the memory of a former pupil who died.
49. The school's learning resources have improved greatly since the previous inspection. Expenditure has been carefully planned to meet the curricular needs. Resources are very good in English, science, information technology, history and physical education; resources are good in the other subjects, except for religious education where they are satisfactory. The quality of resources is good or very good. The use of the learning resources is generally good, although it is only satisfactory in information technology, art and religious education and unsatisfactory in design and technology. The school library is adequately resourced with fiction and non-fiction books. Most of the storage is neat and tidy with good access and suitable labelling.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) The school should improve its procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching by:
 - developing the programme of classroom observation
 - identifying weaknesses and setting targets for individuals as well as for the whole school.
 - extend the role of co-ordinators in evaluating the quality of teaching in their subjects.

Para 42

- (2) Improve the teaching of the lower-attaining pupils in mathematics so they make better progress by:
- assessing pupils' understanding more thoroughly so that more appropriate work can be set.
 - taking more account of the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy, especially in relation to pupil's mental and written calculations.

Paras 3, 13, 15, 60, 62

- (3) Raise standards in Information Technology, design & technology and gymnastics by:
- implementing the school's schemes of work so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed.
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge,
 - using computers much more in classrooms to support work in other subjects.

Paras 4, 18, 19, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79

Improve planning in the foundation subjects so that pupils are given suitable work in lessons.

Para 24

In addition to the key issues above, the governors should consider the inclusion of the following less significant weaknesses in their action plan:

- the pupils' knowledge of other cultural traditions
- the targets in some individual education plans
- the needs of the more able in some of the foundation subjects

Paras 24, 32

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

62

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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0	10	47	32	8	3	0
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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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	337
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	46
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	60
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	40	36	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	25	36
	Girls	30	29	33
	Total	58	54	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (72)	71 (70)	91 (65)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	25	33
	Girls	25	27	33
	Total	44	52	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (67)	68 (59)	87 (60)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	331
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.3
Average class size	30.7

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	111

Financial information

Financial year	1998-9
	£
Total income	450,833
Total expenditure	442,079
Expenditure per pupil	1,493
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,089
Balance carried forward to next year	99,306

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	337
Number of questionnaires returned	184

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	50	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	53	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	49	2	0.5	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	49	13	3	1
The teaching is good.	52	43	1	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	46	18	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	37	6	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	0.5	1	0.5
The school works closely with parents.	29	48	14	5	4
The school is well led and managed.	48	43	2	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	48	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	32	2	1	1

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

ENGLISH

50. Standards achieved in English at the end of the key stage are in line with national averages and those for similar schools. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were well below average. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment below average for reading and writing and few have attained highly. Inspection observations confirm that, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve average levels and make good to very good progress during their time in the school.
51. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. They speak with confidence and listen carefully to adults and their peers. Teachers encourage pupils to speak clearly and grammatically through example and positive intervention. In all year groups, pupils participate in discussions, express their needs and are very confident in asking for clarification about their work. They take turns to feed back in plenary sessions and they are keen to explain their activities. Pupils in younger classes practise and read poems to their class and improve their performance. Older pupils read out their writing to their classes and to the whole school in assemblies expressing themselves clearly. In a Year 4 class pupils considered an extract from 'The Iron Man' and discussed how the author had created a powerful mood with his use of description. During circle times all pupils contribute their views or feelings to the class and listen thoughtfully to each other.
52. Inspection evidence indicates that, at the end of the key stage, pupils read well and they are on course to attain the standard expected. They are systematically taught phonics, and have a structured reading programme in all year groups. They make very good progress as a result and reading standards have steadily improved. There are many effective examples of shared reading. In a Year 3 lesson, the class read a poem together and discussed the poet's use of rhyme and repetition. Teachers lead shared reading of increasingly complex texts during the literacy hour and all pupils have a turn to read aloud during their weekly guided reading session. Teachers help pupils read and evaluate a range of texts. Close study of 'The Snow Lambs' in a Year 4 class led to exploration of the use of language, in particular the metaphors contained in the text. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils read aloud from their own writing. In Year 6, able pupils compared complex scientific texts with fiction and made progress in finding and using information to support their writing. Pupils at the earlier stages of reading have more frequent opportunities to read and those with special needs read regularly to teaching or learning support assistants. Older pupils have access to the library during breaks and use the simplified Dewey system independently to find non-fiction texts.
53. Standards in writing improve during the key stage. On entry very few pupils achieve above average scores in the National Curriculum tests. By Year 6, most pupils achieve average standards of attainment with a significant group of pupils working at the above average level. More able pupils produce grammatical well-punctuated work across the curriculum. Pupils in all classes work intensively at grammar, spelling and handwriting and learn about nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs and are increasingly able to write more complex sentences. Able Year 6 pupils succeed in writing concise factual information such as directions or instructions as well as composing longer stories and poems. The consistent emphasis on learning spellings and the regular practice of

handwriting has had a powerful impact on the work of pupils. Work in books shows marked improvement throughout the school. Very good handwriting and high standards of presentation are common features of the work in every subject of the curriculum. By the end of the key stage, pupils of all abilities have a fluent, legible style.

54. Pupils' work in all other subjects is well supported by the good quality of their reading and writing. They do not, however, have enough opportunity to use computers to improve their writing.
55. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection in all aspects of the English curriculum. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most have a clear understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Hour. Marking and assessment is much more consistent and linked to individual target setting. Pupils' skills are developed to a higher level; they learn to skim and scan and, in Year 5 for example, make concise notes as a basis for future work.
56. The National Literacy Strategy is being well implemented throughout the school and is having a positive impact on standards. Pupils are divided into three ability groups for daily sessions and work is appropriately planned and targeted to meet their needs. This is particularly successful for the most able groups where work is challenging and pupils' standards of achievement improve rapidly.
57. Teaching overall is sound with almost half of the teaching seen being good or better. Teachers plan their lessons in line with the Literacy Strategy and provide plenty of opportunity for reading and writing in lessons. The texts chosen for shared and guided reading are stimulating and hold pupils' interest well. Teachers have high expectations and in most classes, objectives are suitably challenging and independent work is encouraged. The activities are well related to the objectives and teachers round off lessons by reinforcing the main teaching points. Most teachers give ongoing feedback during lessons and regularly mark books including writing helpful comments to support pupils in improving their work. Their assessments influence the next stage of planning and targets set for each pupil. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants in reaching their planned targets. In unsatisfactory lessons the pace was too slow and pupils did not complete enough work. There was an overuse of isolated grammar exercises in some lessons. In an extended writing lesson in Year 6 the teacher talked for most of the session and the pupils had not enough time to finish their tasks.
58. The English co-ordinator provides sound leadership for the subject and has ensured that there is a rich collection of resources to support the curriculum. She oversees plans and analyses samples of work to ascertain that the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and follows the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. However, the school's system for monitoring the quality and consistency of teaching and learning is not effective in identifying weaknesses.

MATHEMATICS

59. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, the school's results in mathematics

were broadly in line with the national average and with similar schools. The work of the current year 6 pupils' shows a similar picture. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were below average. Since then, the results have steadily improved and this is a result of a concerted effort by the school to raise attainment. As part of this, the school introduced ability grouping where pupils in each year group are divided into three ability sets. Throughout the school the pupils in the middle and top sets are doing well. They are covering work at an appropriate level in line with the National Numeracy Strategy and are systematically acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge. The oldest pupils calculate and understand the links between fractions, decimals and percentages. They find fractions of numbers and quantities and understand different forms of notation, such as mixed numbers. They demonstrate a sound knowledge of the number system and are able to calculate accurately using both mental and written methods. Pupils are familiar with different units of measures; for example, they understand the difference between area and perimeter and how to calculate them. They work confidently with 2D and 3D shapes and are learning to construct and interpret tables, charts, tables and diagrams. Some work has been done on problem solving, but this aspect of mathematics needs greater attention. Pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to work investigatively, where they are required to pose questions for themselves.

60. The lower-attaining pupils in some classes are not doing so well in developing their numeracy skills to a sufficiently high standard. Work in their books shows that they do not always understand the exercises they are set and consequently, work is not completed or contains errors. Their other work is often better; for example in shape and space they are making satisfactory progress.
61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, half were good or very good, and all but one of the rest were satisfactory. All teachers use the National Numeracy Framework for Teaching and this ensures that the work planned is at a suitable level for the pupils' age group. Teachers in the same year plan together. In most cases this helps teachers to be clear about the objectives for lessons and how activities are to be adapted for the different ability groups. Lessons are well structured with appropriate attention given to mental and oral work. Pupils enjoy these sessions and are keen to join in. In some classes more time should be given to helping pupils explain their methods and understanding of mathematical ideas. This is particularly the case in the lower sets. Lessons are brought to an end with a focus on drawing out the main points covered and dealing with pupils' errors. Teachers are clear in their explanations of the work to be covered and pupils know what they are supposed to do. Expectations are high and pupils work hard and behave well. In the best lessons, there is a high proportion of direct teaching where teachers successfully combine instruction, explanation and demonstration to engage and sustain the pupils' attention. Appropriate attention is paid to developing pupils' use of mathematical vocabulary and in the main teachers' own subject knowledge is secure. Teachers use resources well and classrooms are equipped with a range of visual material to support pupils' learning. In the one lesson where teaching was poor, the activity chosen for oral work and mental calculation involved too few of the pupils and the teacher's questions were not clear. Although the main teaching activity followed on from a previous lesson, the teacher did not explain clearly what was expected and most pupils were unclear about what they should do. In actual fact, the majority of them spent the time playing with the cubes they had been given.
62. Although lessons seen during the inspection for the lower attainers were satisfactory or better, the work set for them in number does not match their learning needs. The main problem is the approach to written calculations which does not reflect the guidance in

the Numeracy Framework. Teachers are not tackling this systematically and formal written methods are being introduced too early. Errors are not properly diagnosed; too much emphasis is put on presentation rather than dealing with pupils' lack of understanding. As a result pupils are not making the progress they should.

63. There is effective leadership for the subject and the school has successfully addressed most of the issues raised in the previous inspection report. The co-ordinator has undertaken training herself and is continuing to implement the National Numeracy Strategy. Her own qualifications in the subject enable her to give good support to her colleagues. She has carried out a detailed audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses and she is clear about what needs to be done to raise standards further. She has begun a programme of monitoring that includes reviewing pupils' work and observing lessons. The basis of this work needs to be more sharply focused to enable teachers to be clear about areas for improvement.

SCIENCE

64. At the end of Key Stage 2, in the 1999 tests, pupils' results in science were above the national average and above the average for similar schools. In the present Year 6, pupils have good knowledge in all the areas of science outlined in the National Curriculum and standards. They know, for example, about life processes and about the body's systems of circulation and digestion. Their knowledge of forces and materials is good. Most, for example, describe and explain the movement of objects in terms of balanced and unbalanced forces. Many have a good vocabulary of science terms and make good use of this knowledge when they are writing or talking about their work. They are less secure, however, in the area of experimental and investigative work. They make observations and measurements and record these but they are not familiar enough with the process of planning their own investigations or of following a systematic approach. They do not, as a rule, recognise when they need to repeat observations and measurements to ensure that results are valid.
65. There has been considerable improvement in provision for science since the previous inspection. Standards are higher; indeed they have risen year on year. Teaching is very much improved; from "at best satisfactory and often unsatisfactory" to generally good and often very good. None of the teaching seen in this inspection was less than good. Teachers use the scheme of work confidently. Resources are much improved; they are plentiful, of good quality and well organised. Across the school, more time is spent on science but it remains the case that investigative skills need further development.
66. Teaching of science is good and much is very good. The teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and they provide interesting and demanding work in all year groups. In a Year 5 lesson on sound, for example, pupils were challenged to explain how the pitch of guitar strings is raised or lowered by tightening or lengthening them. The teacher enabled the class to make very good progress in their understanding of pitch and volume through well-framed questions. Demonstration and practical activity contributed well to the learning in this class. In a well-planned Year 3 lesson on light, pupils made good progress towards explaining how shadows made by the sun change over the course of a day. The teacher maintained a good focus on developing thinking and encouraging the pupils to make generalisations and draw conclusions. Information technology is used effectively to research and gather information but pupils do not make good use of their numeracy skills in their science work. Teachers record pupils' progress and use this information when they plan new work.

67. In all the lessons seen, teachers had very positive relationships with their classes and maintained a good working atmosphere. Pupils are industrious and motivated in lessons and many say they have learned a lot in science. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning; for example pupils in Years 5 and 6 compile a personal notebook of definitions and scientific vocabulary. Most of the pupils enjoy this activity and feel it helps them remember what they have learned. Teachers often ask pupils to make notes or record key points from the lesson and this is a good opportunity for using and developing literacy skills. In fact, the quality of the pupils' presentation is high in all classes and their confident, fluent handwriting supports their learning well.
68. Though practical, experimental work is done in all classes there is scope to provide a better balance between the teaching of factual knowledge and investigative science. Pupils are encouraged to make observations and explain what they have observed but they are not given enough opportunity to design their own investigations or plan how they will collect evidence in a systematic way.
69. Leadership of science is good. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She monitors the standard of work in the pupils' books and has given teachers a thorough and useful evaluation. She has provided sound advice about how to improve and has introduced strategies which have led to improvements.

ART

70. Some of the work on display and in the pupils' sketch books is of a satisfactory standard but except in the Year 6 classes and a small number of the other classes, little or no art work was in evidence during the inspection. Many of the Year 6 pupils' clay work and pencil sketches are of sound quality and show that they have developed some of the expected skills. In the one lesson seen however, some Year 6 pupils lacked the confidence to make a pencil sketch of a familiar object and could not complete the task. The whole range of skills, knowledge and understanding in art are not sufficiently developed from year to year, largely because not enough time is devoted to the subject.
71. The previous report found that art work was of a good standard, that pupils had many opportunities for art and that they made good progress in their learning. There was, however, no policy or scheme of work; this is now in place. Sketch books were not used at the time of the previous inspection but have now been successfully introduced in all classes. The present findings, therefore, represent an apparent decline in the quality of work though there has been an improvement in the guidance available to teachers.
72. Because only one lesson was seen secure judgements about the quality of teaching can not be made but the very limited sample of work available would indicate that pupils do not have enough opportunity to work at or study the subject in any depth. One exception, however, is the visit to Henry Moore's house for Year 5 pupils. Several of the Year 6 pupils recollect this experience and it is clear that it influenced their enjoyment of art and their knowledge of the work of an important artist.

73. The co-ordinator has made a good start on reviving the place of art in the curriculum. She has prepared a sound scheme of work and is improving resources. There is a need to review the amount, range and quality of work done and to help staff implement the scheme more fully.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

74. The work seen in design and technology (DT) is of a lower standard than expected and pupils make unsatisfactory progress from year to year. Their skills in making products are not built up methodically and there is little progression in their development of ideas, design proposals, planning or evaluation. The judgements are based on samples of work in pupils' folders, observations of five lessons and conversations with pupils and staff; there were no examples of models or products to demonstrate outcomes of previous work.
75. Throughout the school pupils' DT folders have very little work in them. In Year 6 presentation is poor and there is a lack of accuracy in marking out, measuring and shaping materials. Designs for jewellery and for textile bags do not set out a clear sequence of actions and there is no record of pupils' evaluation of finished products or of how their designs may be improved. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils made satisfactory progress in testing yoghourts and recording the outcomes according to four criteria. In Year 5, pupils' designs on reinforcing and strengthening bridges were poorly labelled and there is no evidence of any outcomes. Pupils' folders in Year 4 contain a relatively satisfactory amount of work. In the three lessons observed in this year group the pupils' task was to work collaboratively to design and build strong reinforcements for their cardboard bridges using rolled paper supports. They worked well together, enjoying the task and evaluated their finished models, making sensible suggestions for amendments to their designs. In one class some pupils understood that triangular structures are stronger than other shapes and could apply their knowledge to their work. In Year 3, work in folders is often incomplete. Pupils observed in a lesson on designing a pneumatic toy made unsatisfactory progress as the task demanded a level of experience and knowledge they did not have.
76. Pupils enjoy their design and technology lessons. They are well behaved, show interest and engage in the task even when there is poor support from the teacher. Pupils co-operate well in groups, and in several lessons entered into constructive discussions about their work. They are courteous and responsive to teachers; taking turns to present their models and evaluate them in plenary sessions. In one class there was some off-task behaviour, although all pupils managed to complete their work.
77. Many of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection still exist. The scheme of work is still unsatisfactory and incomplete. It gives no guidance on how the subject may be linked with others and does not ensure continuity and progress in pupils' learning. Whilst there is a new annual overview of units to be covered by each year group each term, teachers' plans do not follow it. For example, Year 4 pupils are building bridges though this activity is planned for Year 5 in the Autumn term. Resources have been increased and are generally more accessible, although they are underused.
78. In the lessons seen, teaching ranged from good to poor, but overall weaknesses outweigh strengths. In the two good lessons seen, there was a good balance of teacher and pupil talk, work which matched pupils' abilities, good introductions and

plenary sessions which allowed pupils to explain and evaluate their work. Teachers gave pupils opportunities to work together to implement their designs and develop their own ideas. They encouraged pupils to amend their designs as faults were discovered. In the lesson where teaching was poor, planning failed to take account of pupils' prior experience and the teacher had abrasive interactions with pupils and tolerated too high a noise level which disturbed pupils' concentration.

79. The scheme of work does not ensure sufficient coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study to allow pupils to make satisfactory progress over time. Present guidance on planning does not enable teachers to plan for their pupils to learn through building on their skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic and sustained way. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

80. Pupils at all levels of attainment make sound progress in learning geography in all year groups. Two residential visits continue to enhance the curriculum. Teaching is effective and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. They know about and understand how localities influence the nature and location of human activities. They understand weather patterns and have compared how weather conditions in St. Lucia compare with those in Britain. They appreciate that land is used in different ways for farming and tourism, for example. Teachers use the local environment well; pupils in Year 5 for example discussed the social issues raised by the development of Tilbury. Pupils make good progress in their understanding and use of maps; they use grid references, symbols, keys and co-ordinates to locate rivers and other geographical features. They are beginning to ask geographical questions in relation to changes in the local area and recognise the characteristics of early settlements.
81. Pupils work well together. Their listening skills are good and they are keen to answer questions. Pupils work well in pairs and pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by their peers. These pupils respond positively to good input from teach support assistants who help them to complete their tasks independently.
82. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and is methodically building up resources including CD ROM programs to support the teaching of the study units. The scheme of work is being revised to ensure that all elements of the subject are covered and to help teachers set clear learning objectives for the subject. Monitoring of pupils' progress across year groups is at an early stage of development. The co-ordinator samples pupils' work and identifies points for action. Resources have increased and improved since the last inspection and there is now a good supply.

HISTORY

83. The work seen in history was as expected for pupils' ages and they make satisfactory progress in learning history throughout the school. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and pupils make satisfactory progress in learning. In Year 6, pupils show an understanding of the function of the county council in local governance in their local history study. They know the reasons for, and describe the results of, situations and changes over a period of time in the local community. Pupils in Year 5 use reference books to research information on the lives of Henry VIII's wives

and identify similarities and differences between the ways of life in the reigns of Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II. In Year 4 pupils acquire factual knowledge of the Invaders, Romans and Anglo Saxons. They develop enquiry techniques as they compare features of life such as homes, roads, and forms of written communication in Roman times with those today. In Year 3 pupils formulate historical questions about life in Ancient Greece, research answers to them and use the Greek myths as a source of information on the world of the Ancient Greeks.

84. Teaching enables pupils to be well-focused on their work and enjoy their lessons. In a Year 6 class pupils worked co-operatively to decide how to lay out and organise their work and settled quickly to their writing. In a Year 4 class pupils contributed enthusiastically to a discussion about the Plotlands. They recalled information they had gained from a visiting speaker.
85. Strengths in teaching are: good clear explanations; introductory sessions which build on prior knowledge; the use of questioning to clarify what pupils know and understand; work matched to pupils' abilities and good input from learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs. Weaknesses are few. In one class a lack of pace resulted in not enough work being done and in another an overlong introduction led to some restlessness among pupils.
86. The co-ordinator has audited and augmented resources and these are well used, well organised, in good condition, plentiful and varied. She now plans to add resources to support the local history units. The new draft scheme of work addresses the national curriculum programmes of study, forms a good basis for teachers' planning, offers advice on assessment and resources and provides a sound framework for building up pupils' historical ideas and skills in an organised and systematic way. Monitoring of samples of pupils' work has just begun but systems for monitoring the subject are at a very early stage of development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

87. When compared with the national expectations, by the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in information technology (IT) is below the level expected. A good scheme of work has been recently introduced that indicates the level of expertise required for each year group. The younger pupils are successfully reaching these standards but the older pupils are working at a low level for their age.
88. Pupils' abilities to use computers were described as above average in the previous inspection; however, there were shortcomings in their knowledge of the applications and effects of IT. Attention has been given to raising standards in the full range of skills and knowledge of the subject and planning is now closely linked to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. However, some aspects are still at an early stage of development and the school recognises the need to continue to raise standards further. This is particularly the case in the use of computers for control and modelling.
89. Pupils use computers confidently and they are making good progress in using IT to support their learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 were using a CD ROM encyclopaedia and the Internet to access information about the human body in connection with their work in science. They knew how to search for the relevant information, use menus and indexes, and key words to aid their research. Pupils in Year 3 were experimenting with a graphics package to enhance their study of

techniques used by different artists. They successfully created pictures selecting the most appropriate tools and they modified and corrected their work.

90. As only a very small number of sessions were inspected, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. There are though some weaknesses in the quality of education provided. Although every class is equipped with a computer, pupils did not use them in the lessons inspected. There was only limited evidence of pupils' work on display and few examples of pupils using IT to support their work in Literacy and Numeracy. There is a lack of consistency in teachers' planning. Some do not include IT in their weekly plans and timetables do not reflect an appropriate time allocation. A strength of the school's work is the opportunity made for small numbers of pupils to work together on focused tasks. During the inspection groups of pupils were observed working with a teaching assistant in one of the school's computer suites. The work of the teaching assistant is very effective. She has good subject knowledge and is clear about the main objectives for each of the units of work. She maintains a balance between direct instruction, demonstration and supporting pupils as they work through the planned tasks. She is aware of pupils' experience of working with computers and provides good support for those who need it. However, the main purpose of the work is to support pupils' learning in other subjects rather than the systematic development of pupils' skills in information technology. Pupils show high levels of interest and they are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and their skills. All pupils have a positive attitude to their work and they confidently set about solving problems they encounter.
91. There is currently no co-ordinator for IT although the most recent post holder prepared a clear policy and detailed scheme of work to support planned future developments in the subject. Resources are very good and the two computer suites are a valuable asset. The headteacher and governors are aware of the urgent need to appoint someone who will give strong leadership to the staff, so that the resources can be used more effectively to support pupils' learning.

FRENCH

92. All classes have weekly French lessons taught by two of the teaching staff. A teacher from the local secondary school teaches the Year 6 pupils for one term. During the inspection, one lesson was inspected and discussions were held with pupils. Pupils' attainment in learning and using the language is good. They have very positive attitudes and enjoy their lessons. They listen carefully and are developing clear pronunciation. They show understanding of simple commands and they give short, simple responses to what they see and hear. They give instructions and ask and answer familiar questions about everyday activities. They are beginning to understand conventions of grammar and how it differs from English. For example, they know that nouns are defined as masculine and feminine. Pupils speak the language confidently and make use of known vocabulary in new situations.
93. Teaching is good and in the lesson seen, the teacher skilfully captured the pupils' interest. She gave good support and encouragement and structured the lesson so that all pupils could participate actively. There is an appropriate balance between practising known language and learning new words and phrases. Pupils make good progress in their learning. Resources are adequate, though not extensive and the school's scheme of work provides a clear structure for teaching.

MUSIC

94. Standards in music are as expected for pupils of this age. Singing in assemblies is good and pupils in all year groups are able to follow the words, keep in time and sing in tune. Pupils who take instrumental lessons for piano, guitar, violin, and brass make good progress.
95. There has been considerable improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The school has adopted a published scheme which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers use the scheme judiciously and introduce key learning objectives each lesson. They recap and practise previous work before introducing new skills. The scheme supports non-specialist music teaching and ensures that elements are introduced in a progressive way providing continuity throughout the key stage. The school has invested in a comprehensive collection of instruments including some from different cultures and guitars and percussion. The school enables pupils to develop their interest in different types of music and a particular piece is introduced and played as children enter and leave assembly each day.
96. In lessons, teachers make objectives clear, make links with previous work and introduce new terminology. They elicit ideas and responses from the pupils and ensure progressive acquisition of the skills of listening, appraising, performing and composing. Pupils in a Year 3 lesson offered a range of explanations and interpretations and identified individual instruments after listening to recorded music. They were able to suggest that the tempo of the music sounded like a chase. There is evident progress in the acquisition of musical skills over time and in lessons. Pupils evaluate their performance and suggest what they need to work on in subsequent lessons. Teachers assess their pupils and give feedback during lessons to help them improve their performance. Instrumental teachers maintain systematic records on the progress of each pupil after each session. Pupils are diligent about practising at home and are very enthusiastic about learning their instrument and keen to join the school band. Pupils behave well during music lessons.
97. The recently appointed co-ordinator is effective in the role. She has expanded the school's collection of instruments and ensures that the scheme is progressively implemented.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

98. Although a good number of lessons took place during the inspection it was only possible to observe three; one dance lesson and two gymnastics lessons. The work seen in the dance lesson was of a satisfactory standard but the gymnastics work was of a lower than expected standard. In the Year 3 dance lesson, pupils worked hard to create and improve movements, showing that they could control speed and direction and share the space well with one another. In the gymnastics lessons, in Years 4 and 5, teaching did not provide enough opportunity for energetic movement nor focus on developing skill. In neither of the gymnastics lessons did pupils make enough progress in performing or improving their actions.
99. Teachers' plans show that they provide a good range of physical education

experiences that fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils in all years learn to swim and almost all reach the national standard by the end of Key Stage 2. The provision of a very wide range of sporting activities, including team games and competitive sports, greatly enhances pupils' experience of physical education. Outdoor and adventurous activities are provided in the school's residential visits to appropriate centres. The high quality of extra-curricular activities and the school's involvement in competitive sports have been maintained. Since the last inspection there has been little change in the quality of physical education provided by the school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but the teaching of gymnastics is unsatisfactory. It is still the case that pupils are not active enough in some gymnastics lessons and therefore make little progress.

100. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership for the subject. She is very enthusiastic and understands its importance in the development of social and personal skills as well as physical skills. She has produced a scheme of work, improved the resources and developed the links with the community. She has not had the opportunity to observe lessons in order to evaluate the quality of the teaching. She is, therefore, not aware that some staff lack the confidence and knowledge they need to teach the subject properly.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. In religious education, pupils reach the standard outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make sound progress and build on what they know and understand about Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Their factual knowledge is good; they recognise some of the ways in which religion affects believers' daily lives and are aware of some religious responses to the natural world, including beliefs expressed through creation stories.
102. Teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to make the progress they do. Lessons have good introductions which revisit previous work to ensure pupils remember and understand. Questions go beyond the literal, for example to encourage pupils to look for the meaning of a parable. Pupils have an informed understanding of the three religions, their sacred books and places of worship. They discern meanings in stories and know some of the Christian parables. Their work on the Jewish festival of Hannukah has provided opportunities to explore the use of symbolism such as light and darkness. They know what Christians believe and the role the church plays in serving the community. They are beginning to understand the difference between fact, opinion and belief and understand that some people do not believe in God. Teachers enable pupils to reflect on their own experience. In a good lesson in Year 4, for example, they discussed their own experience of rules and made up their own rules for life. They discussed why Christians believe the two greatest commandments are "love thy God" and "love thy neighbour as oneself". They considered the qualities that make Sunday special. Pupils in Year 3 have some understanding of the Hindu ritual of prayer at home shrines. They are aware of the importance of Shabbat and the reason for the festival of Sukkot. They write about their special places. Pupils examined the use of church buildings following a visit to the local church. They know a good range of stories from different religious traditions.
103. One general weakness in the teaching is the mundane nature of many of the tasks. For example, using comprehension exercises to teach aspects of the subject. In addition, in some lessons the pace was slow and teachers' expectations of pupils'

abilities and capacity for work were too low.

104. Pupils like religious education lessons and have positive attitudes towards their work. Pupils are confident about sharing their thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of mutual respect, promoted and sustained by class teachers. Pupils feel secure to examine concepts such as love and right and wrong without fear of ridicule. Teachers have good relationships with pupils who have special educational needs and are skilled at asking focused questions to help them complete their tasks.
105. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership for the subject and has begun to sample pupils' work and raise issues with teachers. Resources are satisfactory and well used and the co-ordinator is gradually increasing the reference books and support materials for staff.
106. The scheme of work, based on the Essex Agreed Syllabus, forms a good foundation for teachers' plans and provides a successful framework for a continuous and progressive learning experience for pupils. The policy provides useful guidance to teachers on the curriculum, although the section on assessment is not sufficiently developed.