

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **PENCALENICK SCHOOL**

Truro

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112084

Headteacher: Mr G Williams

Reporting inspector: Dr M Megee

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> October - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 223610

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed

School address:	St Clement Truro Cornwall
Postcode:	TR1 1TE
Telephone number:	01872 520385
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Kent

Date of previous inspection:	13 <sup>th</sup> January 1997
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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23629	Dr M Megee	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages Music	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school Leadership and management Key issues for action
19322	Ms J Bedawi	Lay inspector		Partnership with parents and carers Residential provision
23412	Mr A Jeffs	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
3055	Mr C Tombs	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	Pupils' welfare, health and safety
19996	Mr G Watson	Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education	The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning
22948	Ms M Vallis	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Equal opportunities English as an additional language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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33 Kingsway  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Pencalenick School is a day and residential school for pupils aged eleven to sixteen with moderate learning difficulties, which admits pupils from all areas of Cornwall. At the time of the inspection there were forty girls and eighty boys on roll at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils are divided into ten classes according to age and ability levels. Ninety-two pupils attend on a daily basis and currently, 28 of the pupils board for four nights each week.

All pupils have statements of special educational need, identifying them as having moderate learning difficulties. Many of the pupils also have a wide range of additional special educational needs, including behavioural difficulties, specific learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairment. Because they have learning difficulties, pupils' attainments on entry are below those of pupils in mainstream schools. One pupil is from an ethnic minority (Asian) and there are no pupils who have English as an additional language. Fifty-one pupils are entitled to free school meals.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Pencalenick School is a good school which is very effective in the way it supports pupils' personal developments and relationships. Pupils' levels of achievements are good in most subjects within the context of a special school. In English, levels of achievement in speaking and listening are satisfactory but not so in reading and writing. Teaching overall in other subjects is good, and often very good and sometimes excellent. There is particularly good teamwork between the teaching, care and support staff which means that pupils are treated consistently with care and respect. The headteacher and the management team provide good leadership to the school and are supported satisfactorily by the governing body. The accommodation for teaching is very good, and the work of the residential care staff is a strength of the school. The residential accommodation, however, has some unsatisfactory physical aspects. The school gives good value for money because at a very low cost per pupil it strongly supports pupils' personal development, it has made significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and provides good leadership and management.

#### **What the school does well**

- It provides good and often very good teaching.
- It successfully promotes pupils' personal development and very good relationships.
- It provides sensitive and supportive provision for pupils who live at the school.
- It provides efficient systems which ensure that school runs smoothly from day to day.
- It provides an environment in which pupils are attentive, and interested in the full range of activities and opportunities that are provided.

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils' levels of achievement in literacy.
- The consistency of the procedures for assessing pupils' progress.
- The school development planning system for addressing its long-term priorities.
- Some aspects of the residential accommodation.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected four years ago. The school has made significant improvements since then. At the last inspection, teaching was unsatisfactory in about a fifth of the lessons observed. During the current inspection, teaching is now at least satisfactory in all but a few lessons, and overall, it is good and often very good. All pupils now have access to a curriculum which is appropriate, sufficiently broad and maintains a good balance between the various subjects. The weaknesses in the assessment procedures which were reported at the last inspection have been overcome in terms of target-setting, and the school is now well placed for further improvement. These improvements mean that there have been significant gains in the progress which pupils make and in their overall levels of achievement. The accommodation for teaching is now very good, and the school has maintained the previous high standards in the quality of care it provides and in pupils' attitudes to learning. The school's development plan does not yet address its long-term future, and levels of achievement in literacy have declined.

## STANDARDS

Because all the pupils have learning difficulties, it is not appropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	C	very good	A
Reading	D	good	B
Writing	D	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in individual education plans	C		

*\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.*

The school is beginning to set appropriate targets for pupils' learning in English, mathematics and personal development. Pupils make good progress towards their targets in mathematics and all other subjects apart from reading and writing.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are very interested in the activities and opportunities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory in the school, and in the residential accommodation, it is very good.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Relationships are constructive, warm and positive.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Pupils respond very well to the challenges they are offered, and take the initiative well. Pupils behave particularly well when they are engaged in practical activities or when undertaking vocational programmes.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Good and often very good

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

Teaching is good and often very good in nearly 80 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is mostly satisfactory in English, although the literacy strategy has not yet been fully implemented. Teaching is good in mathematics, and very good in science and personal development. In other subjects, it is mostly good and in subjects like art, history and religious education it is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils, establish and maintain positive relationships with them and use their time effectively to maintain their interest. As a consequence, pupils make good progress and become independent learners. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment procedures in some subjects are not completely effective. Communication skills are well taught across the school, especially where this is planned for. Although numeracy is well supported across the school, all literacy skills are not sufficiently emphasised within other subjects. The levels of achievement of pupils with additional special needs are in line with those of other pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced in both key stages, and is significantly enhanced by outdoor education, vocational education and careers education which make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. In some lessons in English, not enough is expected of pupils and the curriculum provided may sometimes be inappropriate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The programme for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school and is effectively supported by the value placed on individual pupils, the strong moral code which prevails and the encouragement of a range of important social skills. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good, and the provision for social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for all its pupils. There are good systems in place for assessing pupils' academic progress but these have been implemented only in mathematics, history, outdoor education and in design and technology. Child protection and health and safety procedures are good and ensure that pupils are safe, secure and well.

The school enjoys a positive and mutually supportive partnership with its parents and carers.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. A well understood sense of purpose emanates from the headteacher and the management team and permeates through the whole school community.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the school but is not yet systematic in the way in which it plans and evaluates the school's progress towards realising its long-term aims.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has made good use of external organisations to help it evaluate its own performance, and plans to introduce its own mechanisms within this current academic year.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good and effective use of all its resources. The school is very effective in providing best value.

The school is well staffed to meet the needs of the pupils. The accommodation for teaching is very good and the good learning resources motivate pupils to learn. The residential accommodation has some unsatisfactory aspects. The school is strong in the way in which its values are reflected in its work and in the way it makes use of its resources. The school's long-term priorities for development are not sufficiently clear and some statutory requirements are not met.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They feel comfortable in approaching the school.</li><li>• The school's values and attitudes make each pupil feel important.</li><li>• Each pupil likes school, makes good progress and gains independence.</li><li>• The school offers a good range of activities.</li><li>• The school provides a good quality of care and teaching.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistency in setting homework.</li><li>• There is not enough reading.</li><li>• The uncertainties about the future of the school are having a negative impact on the pupils.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Pupils' levels of achievement are below national expectations. However, all pupils have statements of special educational need, the majority of which identify moderate learning difficulties. A significant proportion of pupils also have emotional and behavioural difficulties, whilst others have additional complex learning difficulties and some have sensory impairment. Comparison with national norms is, therefore, inappropriate and judgements regarding pupils' achievements reflect what pupils know, understand and can do in relation to targets identified on their individual education plans.
2. Pupils' gains in learning throughout the school are satisfactory and often good. This represents an improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection and is recognised and appreciated by parents. It is directly related to improvements in the quality of teaching and the development of a broader curriculum. Some of these developments, for example in science, are relatively recent, and their full impact has yet to be realised.
3. Pupils at Key Stage 3 achieve well in mathematics, religious education, art, design and technology, French and physical education. They make satisfactory gains in learning in all other subjects except English, in which their levels of achievement are unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 4, pupils' levels of achievement in religious education are very good. They are good in mathematics, art, design and technology, French and physical education, and satisfactory in science, information technology and music. Pupils' progress in English, however, remains unsatisfactory, notably in reading and writing.
4. Over the last three years, more pupils have been entered for an increasing range of examinations, and the school's success rate has also improved. The school has begun to set appropriate targets for pupils' levels of achievement and at both key stages, pupils' personal and social development is particularly good. Pupils also make satisfactory progress towards achieving the targets for communication and numeracy which are identified in their individual education plans.
5. Within the school there are many pupils with additional special educational needs, such as visual or hearing impairment, autism and specific learning difficulties. These pupils make similar progress to their peers as a result of good, relevant individual education plans. They make at least satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4, where they develop skills which allow them to move on to work and college placements. There are no significant variations in the levels of achievement of boys and girls, nor in the gains in learning made by pupils from different social backgrounds.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

6. Pupils' attitudes to school are good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils like school; they appreciate what it has to offer and they speak well of it. Parents recognise the contribution staff make to positive attitudes, for instance in providing an interesting range of out-of-school activities. Challenging situations bring out the best in pupils. Pupils in Year 7 show trust and courage as they use the climbing wall for the first time. Other pupils co-operate with staff as they put in hard physical effort to clear an area for a new garden during environmental science. Pupils listen attentively in design and technology before identifying and overcoming problems in designing and

modelling an island using a range of new techniques and materials. They take opportunities for joining in activities outside lesson times, such as art and craft sessions and the choir. Day pupils choose to remain at school for the evening disco. Pupils smile when work is commended and display pride when receiving certificates for meeting targets. They are supportive of one another, especially if hurt or upset, and do not interfere if a peer is having a bad day.

7. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Parents report that behaviour is good. It was reported as excellent at the previous inspection. There are some significant incidents of bad behaviour, however, and this can have a negative impact on other pupils. Behaviour in the majority of lessons is good, especially when pupils quickly engage in their own learning and are set tasks appropriate to their age and ability. Books, tools and equipment are treated with respect. Pupils behave immaturely when tasks are trivial or the lessons lack pace. Pupils often behave well when not closely monitored. They move about the school and between lessons largely without incident and behave well in the dining hall. Behaviour on a mini bus was reported as excellent when pupils faced a lengthy delay caused by bad weather. Unstructured activities at lunchtime are sociable and unthreatening. Most pupils talk in small groups or use the playgrounds productively. Banter is mainly good natured. Pupils behave well in the evenings with few serious incidents or misdemeanours. Time is constructively used. Bullying, stealing and racism are rare because staff work consistently together to manage incidents as they arise. These are recorded and appropriate action taken. Pupils realise that there are consequences to bad behaviour, the most serious being exclusion. The number of fixed term exclusions has risen since the last inspection from three to seven occasions over the past year. This slowly rising figure reflects the increasing intake of pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, the majority of whom respond positively to initiatives for their inclusion.
8. Pupils' personal development is very good, as it was when the school was last inspected. Pupils benefit significantly by the very well planned personal development, leavers and residential care programmes. Self-esteem and self-control are enhanced as pupils learn to consider and control their behaviour, contemplate the impact of their actions on others and prepare for life in the adult world. They develop a vocabulary to express emotions and understand the positive effect the school has had in their development. One boy reports that he is now calmer. He no longer overreacts as 'the teachers here are nurturing'. Pupils relate very well to each other, irrespective of gender or additional needs, and to the staff.
9. Within the school, pupils with additional and complex learning needs are well accepted by their peers. They are never ostracised and their contributions to lessons are always valued and considered carefully. They, in turn, respond to this respect by seeking to perform to their best and, generally, work well and contribute effectively within all tutor groups and subjects. Pupils are supportive of each other and value individuals for themselves rather than how well they attain. This is a good reflection of the values and vision of the school as a whole. The value placed on individuals, especially those with a poor feeling of self-worth, is a major contributory factor to the progress made by pupils with additional special needs.
10. More generally, parents remark that each child is made to feel special and that basic values are taught through discussion in personal development. This was witnessed in several lessons where pupils discuss issues surrounding drugs and sexuality in a calmly mature and responsible fashion. The personal development made by pupils in Key Stage 4 during the vocational programme, which includes college links and work related activities, is excellent. College staff and employers speak highly of pupils'

application, ability and attitude and this has led to all pupils being offered a placement when they leave Pencalenick.

11. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils enjoy coming to school. Many parents work in the seasonal leisure and tourism industry and are unable to take their family holiday to coincide with the school holidays. This means it is difficult to reduce the number of holidays being taken during school time. Pupils generally arrive on time, with any lateness due to traffic delays where buses and taxis have to make very considerable journeys across Cornwall.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

12. The quality of teaching is good and often very good throughout the school. This quality is recognised by parents. Three-quarters of lessons are good or better, and over a third of lessons are very good or excellent. The majority of the remainder are satisfactory and, whilst there are a few instances of unsatisfactory lessons, this consistency marks a very significant improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection when almost a fifth of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or poor. The quality of pupils' learning closely reflects the quality of teaching at both key stages. In unsatisfactory lessons, pupils are given undemanding work and the lessons are not well enough structured to ensure that pupils are kept interested and learn quickly. Excellent lessons occur when the teachers are enthusiastic about their subject, respond well to pupils' suggestions and understand the individual needs of the pupils.
13. All staff know the pupils as individuals and understand their particular learning difficulties very well. There is a positive, appropriate approach to managing pupils' behaviour, which ensures that all pupils can concentrate and stay on task, and in these respects, the way in which staff work with pupils embodies the aims of the school well. Lessons are underpinned by very good relationships between all concerned, and staff successfully adopt an approach that reflects the pupils' growing maturity as young adults and actively promotes their independence. Particularly good examples of this occurred in a religious education lesson for pupils at Key Stage 4, and in a lesson on manners with Key Stage 3 pupils; the confidence, sensitivity and enthusiasm of the respective teachers enabled large groups of pupils to discuss current social issues with understanding, good humour and considerable respect.
14. Teachers generally have a good command of their subjects, and their lesson plans relate well to the school's schemes of work. Sometimes, these plans do not clearly identify individual learning objectives. There is a conscientious approach to recording pupils' participation and response to activities, and support staff are sometimes used to particularly good effect in this respect. However, because it is not always clear in the planning what pupils will achieve, these records do not always identify what pupils have actually learned and this limits their usefulness in planning what will be taught next. In some subjects, for example design and technology, staff operate an effective assessment system which could be used more widely across the school.
15. Pupils following vocational courses are more actively involved in planning and evaluating their own work. Practical activities are well organised and there is very effective teamwork between teachers and support assistants. In the more successful lessons, as in an introductory session on adventurous activities with pupils in Year 7, these factors often combine to very good effect and enable pupils of all abilities both to be actively engaged and to practise and develop practical skills. External professionals such as the audiology teacher play a positive part, resources are used to very good effect, particularly those in the wider community, and no time is wasted. However,

where teaching is less successful, as in a Key Stage 4 English lesson, activities become more of a routine with the result that little consideration is given to what the pupils will learn, pupils' interest is not captured and time is not used to best effect. Homework is sometimes used effectively to help pupils consolidate their learning but this is not consistent across the school and there are generally few opportunities for pupils to develop personal study skills.

16. The teaching of basic skills in numeracy is generally effective. A particularly good example occurred in a Key Stage 3 science lesson on the classification of living things which became a highly relevant context in which to reinforce pupils' skills and understanding of measuring. Vocational educational core skills such as problem solving or working with others are often addressed in Key Stage 4 lessons such as design and technology or physical education, and pupils reinforce their information control technology skills in a satisfactory range of lessons and activities. However, whilst subject teachers recognise the need for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, these skills are not always addressed in a coherent way that reflects the targets identified on the pupils' individual education plans.
17. Pupils with additional special educational needs receive teaching that is usually good and often very good. All teachers show an awareness of individual needs, work closely with learning support assistants and use the advice provided by outside specialists to plan and respond appropriately. Thus, a pupil with visual impairment has a support assistant who works closely with the class teacher to ensure equality of access to all of the learning experiences. Resources are provided, such as a large screen for computer work, and care is always taken to maximise the pupil's hearing and touch in order to reinforce classroom activities. Although the pupil has recently joined the school, work is already underway to link with the visual impairment support service to support staff in modifications and techniques required. This attention to detail is also seen in the classroom and group teaching provided for pupils with hearing impairments, behaviour and language difficulties.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

18. The curriculum is broad and balanced in both key stages. The curriculum is also relevant to the needs of the pupils in most subjects, with the exception of English, where pupils are not offered an appropriate range of activities or learning opportunities. Outdoor education, careers and vocational education make valuable contributions as pupils move through Key Stage 4, while at all stages, the personal development programme enriches a curriculum that is much stronger since the last inspection. During those three years, there has been a conscious effort to balance vocational and basic skills elements of the Key Stage 4 curriculum and to ensure that all subjects have clear policies and schemes of work. These are now in place for all subjects and much very effective work has taken place with regard to planning, teaching and resourcing within all subjects. In particular, curriculum co-ordinators have ensured that the full curriculum is offered to all pupils in a way that is manageable. Recognition of the school's good curricular work has come in the form of the Curriculum 2000 Award and the 'Eco School' status which celebrates that part of the curriculum which allows pupils to demonstrate their involvement in the local community and their commitment to reducing waste and pollution. Both are prestigious awards and indicate that, while parents value the range of the curriculum, so also do outside organisations.
19. The personal development programme is a strength of the school. It provides a well-structured and carefully thought out framework for discussing drugs, sex and a very wide range of issues relating to growing up in our society. The programme has been

carefully planned and is well monitored by the co-ordinator. Every pupil has personal development targets as part of their individual education plans and these assist in the development of social skills such as turntaking, assuming responsibility and presenting ideas and views to others. From their point of entry, each pupil is guided and supported in the development of these skills and all pupils progress very well in terms of self-confidence. Class tutors are responsible for delivering the programme and do so with great skill and sensitivity. In one excellent Year 7 personal development lesson, the tutor discusses acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Role-play is used where pupils are able to be teachers and vice versa. Both teacher and learning support assistant participate and pupils maturely identify what is and is not acceptable. More importantly, they can say why. During the lesson, pupils are asked to speak to the full group, to reflect on themselves and the way individuals' behaviour affects others. Because such sessions take place on a regular basis throughout their school life, pupils with low confidence are encouraged to mature and gradually develop a greater self-esteem. This aspect of the curriculum has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection.

20. The programme of vocational studies and careers work within the school continues to be a great strength. It builds on and adds to the very good personal development curriculum by focusing pupils' attention on the skills and qualities needed for living and working as an independent adult. This is always a concern for parents and the work carried out by the school is highly rated by them. There are very good links between Key Stages 3 and 4 to ensure the relevance of courses to individual pupils. During Key Stage 4, pupils are able to follow a range of relevant accredited courses. These are very well taught and allow pupils to build up portfolios of work that focus increasingly on learning and working after school. Teaching is carried out in an adult way and the excellent careers programme, together with work experience and college placements, allow pupils to prepare for new experiences in a structured and supported way. The inspection team was impressed by the exceptionally detailed and thorough approach that teachers demonstrate. Every effort is made to ensure that visits, work placements, and college sessions are well planned and pupils are well prepared for what might otherwise be daunting new situations. Equally impressive are the responses of employers and college staff who recognise the maturity and excellent work habits displayed by Pencalenick pupils. Inspectors accompanying staff and pupils to local colleges were also impressed by the excellent level of teaching and the close and informed links between school, college and careers service staff. The detailed and relevant preparation and follow-up work carried out by the learning support assistant is very good in providing consolidation of work carried out in a range of work placements from hairdressing to horticulture. The success of the programme and the dedicated work of staff are to be seen in the success of all pupils in gaining a placement at the end of their school career.
21. The school has a wide range of extra-curricular activities to which all pupils have access. There are regular clubs or 'drop-in' activities at lunchtime, such as the sewing club, information technology, a choir and climbing club. In addition, there are many activities that enrich pupils' experience and give opportunities for personal development and the development of citizenship in a practical way. The Year 9 residential trip to France, the entire outdoor education programme and activities such as Industry Week provide the widest range of experiences for all pupils. The programme of activities for boarding pupils is rich and ensures the effective use of evenings throughout the year. All of these contribute well to pupil confidence and maturity.
22. The school makes very good use of a wide range of links within the community, other schools and colleges. The effective outdoor education exchanges between the school and Penair Comprehensive, the joint employment of an information technician with Richard Lander Technology College and Rosleand Junior School, and Pencalenick's involvement with teacher training are just three examples of co-operation that make the

most of opportunities within the local community. Not enough work has been carried out in terms of partnerships with local schools to develop inclusion programmes, but the links are there and the very good relationships have been established. Similarly, the strong links with industry and commerce in the area have laid a very effective basis for the vocational work. All of these connections contribute to programmes of work that enhance pupils' skills and confidence.

23. The school has developed numeracy work very well. Using elements of the National Numeracy Strategy and developing it to the needs of the pupils has proved very effective. This has been accompanied by relevant training and resourcing. The contribution to progress within mathematics has been significant since the last inspection. However, this is not the case with literacy, where the literacy strategy has not been effectively introduced and not enough training has taken place for the school to effectively build on new ways of teaching literacy skills.
24. All of the curricular opportunities contribute towards progress and personal development for pupils. All pupils have equal access to subject and extra-curricular activities. Progress for all pupils is good as a result. The effective use of support agencies and the focus on individual needs are well reflected in the speech and language therapy groups which use the skills of the therapist together with the head of care and the assistant head. They work for short periods of time with pupils who experience problems with self-confidence and presenting themselves. The Year 7 work observed during the inspection was of a very high quality and clearly contributed to both social and academic progress in the pupils concerned. The value that the school places on individual worth ensures that each pupil has a full and relevant curriculum inside and beyond school. For a few more able pupils, progress is sometimes limited by the lack of activities that stretch and challenge them.
25. Provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural development is good and very good for social development. These were strong at the last inspection and remain so. Assemblies within school do not contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual awareness. However, the school offers a very good religious education programme, and it places great value on individual worth. Pupils are offered very positive experiences in subjects such as personal development, physical education, art, science and history. All of this means that many opportunities arise for pupils to experience the wonder and excitement of the world they live in. During the inspection, lessons on love, sex and Christianity in religious education and on conditions of slaves in nineteenth-century America provided just two of many examples of curriculum experiences that made significant contributions to pupils' spiritual development.
26. The high standard of provision for moral development has been maintained since the last inspection. In religious education for example pupils learn about the values and beliefs of others. The school also supports moral development through consistent application of the behaviour policy. Strong moral principles underpin the school's behaviour policy which is implemented throughout the school. All pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and are frequently encouraged to reflect upon the effect of their actions on others.
27. The development of social skills is very good. There is a clear code of conduct which emphasises sociable behaviour. All staff provide very good role models for pupils to follow. They encourage pupils to relate well towards each other, especially at lunchtime and other social occasions. Staff also create opportunities for pupils to work together in small groups or in pairs. During class work, there is a strong emphasis on co-operation and helping one another. Pupils respond well to this. Most teachers encourage

responsibility by encouraging pupils to hand out materials and clear up at the end of lessons. This gradually becomes second nature to many pupils. The inspection team was also impressed by the politeness and friendliness of all pupils within class and around the school. The ethos of the boarding accommodation is very supportive of good relations between adults and young people. It positively enhances their growth to maturity.

28. Pupils' cultural development is good and is assisted by the many activities that they undertake. Visits to museums and galleries, the French visit during European Studies and the many visits undertaken as part of subjects such as history and vocational studies give pupils a wider view of the world and introduce them to lives and experiences outside their own. In art, pupils look at and imitate a range of techniques from other countries. There are good resources for the teaching of history and religious education and a well stocked library that includes a range of books highlighting other cultures and religions.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. The care, welfare and support for pupils' needs, whether they are day or boarding pupils, provided by all staff, is of overall good quality. It has a significant positive impact on the ethos and atmosphere of the school. The arrangements for child protection are very good. The school has an explicit policy and reference to child protection is found in other relevant policies, for example sex education. Local authority procedures are known and followed and the designated person is well trained, providing training not only for staff at Pencalenick, but on occasion, for staff from other schools. Good practice is seen in the keeping of initial concern notes and in the way that pupils who are no longer on the 'at risk' register continue to be monitored by the school. There are a number of pupils who are either in public care or on the register. Their needs are very well met and records are securely kept with restricted access to ensure confidentiality. There is appropriate liaison with different social workers and with social services in arranging case conferences, and between teachers and care staff.
30. There is very effective supervision that provides a good mix of support and independence for pupils, with close teamwork between all staff being a key feature. There are qualified first-aiders and good attention to procedures, with records properly kept. Mealtimes are positive social occasions with good quality nourishing food available. The many outside visits and activities are thoroughly checked and researched. The arrival and departure of pupils presents a considerable challenge with many buses and taxis in a fairly confined space. Occasionally, the level of pupil supervision at this time is not as high as it should be. Whilst care is taken to ensure that pupils wear seatbelts, the home-school buses have no escort travelling with the drivers and this represents a risk should there be any emergency.
31. There is very thorough attention to health and safety with a good policy and excellent quality six-monthly risk assessment, with action taken on any identified areas as soon as is possible. This is a significant improvement since the last report. Required records of, for example, fire drills and equipment tests are kept. The school was informed of a number of health and safety issues largely relating to the residential accommodation. These were either dealt with immediately or action put in hand to resolve issues requiring the attention of the local authority. The one outstanding area of concern is the disused swimming pool, still full of water (a requirement of the Fire Department) and uncovered.

32. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. The school contacts parents regarding any unexplained absences. Transport drivers often bring in messages from families. Parents are expected to inform the school if they are considering taking a holiday during the term. The school does not have the services of a permanently allocated educational welfare officer. Registers, including those for residential pupils, are taken for each session. This is an improvement from the last inspection. However, school registers do not comply because necessary pupil data is not always included, daily and weekly totals are not entered and in many registers, marks are entered in pencil. Good practice in completion and marking was seen in one register, but this is not followed as a whole-school practice.
33. Procedures for promoting acceptable and appropriate behaviour are good. This is consistent with the last inspection. Pupils are made fully aware that they are valued as people. Their self-esteem is promoted in many ways, but particularly by staff praising positive behaviour throughout the day and in every activity. All staff provide good role models for pupils in their kind, considerate behaviour to one another and to pupils. Rules in the code of conduct are few, simple and clear and pupils understand them. Aspects of a pupil's behaviour may often feature as one of their individual education plan targets and these are regularly monitored and reviewed by the group tutor. This means that pupils are frequently reminded of how they need to behave and generally make rapid progress. There are good guidelines for staff in the Positive Behaviour Policy and in the staff handbook in how to deal with incidents in school and in the residential accommodation. The school has no specific bullying policy but the procedures for eliminating bullying are satisfactory. Procedures for preventing harassment are embedded in the personal development programme which covers relationships, tolerance and related topics. Good links have been established with external agencies. Although there is now much more consistency in setting and following targets for pupils with behaviour difficulties, there is still room for improvement in the clarity of these targets and the attention paid to them by one or two teachers who do not yet effectively use targets to inform lesson planning on a regular basis. The staff use opportunities well to reinforce expectations of behaviour and acceptable actions, in line with the positive behaviour policy. The management of behaviour is generally very good, using strategies that are successfully helping individual pupils to improve and gain responsibility for their actions. There is ongoing recording of any concerns and detailed records for pupils having difficulties. Pupils know the system for rewards and the consequences of any inappropriate behaviour, and this means that they quickly learn how to behave more appropriately. However, there are a number of recorded incidents of harassment or bullying and fixed-term exclusions have increased to seven since the last inspection. Procedures for exclusion are followed properly. The use of physical restraint is comparatively rare but when it is used, there is a high level of respect and sensitivity for the pupil concerned, with full records kept.
34. The monitoring of personal development is good and has a high focus within the school. Pupils' personal development targets are known to all teachers and the process is well monitored by the assistant head to ensure that progress is as great as possible. In many lessons, staff complete an ongoing record of pupils' attitudes and reactions noting any significant improvement or deterioration that can be shared with relevant staff and parents so that the pupil receives the best possible level of support at all times. Discussion groups are highly effective, developing pupils' understanding of social and personal development using strategies such as drama and role-play to make messages enjoyable and relevant. Informal guidance is always to hand from staff and pupils accept this very well, secure in the knowledge that the staff have their best interests at heart.

35. While good examples of assessment practice can be found in such subjects as mathematics, history, outdoor education and in design and technology, the assessment, recording and reporting policy has not been fully implemented across the school. For example, pupils' work is often not stored, dated, annotated and referenced to National Curriculum levels, to show what pupils can do, know and understand as required by the guidelines. There is a need for the school's assessment procedures to be more rigorously implemented and monitored.
36. Baseline assessment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science allows for setting in these subjects from Year 7. Information from these assessments in English and mathematics, along with an assessment of pupils' personal development, form the basis for pupils' individual education plans. In the best practice, the three targets within these plans are reasonably precise, closely related to National Curriculum levels or personal development needs and are used well to inform curriculum planning. These are regularly monitored and reviewed by subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics and by the group tutor for personal development. Although some pupils are involved in setting and monitoring their own targets, this is not regular and automatic. The pupils are aware of their targets and place great value on achieving them. If they do so, they are rewarded with a merit award presented at a whole-school assembly and agree to another target. While this is an improvement on the previous inspection, pupils' individual targets need to inform all subjects of the curriculum, including the care curriculum. However, there has been considerable progress in all aspects of individual education plans since the last inspection.
37. Plans are in hand to make assessment information computer based and this is a positive development. There is as yet no agreed marking policy. Marking is regular and positive but lacks evaluative comment as to how pupils might improve their work. Assessment within the residential setting is good and effective records and care plans are maintained.
38. The school has developed a very effective procedure for responding to the requirement for the annual review of pupils' statements. All of the legal requirements are met. Annual review meetings which involve parents are effectively used to set targets for use in pupils' individual education plans.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

39. The school enjoys a positive and mutually supportive partnership with its parents and carers. The school uses the concept of a home/school contract well to identify the roles and responsibilities of teachers, pupils and parents. The school makes sure that parents are as involved and aware of the school's work as is possible, given the distance that many families live from the school. This restricts the amount of involvement that parents have in the daily life of the school but a small number are involved offering their skills to help in activities such as canoeing, for example.
40. Parents hold the school in very high regard and are very pleased with, for instance, the improvements that their children make and the opportunities that are available to them. There is frequent telephone contact from staff who can always find time to listen or offer constructive support. The quality of ongoing support and the commitment to the school shown by parents is a very significant strength.
41. The Patrons of Pencalenick are a long established and very effective fundraising group. They organise events throughout the school year, culminating in the Strawberry Fair that is the main fundraiser. All events are well attended. Funds raised are used to support

learning and range from the purchase of relatively small items such as CD players and televisions for the residential unit, to ongoing stabling costs of the school pony or major long-term pledges such as money to refurbish the swimming pool. A team from the school ran in the London Marathon, raising well over £3,000 in sponsorship.

42. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory, overall. Not all required information is contained in the school prospectus and there are a few items of required information missing from the governors' annual report. However, both documents contain other information that is useful for parents. Parents receive newsletters from time-to-time informing them about events such as progress meetings and invitations to attend, for example, the annual governors' meeting. The involvement of parents in their children's annual reviews and their views and input about suitable targets for their children are good. They are fully involved and consulted at all stages, although not all feel able to attend.
43. Before and during the inspection, the team received a number of very positive comments emphasising the very good links between the school and parents, especially when this related to problems or additional needs. Parents are not always clear about how the statement of special educational needs is being implemented specifically with regard to the success and progress of day-to-day targets.
44. Parents are sometimes encouraged to contribute to their children's learning at home, perhaps by hearing their children read. They are encouraged to keep in daily touch by using the home/school liaison book. The provision of homework is satisfactory and generally provided across the school, although this provision is not consistent across the school.
45. The positive partnership has been maintained since the last inspection and continues to thrive.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

46. A well understood sense of purpose emanates from the headteacher and the management team and permeates through the whole school community. The headteacher, school's governors and staff with key responsibilities provide the school with good leadership and satisfactorily ensure that the school has a clear educational direction. The quality of the teamwork between teaching, care and support staff is very good and this leads to a shared commitment to providing a safe, caring and supportive community in which all members are valued.
47. Although the school does well in the way in which its values are reflected in its work, the school's written aims are not sufficiently explicit and do not provide a clear basis for the identification of priorities and for long-term planning. At the last inspection, the school development plan did not give sufficient weight to long-term priorities or provide sufficient detail for action planning. The current plan is quite detailed but is mostly concerned with planning the development of the various subjects. At this level, the school identifies appropriate priorities, action to be taken, individuals responsible, resource implications and a reasonable timescale for each target. The headteacher and governors can explain quite clearly how they wish to move the school forward, and these aims are shared with parents and staff, but the school's planning does not reflect these ideas or provide contingency arrangements which take into account the uncertain future role of the school.

48. The school has recently written a good performance management policy which should ensure that there will be rigorous monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching. The school has made good use of external organisations to help it evaluate its own performance, and as a consequence, it has received recent recognition for successful practice through the Investor in People Award, the Eco Schools Award, the Investor in Education Business Partnership and the Schools' Curriculum Award. However, internal mechanisms are not yet in place and although there is some monitoring by subject co-ordinators, this is not sufficiently systematic and does not provide adequate feedback to teachers which could increase the progress made by pupils. This weakness was previously identified at the last inspection.
49. The governing body is very supportive of the school but is not yet consistent in the way in which it plans and reviews the school's progress towards realising its aims. The governing body does not fulfil all its statutory duties, although its understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is satisfactory.
50. The school makes good and effective use of all its resources and this motivates pupils to learn. The financial planning and control systems of the school are good. The headteacher and the governors carefully monitor the school budget and the headteacher, assisted by the administrative staff, provide efficient day-to-day financial and management systems which ensure the smooth running of the school. The school spends its money very wisely, seeking the best price for its purchases. The prudent financial management within the school means that the school has been able to gradually accumulate a useful reserve, to be used for purposes clearly specified within the annual budget statement. The school makes good use of the income it receives which is low in comparison to other schools nationally.
51. The school makes good use of information technology for teaching, management and administrative purposes.
52. There are appropriate arrangements for the induction of new staff to the school. Professional development opportunities are available to all staff, and visits to other schools are organised to ensure that staff are aware of developments in both special and mainstream education. The staff are experienced in working with a range of additional special needs. Teachers have good knowledge and attitudes and learning support assistants are a highly skilled and sensitive team which provides well-matched support to pupils with complex or multiple difficulties. The use of external specialists, such as the speech and language therapist, educational psychologists, hearing and visual impairment staff and social workers is well co-ordinated and dependable. Co-ordination within special educational needs has been good and the co-ordinator is clear about how to improve the system further. So far, training for staff has been adequate but has not provided the additional skills that are needed for work with autistic pupils and those with specific literacy and behaviour difficulties.
53. The number, qualifications and expertise of teaching, care and support staff are well matched to the needs of the pupils and to the demands of the curriculum. The exception is English where only one teacher, the co-ordinator, is qualified in the subject and this lack of expertise has affected pupils' progress. Initial teacher qualifications cover almost all areas of the curriculum. Responsibilities are well matched to these qualifications. Approximately one-third of teachers has additional qualifications in special educational needs. There is a breadth of knowledge and experience available to support outdoor activities. Several learning support assistants and care staff have higher qualifications and this has had a positive impact on learning and the quality of the care provision. Administrative staff are of high quality and contribute significantly to the

efficiency of the school. Other staff such as the caretaker, cooks and gardeners support the personal development of pupils through the positive contributions they make. Visiting specialists support the wide range of pupils' special needs.

54. There has been exceptional improvement in some of the school buildings since the previous inspection. Along with the grounds and setting, the school now presents a most pleasant, welcoming learning environment with a very good standard of accommodation, enhanced by attractive display material. This complements the good teaching and teachers' specialist knowledge and contributes to the good achievements and good personal development of pupils. In the new building, there is excellent specialist accommodation for science and art and very good accommodation for European studies and mathematics. Other buildings have been adapted to provide excellent specialist accommodation for information and communication technology and very good specialist accommodation for technology. The mobile classroom now provides a good base for music and the humanities block has been improved to a good standard. English takes place in the main building where there are two spacious classrooms adjoining the library. Accommodation for physical education and outdoor education is also very good. The gymnasium has been improved with a new floor covering and now doubles as an assembly hall with the addition of retractable concert seating.
55. Outside there is a field for sporting events, a hard core play area for ball games and an adventure playground. A further leisure area provides for swings, a stable for the school pony and a walled garden with a glass greenhouse and polythene tunnel. The old damaged but 'listed' greenhouse has been carefully dismantled and reassembled at the Heligan Gardens where it now stands with a plaque proudly bearing the school's name.
56. Learning resources are good in all subjects and very good within science, information technology and European studies. This represents considerable progress since the last inspection when resources were deemed 'generally adequate'. It was observed that resources were a limiting factor on the progress made by pupils. This is no longer the case. An excellent information technology suite, a purpose-built science facility and the climbing wall in the gym are examples of well planned developments that have enhanced learning by providing good quality and effective resources. The school continues to make very effective use of its major resource, the local environment, within physical education and science. The library continues to be a valuable resource but too little progress has been made to develop effective support for learning library skills since the last inspection. There are still a few weaknesses in the stock of computer software in many subjects, but particularly in mathematics, English and design and technology.
57. At the time of the last inspection, the school provided satisfactory value for money. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, the leadership and management of the school are good and the costs to educate pupils are lower than the national average. This means that the school now gives good value for money and is well placed to continue the improvements since the last inspection and implement future initiatives.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to improve the existing good standards and further improve the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Raise pupils' levels of achievement in English and literacy by:

- implementing the National Literacy Strategy;
  - improving teachers' subject knowledge;
  - adopting a whole-school approach to literacy;
  - developing an effective scheme of work which emphasises basic skills in literacy. (paragraphs 16, 23, 71, 73, 74, 80, 85, 101)
- Improve the implementation and monitoring of the school's agreed assessment procedures to ensure consistency in all subjects. (paragraphs 35, 36, 37, 74)
  - Clarify the aims of the school and ensure that they are effectively addressed through the school development plan. (paragraphs 47, 49)
  - Improve the quality of the residential accommodation especially with regard to pupils' privacy. (paragraphs 31, 58, 60, 63, 65)
  - The governing body should ensure that all statutory requirements are met. (paragraphs 42, 49)

## **RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

58. The quality and practice of residential care is very good and a significant strength of the school, enabling children to develop their personal, social and behavioural skills very well. This care takes place within a positive environment that offers pupils secure values and the belief and independence needed to grow into responsible young adults. There is also a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to schoolwork and, for example, their ability to work productively with others. However, there are some weaknesses in the quality of accommodation such as the lack of privacy and the lack of central heating in the bedrooms. There is nowhere for children to study quietly and this hinders the development of closer links with the academic work done in school.
59. The staff are very skilled and experienced, working as a close and very harmonious team, providing all youngsters with positive role models. The quality of all relationships is excellent. There is a very high degree of mutual respect, for example, staff always ask if they can show work to others and children value adult approval. They relate easily to the adults around them and usually to other children. Staff are adept at pre-empting any negative feelings between children, using discussion and negotiation to very effectively resolve any difficulties. There is a real 'family' feel in the unit with humour and ongoing 'banter' between adults and children. Children are, however, well aware of the 'boundaries' and are generally careful not to go too far. There is a very effective and clearly known system of 'sticker cards' that is considered fair by pupils and used to 'purchase' or save towards items that the children have decided that they want. This system is independent of the system operated during the school day.
60. Careful and detailed records are kept of pupils' personal development with any strengths or weaknesses noted. A good quality daily log book is kept with two daily 'handover' meetings between day and night staff, so that any concerns are known. Children all have individual files and keep records of their personal development, including, for instance, their likes and dislikes and identification of personal strengths and weaknesses and how they might best improve. Whilst personal and behavioural targets are constantly reviewed, the school misses the opportunity to reinforce pupils' academic targets out of lesson times. There has been some work on literacy but there is an awareness that this is an area for development. Due to the constraints of the accommodation, there is no designated area for quiet study.

61. At the end of each school day, children participate in an exciting and challenging programme of activities, with school and residential staff working closely together. Children may learn how to repair and maintain mountain bikes, go shopping in Truro, go rock climbing or help to look after the school pony, Penny. Children thoroughly enjoy the activities provided and eagerly learn new skills. In the unit there are televisions and CD players in all bedrooms, provided by the Patrons of Pencalenick. Children play cards or board games with the adults and delight in winning!
62. Arrangements for child protection are very good and the well being of children has the highest priority. Almost all are registered with a local doctor and if there is any need for emergency treatment, children are taken to the local hospital. Parents are kept fully informed and are welcome to phone their children in the evenings. Pupils also have access to a phone but there is little privacy.
63. Some aspects of the physical accommodation such as the lack of privacy and central heating in bedrooms and some bathrooms are unsatisfactory. The very large rooms are used as dormitories with up to seven children sleeping in a room. Pupils have no privacy or screening from others in the room and very limited storage for personal possessions or clothes. There is nowhere to go for children who want 'space' to be away from others for a while. Whilst public areas and living rooms are warm and centrally heated, bedrooms are not and pupils comment that they are very cold in winter and the rooms are also draughty. Some bathrooms are also cold and lack privacy.
64. The unit operates very effectively with well-organised systems and routines. It is well managed and led. Night staff make hourly checks on the children and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Decisions to admit children are taken by the school and social services make some referrals and parents can also request places for their children either short or long term.
65. Staff work hard to compensate for the inadequacies in the residential accommodation and to ensure that children who have had many difficulties and negative educational experiences are given the opportunity to develop their full potential and a sense of worth in their own capabilities and relationships. All the children are enthusiastic about staying in the unit during the week.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	30	40	20	4	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	120
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	119
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### ***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	7	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.6
Average class size	12

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	619

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	1,045,169
Total expenditure	1,049,348
Expenditure per pupil	8,672
Balance brought forward from previous year	92,544
Balance carried forward to next year	88,365

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	124
Number of questionnaires returned	34

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	35	3	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	56	35	3	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	41	3	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	35	18	15	3
The teaching is good.	74	15	6	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	26	9	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	21	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	26	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	62	35	0	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	18	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	15	12	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	74	18	6	0	3

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents were concerned that the uncertain future of the school is having a negative impact on the pupils. They said that homework was not always set consistently.

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

### **ENGLISH**

66. Levels of achievement in English are unsatisfactory overall in Key Stages 3 and 4. However, there are variations across the attainment targets. Levels of achievement in speaking and listening are satisfactory in both key stages and unsatisfactory in reading and writing. This shows unsatisfactory improvement in English since the last inspection where these areas were highlighted as key areas for development.
67. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory in both key stages because of good opportunities for language and communication development across the curriculum. Pupils in Key Stage 3 contribute suggestions for vocabulary to be used in stories. They express their opinions of particular books and discuss safety issues surrounding fireworks. Pupils are sometimes not as good at listening as they are at speaking, except where lessons are particularly challenging and relevant. Pupils remain in role as they perform a short drama in history about medicine through the ages. Pupils in Year 9 listen carefully during a lesson about drugs, taking turns as they describe legal and illegal substances. Pupils in Key Stage 4 find sustained listening difficult during English lessons but listen attentively to instructions for practical activities such as cooking a pizza, using simple but effective language to express preferences for the finished product.
68. Levels of achievement in reading are unsatisfactory in both key stages. Most pupils, but not all in Key Stage 3, achieve relatively low levels of reading and are unable to read for a range of purposes. They have difficulty in selecting relevant information from reading materials. These skills remain low during this key stage, hindering progress across the curriculum. Almost all pupils can read the most common words and, with encouragement, read a simple story. They display some ability to use knowledge of letter sounds and use picture clues to read new vocabulary. A small number of more able pupils read for pleasure and show some understanding of the story, but they have insufficient skills for selecting reference materials or using a contents page or index.
69. Pupils in Key Stage 4 do not achieve as much as they should because their reading skills have not developed in line with other skills. They have not become independent readers although almost all pupils can read a simple worksheet in context. This means that coping with language in everyday life is difficult although some pupils display sensible strategies such as asking an adult to read for them. They can read words useful across the curriculum such as days of the week and months of the year. A small minority of pupils read for pleasure, selecting books from the school and local libraries.
70. Levels of achievement in writing are unsatisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4. More able pupils in Year 7 can write a few simple sentences paying some regard to punctuation and spelling. Some pupils have well formed handwriting on entry to school. Less able pupils write their name and copy the date. They can spell a few short common words but need much support for writing. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 continue to write a small amount of text. They develop insufficient strategies for spelling and the majority of handwriting is printed. More able pupils follow the conventions to write a formal letter and display knowledge of more advanced punctuation such as speech and exclamation marks. More able pupils in Key Stage 4 write short, sequential sentences to form a paragraph. They are beginning to write for a wider range of purposes such as filling in a request form in a catalogue or writing a simple poem. However, the majority of pupils have not acquired independent writing skills at a basic level necessary to cope in school

or the wider world. Spelling remains very weak and a cursive handwriting style is not established.

71. The quality of teaching is variable and has declined since the last inspection. Although most teaching is satisfactory in both key stages with a small percentage of teaching good, almost a quarter of teaching is unsatisfactory. Some teachers have insufficient subject knowledge and as a direct result, pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils make some gains in individual lessons but sometimes teachers do not plan consistently or adequately for the development of skills over time. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented unsuccessfully and does not generally form a basis of support for teaching. Too many lessons stand alone. Work is often unchallenging and repetitive with an over reliance on worksheets. Too few opportunities are given for pupils to use their imagination and write within a structured framework. For example, in unsatisfactory lessons, pupils are left to work on undemanding activities such as adding initial letters to word endings whilst the teacher listens to individual readers. Pupils have infrequent opportunities to draft and edit their work and information and communication technology is little used to promote learning. Lessons are better where the planning allows pupils to participate actively in lessons, where any behaviour difficulties are dealt with quietly and effectively and teachers make good use of questioning. Relationships in the majority of lessons are good and learning support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher and support assistant worked as a team to help pupils identify direct speech. In a Year 10 lesson, more able pupils made progress in dictionary use with the help of good support.
72. Pupils' attitudes to English are satisfactory overall but good in over a third of lessons. Attitudes in a quarter of lessons are unsatisfactory or poor. Even when tasks are repetitive, pupils usually concentrate well and complete work neatly. Once their interest is engaged they are prepared to work hard. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils try their best to write about a birthday party while the teacher listens to readers. A small Year 7 group sustains high levels of concentration as the teacher reads to them. They then feel secure enough to express some of their fears of the dark. Good humour is displayed by pupils in Year 9 as they willingly volunteer to write on the whiteboard and identify vowel sounds. Some behaviour is unsatisfactory. This is usually, but not always, associated with less successful teaching. Pupils may be noisy on entry to class and take some time to settle and chatter amongst themselves. This is especially so in Year 11 where pupils should be engaged in preparing for the Certificate of Achievement. There is movement around the classroom, some instances of inappropriate language and a range of immature behaviour. Some pupils respond well to a limited range of opportunities for personal development. They collect and put away equipment and discuss individual targets sensibly with staff. Dictionaries or word banks are not available consistently and pupils have few chances to choose their method of recording work.
73. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is despite good, and sometimes very good, examples seen in individual subject areas. It is unsatisfactory because opportunities are sometimes unplanned and unidentified for the development of a wide range of reading and writing skills. Communication skills are satisfactory however. These are well promoted through the national skills profile accreditation in Key Stage 4 and through personal development targets. This means that pupils throughout the school have satisfactory skills in speaking. Reading from the Old Testament in religious education raises pupils' self-esteem because of the challenging text. Writing about the rites of passage such as births and deaths contributes to spiritual development as well as writing skills. Invitation to a food tasting in

food technology and a report on a visit to an intensive farm in science provide practical stimuli for writing for a range of purposes.

74. The management of English is unsatisfactory. There have been several changes in co-ordinators in recent years. The school has not benefited sufficiently from the staff training in the National Literacy Strategy. Although resources are generally satisfactory, resources to support the literacy hour are unsatisfactory. The school has no big books and no up-to-date materials for group reading. This is a weakness and has contributed to a lack of progress in reading. There is no policy for spelling or handwriting and presentation within the subject or across the school. The curriculum is often too narrow. There is little planning for drama and poetry. There are no visiting authors, poets or theatre groups to stimulate the imagination and raise the spirits. English therefore makes an unsatisfactory contribution to cultural development. The library is a stimulating environment and the librarian has developed a good range of reading materials including magazines and comics that are well displayed. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to encourage pupils to look up information in reference books. Learning support assistants work hard to record assessment but this may sometimes be unfocused and could be further improved in order to more effectively inform teachers' planning. Targets are discussed individually but are not always specific enough to be helpful. Very good classroom displays support language and celebrate good work. The new co-ordinator is very aware of shortcomings in the subject and intends to implement improvements to raise levels of achievement and provide a broad and more balanced curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. Achievement is consistently good in mathematics. In 1999, in the second year of entry, 100 per cent of pupils gained the Certificate of Achievement award at Pass level and 64 per cent at Merit level or above. This represents a significant improvement in pupil achievements since the previous inspection in 1996. Key Stage 3 Standard assessment tests since that time, confirm pupils' steady progress year on year. This is as a result of effective teaching, assessment and good organisation.
76. Pupils make good and occasionally very good progress in lessons, and steady progress over time in both key stages but from a low base of prior learning. At the end of Key Stage 3, less able pupils know, understand and can use number bonds to ten. With help, they gather data on peoples' birthdays and collate this information in the form of a frequency table and simple bar chart. More able pupils are able to quickly work out the change to give from set amounts of money, for example 50 pence or a £1 coin. They collect data using a tally chart and transfer this information on to a bar chart and pictograms.
77. At the end of Key Stage 4, less able pupils understand, know and can identify odd and even numbers. They are acquiring the language of number associated with conducting a survey, such as, average, typical and most common. They know how to use the tally system to collect and collate information efficiently. More able pupils remember number facts and recall them without hesitation in number games to 50. They apply logic skills to solve simple problems. They use mathematical names for common two- and three-dimensional shapes and describe their properties, including the number of sides and corners. They understand the symmetry properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and can classify them accordingly.
78. Teaching and learning are consistently good and occasionally very good at both key stages. Teachers effectively capitalise on the good ethos for learning that exists within

the department, and set very high expectations in lessons. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, use the correct mathematical vocabulary and understand the academic strengths and weaknesses and the special educational needs of their pupils. They are well supported in their work by well-qualified learning support assistants (LSAs), who in addition to helping individual pupils, carry out ongoing assessments. All aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy have been implemented and this is reflected in the direct teaching and interactive oral work with the whole group, which all teachers employ.

79. Learning is effective because of good lesson planning. Teachers introduce lessons clearly so pupils know what to expect and this encourages independence in learning. Lessons round off with a whole-class discussion where their progress is reviewed. Pupils leave with a sense of achievement. Teachers match questions to the ability of individual pupils and this involves everyone and challenges pupils at the appropriate level. Teachers' high expectations and good humour ensure that time is used well, pupils enjoy the subject, behave well and work hard. Pupils' written work is often pristine because this is the standard expected of them. Their positive attitude to the subject enhances learning and contributes to a busy and purposeful ethos. In all lessons there is a variety of activity, whole-class teaching and questioning as well as written work. This ensures that pupils are always occupied in meaningful tasks. Teachers use a good range of resources, for example: a selection of large cards for mental calculations; mirrors to help pupils classify shapes according to the lines of symmetry; and computers to construct bar graphs and record information on a survey on favourite foods and pop groups. The good use of resources motivates pupils and consolidates their learning.
80. Mathematics is given adequate time at both key stages. Setting from Year 7 helps pupils progress as fast as possible. Setting is flexible to allow adjustments when needed. Pupils are appropriately challenged in each set. Subject leadership is very good and there have been a number of clear improvements since the last inspection, notably in teaching and learning and curriculum planning but also in assessment strategies and in improving numeracy across the curriculum. For example, there are good examples of numeracy skills being reinforced in design and technology, history and science, in measuring, weighing and counting. There are limited opportunities for mathematics teachers to contribute to improving literacy. Teachers however, reinforce pupils' speaking and listening skills by teaching mathematical vocabulary and by encouraging pupils to explain and argue their conclusions.
81. The school analyses its data in mathematics to monitor standards, sets appropriate targets and identifies differences in achievement between girls and boys. There is a need for more explicit expectations of homework and marking. Mathematics accommodation is very good and resources for the subject are good.

## **SCIENCE**

82. The school makes very good provision for science. Significant improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the accommodation demonstrate that the school has made a positive response to the findings of the last inspection. However, because these improvements are recent, their full effect has yet to be realised.
83. Pupils' levels of achievement are satisfactory at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, pupils have a basic understanding of what is necessary for a test to be 'fair' and develop their skills in measuring when classifying groups of living things. They name the main parts of a microscope and record their findings neatly and accurately. Older pupils build on

these skills; they understand the difference between freezing and boiling, and some make sensible estimates of temperature. They construct electrical circuits to test for conductivity and record their findings in reasonably clear diagrams. They also conduct experiments to find out the effects of fertiliser on the growth of plants and apply a simple understanding of pneumatics to everyday life. At Key Stage 4, pupils know that electrical current is measured in amps and can apply their knowledge of circuits to the wiring involved in household lighting. They understand how electrical currents can create magnetic fields and how those fields can be harnessed to make electric motors. Pupils have a broad understanding of human anatomy and the function of the main organs; they also know what plants need in order to live. These gains in knowledge are accredited through the pupils' Certificate of Achievement coursework, and pupils apply their learning in such relevant contexts as GNVQ courses in Health and Social Care and Land and Environment.

84. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' personal and social development. Pupils understand how to approach things in a scientific way and have a responsible, common-sense attitude towards health and safety issues. They behave well in science lessons; they are co-operative, work hard both on their own and in small groups, and answer questions readily.
85. Teaching in science lessons throughout the school is predominantly very good. Lessons are very well organised and take account of the relative strengths of the teachers involved. Relationships are consistently good, all staff work well as a team, and there is a calm, good-humoured and very successful approach to managing pupils' behaviour. In consequence, pupils maintain their concentration and become increasingly interested and involved in activities. Where teaching is most successful, there is a good understanding of what constitutes 'science'. Simple activities are presented in a scientific way with the result that pupils and students learn to predict, test and draw conclusions. Lessons are well paced and resources, particularly the school grounds, are used to good effect. Lesson plans relate well to the scheme of work but not enough consideration is given to ways in which the subject can address the targets identified in pupils' individual education plans. Due regard is given to the development and application of pupils' numeracy skills, although opportunities to reinforce pupils' skills in literacy and information and communication technology are underdeveloped.
86. Provision for science has been hampered by staffing changes but the recent appointment of an experienced specialist has resulted in the rapid development of an appropriate and highly relevant scheme of work. Opportunities for scientific enquiry in other subject areas such as design and technology are being established, but the role of information technology has yet to be developed. The establishment of baseline assessment for pupils in Year 7 means that there is a good yardstick against which to measure pupils' gains in learning in the future. The new education block provides excellent classroom facilities, resources are being rapidly developed and the way in which the grounds are used for environmental science activities is a particularly positive feature.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

87. Levels of achievement in art are good in both key stages. Progress over time is good. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 3 study their faces closely in the mirror looking carefully at the position and shape of individual features. They watch the teacher's demonstration with interest then use some of her techniques with charcoal to good effect in attempting their own portraits. Pupils in Year 8 evaluate and improve their collage work producing stained glass pictures incorporating tinted paper and cling film

displaying well the influence of their study of cubism. By Year 9, pupils demonstrate their skills to produce an excellent display reflecting life under water which is tactile and visually pleasing. It shows sensitivity to colour, texture and space and combines materials sympathetically. Pupils in Key Stage 4 continue to achieve well. In Year 10, they use research and the development of ideas to design packaging and advertising for a cassette or Playstation game. They sketch initial ideas, refine their work and settle on appropriate images such as a scooter or wrestler to engage the interest of purchasers. More able pupils in Year 11 respond to the challenge of preparing for the Certificate of Achievement. They use pencils or pastels to experiment with shape and design for sea creatures which they have researched and then create in clay. They compare and comment on their work and offer suggestions for improvement. Understanding of the properties of clay is demonstrated as they use tools to cut and shape it confidently.

88. All teaching is at least satisfactory with most teaching being good or very good. Because of this good teaching and very good subject knowledge, pupils learn well within lessons. The exception is in Year 10 where an incident during the lunch hour had unsettled pupils and taken much teacher time to resolve. Very good use of highly competent support staff is used effectively at such times. Good support and adaptation of resources for pupils with additional special needs such as visual impairment are also good, allowing them to make progress in line with their peers. Planning for challenging work using a wide range of media and techniques relevant to the pupils is a strength. Effective use is made of the local environment especially to develop three-dimensional work such as sand sculptures. The school grounds provide the stimulus for atmospheric work developing the use of encaustics. Pupils in Year 11 gain knowledge of three-dimensional work and the use of tools as they closely observe the teacher working with clay. Introductions to lessons are clear, setting objectives and the standards expected. Time spent in evaluation at the end of lessons is valuable and contributes to speaking and listening skills as well as assessment. Homework when used is practical, involving pupils in looking for materials such as illustrations to bring to school to support topics.
89. Pupils' attitudes to art are very good in both key stages. The exception is in Year 10 where pupils had been disturbed by events outside the lesson. Pupils respond positively to the clear challenges set. They listen carefully to instructions and try their best to carry them out. They are prepared to refine and adapt their work. Relationships with peers and staff are positive and productive and pupils are prepared to learn from each other. The readily available, good quality resources are used sensibly for their purpose. Behaviour is almost always very good which means that pupils concentrate well and make good progress. Personal development is very good with pride shown in good work. Pupils respond well to opportunities for making decisions and they make choices sensibly. They are sensitive to the feelings of others as they evaluate work, for example when discussing the colours and shapes used by peers in collage work in Year 8.
90. The management of art is good. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her role and has the ability and vision to move the subject on although there has been no opportunity to monitor teaching. Improvement since the last inspection is already good. Progress, teaching and the curriculum, which now meets statutory requirements, have all improved. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Informal and sociable arts and crafts sessions at lunch times bring together pupils from across the years and contribute significantly to good achievement in textiles. High quality tapestry work contributes to good displays. A series of individual tapestry panels made by parents as well as pupils celebrates Cornish history and is to be mounted and framed to mark the millennium. Cultural development is encouraged and the curriculum enriched by the study of African and European art and artists.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Levels of achievement in design and technology are good in both key stages and across all areas of the subject curriculum. Levels are understandably higher in making than designing. In their first lesson, Year 7 pupils contribute sensibly to the discussion about what constitutes technology. They identify some of the materials, tools and equipment used and collaborate well to build the longest structure possible using art straws and sellotape. The challenge of making an electrically powered buggy involves Year 8 pupils in designing as well as making. They start to understand electricity as well as how generators may be used to provide a source of power. They use standard symbols for components when presenting their designs. By Year 9, pupils collate a variety of information as they follow a theme on desert islands. Discussion and refinement take place as chicken wire is moulded and stapled to a board then covered in artex. They bring knowledge from science and geography as they consider prevailing winds before siting a shelter and recall facts about volcanoes. Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils achieve good standards in textile work, joining materials by using stapling, lacing and velcro as well as sewing machines and hand stitching. Their finished products, including teddy bears and finger puppets, are of such good quality that they are included in story sacks presented to a local infant school.
92. More able pupils in Key Stage 4 follow the GNVQ foundation unit 'Making Products'. They consider issues of batch production and discuss their brief to build a picnic table. 'We'll have one person drilling, one person cutting and one person measuring' was the swift response. Pupils pay high regard to health and safety as they use tools competently and productively. With help when necessary, they measure wood accurately before cutting it. Less able pupils follow the National Skills Profile 'Manufacturing' module. By Year 11, boys and girls co-operate in small groups to cut, scrape or grate the ingredients necessary to make small pizzas which are then evaluated. Then they use information and communication technology competently to present their results graphically.
93. All teaching is at least satisfactory and in most lessons it is good or very good. This is a subject which benefits from the very good knowledge of all teachers and support staff. Their detailed planning for an exciting range of appropriate activities challenges pupils and results in the very good progress which they make. Pupils impregnating rags with artex learn why this material had been chosen and overcome the problem of how to form the volcano. After a visit to a local clothing factory, where they watched electronic cutting, pupils combined a range of skills to make themselves sailcloth jackets of quality. In their enthusiasm, teachers occasionally plan too many activities and quality is sacrificed, as was observed in a Year 7 lesson where pupils were rushed to finish the theory before starting practical work. Some opportunities for teaching basic skills are lost as there is no whole-school approach to reading and writing and the reading age of some materials is well beyond the capability of pupils. Opportunities for speaking and listening are excellent however, and there are good gains in communication skills. Lessons are pleasant experiences characterised by good humour and high expectations.
94. Attitudes to the subject are always satisfactory and frequently excellent. Pupils try hard for sustained periods of time. They show pride in demonstrating their good work and they want to learn. They speak highly of their teacher and take health and safety seriously, for example using goggles and the extractor fan when necessary. Behaviour is excellent and is a reflection of the relevance of the opportunities which pupils experience. This subject builds self-esteem and contributes significantly to personal

development. Pupils work well in groups, they support one another and accept responsibility willingly.

95. The management of design and technology is good. The energetic co-ordinator leads a very strong team whose individual expertise contributes much to the success of the subject. The professional development of one member of the support team has been considerably enhanced by his training as an internal assessor for the GNVQ 'Manufacturing' course and his opportunity to develop modules of work. Very strong cross-curricular links and excellent use of the local area for extending and enriching learning opportunities contribute to the relevance and breadth of the subject curriculum. For example, pupils visit the railway station looking at food available and the price as part of the study of 'Food on the Move'. Mainstream links are strengthened when they take the products to a local school for evaluation. The subject policy and schemes of work are very good. Procedures for assessment are also very good including pupils' written self-assessment at the end of each module of work. Pupils maintain a useful portfolio of work, and reports include National Curriculum and 'p-scale' levels, and descriptions of work covered and learning outcomes. These assessment procedures could be used more widely in the school as a model of good practice. Digital cameras are frequently used well but the control element of the subject is constrained because of lack of software to support the use of Lego Technik. Resources are otherwise good and used efficiently.
96. There has been good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching and the enthusiasm of pupils for the subject have been maintained. Progress is now good at both key stages although it is still better in making than design. The curriculum is now broader and schemes of work are explicit about skills, knowledge and understanding. Resources have improved significantly and health and safety issues have been addressed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. Pupils' achievement in geography is good and they make good and sometimes very good progress, albeit from a low base of prior learning. This demonstrates significant improvement since the previous inspection when geography was not observed being taught and judgements were based solely on the scrutiny of work and teachers' planning. These good achievements are possible because the quality of teaching is consistently good and occasionally very good and the curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils' learning builds successfully on what they already know and can do.
98. In Year 7, pupils demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of the countries of the United Kingdom and the county of Cornwall. In response to the question 'What is geography?' they are making plans on a variety of scales. They understand that a plan or a map is a view taken from above. They display fine manipulative skills in folding, cutting and gluing in constructing three-dimensional furniture to fit in a plan of a bedroom. Teaching is characterised by positive step-by-step explanation and the careful use of questioning that prompts pupils to think carefully about their learning. Good organisation and preparation beforehand and the sensitive support of the LSA ensure the lesson proceeds smoothly and results in high levels of participation throughout.
99. Pupils work neatly and well and clear away quietly at the end. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and this contributes to their progress. In Year 8, pupils make very good progress as a result of teaching that is dramatic and exciting and full of pace and verve. By the end of the lesson on natural hazards, they can name the main parts of a volcano; carry out small group experiments to demonstrate how a volcano erupts and

locate and name the six major volcanoes in the world. They can also use a variety of appropriate adjectives and verbs to describe the event in colourful detail. They show wonder and delight as the model volcanoes bubble and froth. The teacher's very good subject knowledge, high expectations and sheer enthusiasm, ensure a high level of interest and involvement, with pupils gaining in confidence in their own achievements. Pupils are eager and co-operative throughout and are trusted to behave sensibly. This responsibility enhances their learning. Good organisation and positive pupil management skills ensure pupils' excitement is well focused. The lesson is beautifully timed to include a short but effective plenary to recap on what pupils have learnt, and leaves them with a tinge of anticipation as to the next lesson.

100. In Year 9, pupils know and understand how cliffs are formed and why coastal erosion occurs. They contribute well to a discussion using and understanding geographical terminology such as 'weathering', 'headlands' and 'bay'. They ask questions and seek explanations using their own local knowledge and experience about coastal and river landforms. Planning is good and the teacher takes pupils through the tasks giving prompts, guidance and encouragement so that learning remains focused. Good use is made of photographs to illustrate learning objectives. Pupils are keen and attentive and as a result, progress is good.
101. The co-ordinator has developed the subject well since the last inspection and there have been a number of improvements notably in curriculum planning, in the time allocated to the subject and in the provision of appropriate resources. The school is ideally situated and pupils gain knowledge of different environments, landforms and the tides through fieldwork, right on their own doorstep. Pupils' geographical skills and knowledge are also reinforced by activities in outdoor education in which the co-ordinator takes a leading part. The subject contributes to improving pupils' literacy skills and to a lesser extent numeracy skills but such links should be more deliberately planned. There is a need for implementing more accurate assessment practices and for less reliance on worksheets.

## **HISTORY**

102. History is only taught at Key Stage 3. Pupil progress was seen as satisfactory in the last inspection report. It is now good, reflecting a dynamic subject specialist making the most of a very wide range of techniques and opportunities. Pupils enter the school with a poor sense of 'present' and 'past', little concept of time and are unaware of how people lived in the past or what this meant. By the end of Key Stage 3, they have made good progress in all of these areas. They are also able to transfer their historical experiences and make comparisons between different ages. The work in history also enhances pupils' ability to understand the ideas and values of others, a skill which they demonstrate in discussion and role-play. There is considerable progress in pupils' ability to talk about and question the past and to use information technology to produce work of a high standard. There is not always adequate progress in the written work of many pupils, especially those who are more able.
103. Teaching in history is very good. It combines a high level of enthusiasm with an emphasis on historical accuracy. Role-play, a wide range of experiences and very effective contributions from learning support assistants contribute to the significant improvement in this subject, and greater pupil progress, over the past three years. In a very good Year 7 lesson, the teacher and a learning support assistant acted the parts of modern and medieval doctors, with pupils taking on the role of patients. Comparisons are made between different treatments and similarities and differences highlighted. The lesson is highly enjoyable, exciting and stimulating. As a result, pupils demonstrate a

very keen understanding of the differences and are keen both to give their views and complete the comparative work that follows. Similarly, in a very good Year 9 history lesson, pupils have the opportunity to taste the various foods that American slaves would have eaten and to express their likes and dislikes. The food has been meticulously prepared and the 'tasting' is well organised by the learning support assistant, while the teacher is able to lead the discussion on what pupils like and why. The whole lesson is conducted in a very mature and relaxed way and the learning that takes place about conditions for slaves is impressive. Pupils are also able to bring other experiences to this lesson, such as their knowledge of transport and geography. All of the senses are used, questions extend pupils' thinking and the activities are recorded on digital camera. The efficient but relaxed use of resources, time and language contribute to an exciting lesson where a lot of learning takes place.

104. Clearly pupils enjoy their history greatly. They enthusiastically participate in the many role-play activities and games. They are keen to contribute their opinions and ideas and produce the best work of which they are capable. Behaviour in history lessons is always good and there is a high level of respect between adults and pupils. As a result of the enjoyment, the pupils are keen to follow up history work with word processing, searching the web and other information technology activities. This is a very good example of cross-curricular work that uses one area of work to enthuse and challenge in others. Pupils respond well to this as they can see the point and relate it to exciting experiences.
105. Co-ordination in history is very good indeed. There is very good planning, recording progress is developing well and there has been a sensible investment in resources. The use of local resources such as Charlestown and the Automobilia museum is good. The links with English, geography and information and communication technology are good and this enriches pupils' experiences. Stronger links are planned between geography and history and this will assist in the sharing of good practice.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

106. The previous inspection report indicated that progress in ICT was satisfactory at Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory overall at Key Stage 4. There has been an improvement since that time in terms of co-ordination, hardware and the scheme of work. All of these have been introduced recently and inspection evidence indicates that pupils' learning and the coverage of all aspects of ICT is now at a much higher level than four years ago.
107. When pupils enter the school, few have any consolidated computer skills. Occasionally a pupil has a computer at home and has some knowledge of the Internet. Most have only rudimentary skills or familiarity with the keyboard, screen menus and procedures for word processing, control or data handling. By the end of Key Stage 3, all can carry out basic word processing tasks, cut and paste art work into text and have mastered the early skills of data handling and control programs. As the new scheme of work has only recently been introduced, it is not surprising that progress is not so obvious in Key Stage 4. However, the learning that takes place within lessons, linked to a very good, well-structured programme of skills development, indicates that progress is already beginning to improve. Already pupils in Year 11 are comfortable with using the Internet, sending e-mails, presenting work using graphics and text and coming to conclusions from data entered into and collated by spreadsheet programs.
108. Teaching in ICT is always good and usually very good. It is characterised by very good planning, extremely effective use of what are now first-class resources and a thorough approach to recording what pupils have done and what they need support with. This, together with a good scheme of work, provides pupils with a secure basis for learning.

They enjoy using the new facilities and gain great satisfaction from the training they receive and the high quality work they produce in print and graphics work. This involvement means that the very knowledgeable specialist teacher and learning support assistant are able to maximise their skills and ensure progress for all pupils in all lessons. They work well as a team and provide an informed and supportive backup for all pupils, including those who experience difficulties in reading and attention span. Thus, in a very good Year 7 lesson, pupils who have had very little experience of ICT work at their own computer, watch demonstrations on an electronic white board and receive almost instantaneous support if they encounter problems. A good Year 8 lesson sees a similarly high quality of teaching and support. This time, pupils bring work from history lessons on transport. They use clip art and simple word processing to design a cover for their history folder. This task involves a wide range of search and editing skills. All pupils are successful and their results are recorded by the teacher and stored on personal disks for future reference. In a very good Year 11 lesson, pupils are developing control skills involving designing geometric and letter shapes using commands within a 'roamer' program. The task involves sequencing, a knowledge of distance and angles and an overall ability to plan ahead. These are all skills that many have had problems with in the past. The progress and confidence they show in completing the task is impressive and indicates that they are on course to leave Pencalenick with a good repertoire of ICT skills and, more important, an understanding of what computers can do. Occasionally, more able pupils complete work early and, at present, there is not enough extension work to ensure that they progress at an appropriate rate. There is also a need to develop skills to make the best use of the Internet and the material it provides.

109. All pupils enjoy ICT work. They appreciate the quality of the resources, are often thrilled by the excellence of the finished product and demonstrate very good levels of attention within the ICT lessons. Levels of behaviour are always good and often very good in all pupils, including those who have difficulties with attention and appropriate responses in other areas of the curriculum. They have an excellent relationship with and respect for the teacher and learning support assistant and are, therefore, keen to do well and produce good work. The respect offered to the pupils through the conscientious planning and high quality resources is more than returned by very mature behaviour from all pupils. Pupil enthusiasm is enhanced by their developing ability to use the Internet for accessing the web and sending e-mails. The growth in confidence goes hand in hand with skills development and both contribute to highly motivated and fulfilled pupils.
110. The co-ordination of this subject has been very good indeed. It is now very well led, resourced and taught. Links with some subject areas, such as history, design and technology, mathematics and European studies are very strong and training is being provided as each curriculum subject begins to incorporate information technology into their planning. There is still some room for development in the use of computers within classrooms, for training to boost all teachers' awareness and confidence in the subject and for the provision of appropriate software in some subjects.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### ***French***

111. French is taught to both key stages as part of a broader programme of European studies.
112. Levels of achievement in French are good in both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress. Younger pupils greet each other in French and ask how they are. They talk and write about what they like and dislike by using 'j'aime' and 'je n'aime pas'. Pupils learn food names like 'fromage', 'frites', 'pommes' and 'oignon'. Older pupils talk and write in French about conservation issues. They understand and use phrases like 'economiser l'eau' and design ecology posters in French. These pupils study European cities and learn the names in French. They look at brochures and books while planning to develop a brochure of their own.
113. Teaching is good in both key stages. Lesson topics are introduced very clearly and many of the tasks provide a good challenge. The learning support assistant provides very good support in using the language laboratory. Where this happens, however, other pupils may be left with a holding activity like colouring in a worksheet which is undemanding and gives the pupils little opportunity to make good progress. By contrast, there is good planning and range of activities for pupils who have additional special needs, for example visual impairment. The teachers generally give good encouragement to the pupils to pronounce French words correctly and the team teaching arrangements in Key Stage 4 work well.
114. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are good, they work hard and enjoy trying out their new vocabulary on each other. This is because the staff are enthusiastic about the subject and develop warm relationships with the pupils. Pupils are often encouraged by others in the group and make light of each other's difficulties if these arise. This means that pupils persevere, are resilient and eager to do well.
115. The management of European studies is good. The arrangements for monitoring the teaching are informal but effective and the team planning and team teaching effectively use the complementary skills of all the staff involved. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has good technical knowledge of effective teaching strategies as well as a good command of the language. The school has maintained the good standards reported at the last inspection and has improved the accommodation and resources for the subject. There is good use of information technology through the language laboratory and relevant information is frequently sought in lessons from the Internet. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through trips to France and a planned link with a special school in Germany.

### **MUSIC**

116. Levels of achievement are good in music in Key Stage 3 and the subject is not taught to older pupils. Pupils play rhythmic accompaniments to songs using handclaps, claves and other unpitched percussion instruments. They perform simple melodic accompaniments to tunes using chime bars, glockenspiels and marimbas. Pupils know whether certain pitches are high or low and whether a tune goes up or down. Pupils name different sections of the orchestra, like woodwind and brass, and identify specific instruments within those sections, like flutes and trombones, when they hear a recording. Pupils learn about binary form, the stave and name the notes on the lines. They improvise dance sequences to recorded music.

117. Teaching is always satisfactory and generally good. Where the teaching is good, this means that pupils make good progress and learn quickly. In these lessons, the relationships are warm and friendly, the activities chosen in the lessons are effectively introduced and are appropriate to the age and interests of the pupils. Lessons move at a brisk pace and the pupils receive good feedback on their progress. There is good teamwork with the learning support assistants who have a very positive impact on the lessons. There is also good selective use of a commercial music scheme of work. In less effective lessons, pupils are not clear about the instructions and the staff sometimes find that a few pupils are difficult to control.
118. Pupils' attitudes to music are satisfactory overall but they can become distracted and disrupt the lesson for others. At other times, pupils, especially the younger ones, join in enthusiastically and display care and affection for each other and the staff.
119. The management of music is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and there have been improvements since the last inspection. Music sessions are now shorter and the accommodation and resources are good. The co-ordinator is beginning to make use of information technology and this will be invaluable in maintaining interest especially among the older pupils. The co-ordinator gives all pupils the opportunity to attend the choir and recorder groups, although no individual tuition, for example from a peripatetic teacher, is made available. The subject makes a good contribution to the cultural life of the school. Recent events have included visits to local lunchtime concerts, evening trips to see African dance and drumming and a visit to the school by a South American musical troupe.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. Physical education makes a highly positive contribution to the life of the school.
121. Pupils of all abilities make good gains in learning throughout the school. Younger pupils at Key Stage 3 who cannot swim use the facilities in the local community pool to gain a basic level of competence in the water; these skills are then applied to good effect when practising the personal survival routines associated with adventurous activities such as canoeing and sailing. They learn the basic skills of games such as basketball, passing and receiving the ball with some accuracy and learning to make good use of space. Older pupils then apply this learning well when working together as a team, thereby reinforcing their understanding of key vocational core skills. They also apply their understanding of team sports and competition when playing matches against other schools and during such events as the school's sports day. Younger pupils move round and over apparatus with considerable energy and develop a good understanding of how to vary their flight when using the trampette or the springboard. These levels of body-awareness are then applied and developed by older pupils in the highly relevant context of aerobics routines and weight-training programmes. Pupils learn how to climb, moving gracefully and treating the equipment with care, and practise their skills on artificial walls in local leisure centres.
122. Pupils respond very well to the activities. They have a sensible, mature attitude to health and safety issues, they look after their own kit and use showers and changing facilities appropriately. They co-operate well, helping and encouraging each other to very good effect and are very enthusiastic, displaying an excellent team spirit in group activities. Pupils tolerate cold, damp conditions with equanimity and show considerable determination in rising to the associated physical challenge. In all these respects, their

personal and social development is very good and the subject makes an extremely positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual and social development.

123. The quality of teaching is usually good, often very good, and has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned and founded upon the very good relationships between all staff and pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, know the pupils very well and generate extremely positive attitudes. There is a sensible, entirely appropriate approach to health and safety issues and teachers employ a very good range of strategies and clear demonstrations with the result that all pupils understand and can apply the points under consideration. Good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development are created and exploited, although opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning in other subjects such as mathematics and science are often overlooked. Where teaching is less successful, the range of strategies is more limited and opportunities for pupils to record and evaluate their own performance, particularly in mathematical terms, are under-exploited.
124. The subject is very well co-ordinated, and adventurous activities, linked to the outdoor education programme, are a particular strength. This area, linked to a good residential visits programme, is co-ordinated separately but this is entirely appropriate and the subject endorses the aims of the school extremely well. All pupils now have appropriate access to the subject, and provision is also enhanced by a wide range of lunchtime clubs and sporting links with other special and mainstream schools. However, the provision for dance is relatively weak and the part that physical education can play in other subjects, though acknowledged, is not formalised in ways that ensure that opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning and understanding in key areas of the whole curriculum are clearly identified and used. There is a very good gymnasium and excellent outdoor facilities that are used to very good effect, as is the local community; there is also a very good range of both large and small apparatus and equipment. The outdoor swimming pool, however, is currently out of commission with the result that older pupils' access to swimming programmes is severely restricted.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

125. The school has responded well to the findings of the last inspection and now makes very good provision for religious education. The subject makes an extremely positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and personal development, and embodies the aims of the school particularly well.
126. At Key Stage 3, pupils make good gains in learning. They know stories from the New Testament, such as the Nativity, in some detail and can compare and contrast attitudes towards such concepts as love and marriage in the Bible with those prevalent in modern Britain. They can discuss their feelings about events such as birth, and apply such insight to human rights issues. Pupils at Key Stage 4 develop this knowledge and awareness very effectively with the result that their levels of achievement are very good. They know many of the differences between the world's major religions. They can compare, for example, the Jewish concept of God with that of the Christian faith, and contrast the Bhuddist attitude towards personal wants and needs with that of a secular society.
127. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and, throughout the school, they develop a very good understanding of friendship and consideration for others. They respond very well to opportunities for discussion and are willing both to voice their opinions and to listen to those of their classmates. They treat other people's views with respect and sensitivity and express themselves with little sign of self-consciousness.

128. Teaching in religious education is never less than good, often very good and occasionally excellent, especially at Key Stage 4. Lessons are well planned and founded upon excellent relationships between all concerned. Teachers set very high expectations for the pupils. Staff work very effectively together as a team and are quick to relate the issues contained in, for example, the Bible, to the choices and dilemmas faced in everyday life. As a result, the pupils appreciate the relevance of the lessons, maintain their concentration and become increasingly involved in the topic under discussion. The teacher values and respects pupils' contributions, and uses them skilfully to illustrate points of view and advance the pupils' understanding, as in an excellent Key Stage 4 lesson on the Christian view of love, sex and marriage. Opportunities to develop pupils' reading and communication skills are created and exploited to best effect. Homework is used imaginatively and to good effect in reinforcing pupils' knowledge and understanding.
129. There is a good scheme of work which, through its close links with the programmes for the pupils' personal and social education, is highly relevant to the pupils' needs. The contribution that the subject makes to the school's arrangements for collective worship, however, is underdeveloped and opportunities to accredit the pupils' learning, and vocational core skills are not clearly identified. The recently refurbished accommodation provides a pleasant teaching area and there is a good range of resources and texts which are used well.