

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **SITHNEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sithney, Helston

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111824

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Griffiths

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Baxter  
25217

Dates of inspection: 3-4 February 2003

Inspection number: 247147

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Crowntown  
Sithney  
Helston  
Cornwall

Postcode: TR13 0AE

Telephone number: 01326-572910

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Graham Kitts

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
25217	Paul Baxter	Registered inspector
12735	Mary Bebo	Lay inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA

Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>16</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This community primary school for pupils aged between four and eleven years is much smaller than other schools nationally and it serves a rural community not far from Helston in Cornwall. It has 57 pupils, 32 boys and 25 girls; of these, three children attend part time in the reception class. The school roll is constantly changing with varying and occasionally significant numbers of pupils in the different year groups either entering or leaving the school other than at normal times of admission and transfer. Most pupils are white with seven per cent from ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly travellers. No pupils have English as an additional language. In socio-economic terms, most pupils come from average backgrounds. Approximately 22 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, a broadly average percentage. Seven pupils have special educational needs, covering speech and communication and moderate learning needs, and this represents a below average proportion. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs and this is below average for a school of this size. Children enter the reception class with broadly average levels of attainment, but significant variation can occur from year to year.

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

Sithney is a very good school with significant strengths, underpinned strongly by the committed leadership of the headteacher, who promotes an excellent team effort and a shared intention to enable pupils to achieve their best. As a result of the very effective implementation of national strategies in literacy and numeracy and the enrichment of the teachers' expertise through ongoing staff development and the sharing of skills, the quality of teaching is now very good. In response, the pupils show excellent attitudes and behaviour, enjoy exemplary relationships and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment by the time they leave the school. Standards are high in English and are above average in science and mathematics at the end of Year 6. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards are generally well above average and pupils' achievement is very good due to the consistent strength of the very good teaching.
- The school excels in managing pupils' social and moral development and ensures that spiritual development is very good and, as a consequence, the pupils respond extremely positively to teachers' high expectations of them and this enriches their learning.
- The headteacher's excellent example, strongly supported by colleagues and governors, underpins an equally successful shared commitment for improvement and capacity to succeed that constantly evaluates and enriches pupils' learning.
- Pupils develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) very well and use and extend these productively to improve their learning across the curriculum.

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

- The low rate of pupils' attendance in relation to that found nationally.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Sithney was judged to be a good school at the time of the last inspection in October 1997. Since then the school has improved well in all areas of provision and is a very good school now. Standards have improved significantly in every subject inspected, especially in English, mathematics and ICT. The previous inspection criticised areas of provision in ICT, particularly the pupils' ability to control mechanisms. The pupils' independence and great inventiveness in using ICT are now huge assets. The quality of teaching and learning has been improved considerably with nearly a four-fold increase in the

proportion of very good lessons observed and now promotes the pupils' very good achievement. A successful team approach underpins the headteacher's leadership and is the driving force behind the school's excellent shared commitment and capacity to succeed.

## STANDARDS

The table showing the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, based on average point scores in the 2002 National Curriculum tests, has been omitted because the size of the year group was too small to make statistical comparisons valid.

The year groups are very small and each year the number of pupils and their prior attainments vary considerably. In addition, a high proportion of pupils leaves or enters the school at times other than the norm. These make statistical comparisons of pupils' performance in national tests with other schools unreliable if based only on one year. Nevertheless, the pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science in recent years, shows a higher trend of rising standards compared to that found nationally, reflecting the school's very effective provision. Except in writing, where there has been a slight fall, standards have risen in a similar way at the end of Year 2. Inspection shows that reception children are achieving at least well in all areas of the curriculum. They reach the nationally recommended goals in most areas of learning except in personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy, where standards are above average. Standards continue to rise in Years 1 to 6 in response to very good teaching. The pupils' attainment is high in English and mathematics and it is above average in science by the end of Year 2. Attainment is high in English and is above average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, with any differences reflecting the variations in the pupils' prior attainment. There are strengths in the pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and in their use to enrich learning across the curriculum. The pupils' skills are also well developed in history, music and physical education. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, potentially higher attainers and pupils from differing backgrounds, such as travellers, achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. The school is on course to exceed the targets set for pupils' attainment.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school, show enthusiasm and sustain concentration extremely well, enhancing their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent in lessons and at play across the school and strongly underpinning pupils' enjoyment of school and their academic success.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships between all those who work in the school. Pupils enjoy good personal development but independent use of the library is restricted by its location away from two out of the three classrooms.
Attendance	Low compared to the national average, due in part to the significant statistical impact absences can have in a small school.

The way in which pupils work hard, either as individuals or in groups, showing interest in their studies and respect for each other, whatever their level of contribution, are particular strengths that are promoted very consistently and warmly by all the staff of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	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 very good overall; it is a consistent strength across the school and it is the key factor in promoting the pupils' successful learning. All the teaching observed across the school was at least good and three-quarters was very good – an outstanding level of consistent quality. Consequently, the pupils' learning was enjoyable and fruitful. Relationships are first class. Learning is a productive social occasion for the pupils, who feel secure and respect their teachers and respond positively to the firm but warm management of behaviour. The pupils sustain concentration for long periods and, encouraged by their teachers, share a consistent commitment to their work. They co-operate well, especially when using computers or other resources; consequently, they learn very well. The teachers are very knowledgeable and interest and challenge all pupils, including higher attainers and lower-attaining pupils, equally successfully. The teachers assess the pupils' work and progress most effectively. They know their pupils very well. They share expertise with each other and with the learning support assistants diligently and use their knowledge of individual pupils very effectively to include all pupils from differing backgrounds, including travellers, to promote the pupils' very good achievement. In the best lessons, teachers set very high expectations; their questions are penetrating and demand the right amount of thinking from the pupils. As a result, the pupils know what is expected of them and build very well on what they have learned before. The needs of reception children are particularly well met in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development and the very well-equipped indoor reception room is used most effectively to stimulate the children's learning through role play and a rich variety of practical experiences. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are taught very effectively in all classes and are used and extended productively to enrich the pupils' learning across the range of subjects. There is scope, however, to offer more investigation and challenge in science for Year 2 pupils in the youngest class.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall; a well-planned curriculum that is considerably enriched by the extremely effective use of ICT and by the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills to support their learning across the range of subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; all teachers and learning support assistants give sensitive, carefully considered support, strengthening the pupils' achievements.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall; excellent provision for the pupils' moral and social development, very good spiritual and good cultural development. The excellent role models of staff and the purposefully planned learning opportunities in lessons promote the pupils' excellent attitudes to their work.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very effective provision with a strong emphasis on including all pupils, valuing their contributions and challenging them to achieve their best.

The parents, local community and other schools are very supportive of the school and these links significantly enrich the curriculum and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall; the outstanding personal contribution by the headteacher, very well supported by the senior teacher, establishes an excellent commitment and capacity to succeed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall; under the clear direction of an experienced chair, governors give effective support to the staff of the school. There is insufficient information about the school's finances, pupils' attendance and facilities for disabled pupils in the governors' annual report for parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; a rigorous programme of assessing the pupils' performance contributes strongly to improvements in standards and teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; finances, including sums brought forward, are used very effectively to support the school's priorities and the pupils' achievement.

Principles of best value are applied well to all spending decisions. The school is resourced and staffed very well. The recently improved accommodation is beautifully maintained and is satisfactory overall. However, facilities for children's independent outdoor play are not sufficient, and most pupils still have to go outside to access toilets, and this is a weakness. The school promotes racial equality effectively.

## 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>The children like school, behave well and make good progress.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed and the teaching is good.</li> <li>The children are expected to work hard and achieve their best and the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The degree to which the school works closely with parents.</li> <li>The quality of the information provided by the school about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team support all of the parents' positive views expressed above. Inspectors consider that the school works very closely with parents and provides good information about how children are progressing.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Standards are generally well above average and pupils' achievement is very good due to the consistent strength of the very good teaching.**

1. The quality of teaching and learning has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection. All the lessons observed across the school were at least good and three-quarters were very good, an outstanding level of consistency and quality. As a consequence, the pupils build systematically on their previous learning as they move from class to class and achieve very well by the time they leave the school. The quality of teaching is strong in many aspects but the following elements are key features that promote the pupils' learning across the whole school:
  - teachers set high expectations for pupils' effort, attainment and achievement;
  - teachers possess very good knowledge of the subjects they teach, enabling them to challenge and develop the pupils' thinking and understanding;
  - lessons, including the use of support staff and resources, are planned very meticulously, ensuring that learning objectives to meet the needs of all pupils are fully met;
  - the teachers assess the pupils' work and oral responses very thoroughly and use this knowledge equally successfully to develop the pupils' skills;
  - the teachers promote very warm relationships, emphasise the spiritual dimension of learning, and ensure that the pupils' efforts are celebrated and that learning is enjoyed;
  - teachers and support assistants use and share their talents in a very good working partnership to promote the pupils' learning successfully.
  
2. These aspects, present in all the lessons observed, were combined to best effect in the very good lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Class 1 for reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, the teacher used her detailed knowledge of the pupils, including the youngest children, to challenge them rigorously but supportively. The pupils were required to recite their knowledge of number bonds and to demonstrate their skill in addition and subtraction. In response, the pupils rose to the challenge, showed real enthusiasm for the tasks and celebrated not only their own, but also each other's success. The climate of expectation nurtured by the teacher had a very powerful and beneficial impact on the pupils' achievement.
  
3. Teaching in Class 2, for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4, was also very good and was clearly demonstrated in a history lesson where ICT was used to enrich pupils' learning. Teaching in this lesson was typified by the teacher's detailed planning, the teacher's knowledgeable responses to the pupils' observations and by her encouragement of the pupils' independence in learning. During this lesson, the pupils reacted to the teacher's focused questioning with enthusiasm. They were genuinely interested, for example, in why King Henry VIII had so many wives. Informed by the teacher, the pupils researched their CD-ROMS and books to collect information, shared their findings with each other and with the teacher and by the end of the lesson were interrogating the accuracy of historical evidence, exploring possible reasons why the king changed his wives. This reflects the maturity of the pupils' thinking, the significant quality of their attainment and the success of the lesson in promoting their learning.
  
4. The pupils' learning continued to blossom in Class 3, for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, as the teacher stepped up the level of challenge to match the pupils' increased skill and maturity. A significant feature of the teaching observed in this class was the teacher's skill in meeting the needs of pupils with differing levels of prior attainment, including pupils relatively new to the school, without lowering the overall challenge and pace of learning. This was seen to very good effect in a literacy lesson where the pupils considered the range of vocabulary needed to present an argued case - 'managing dogs on beaches'. The lesson was thoroughly planned, developed very clear links with previous work, made focused use of overhead projection to present text, and showed the teacher's secure knowledge of the issue being considered. In addition, her skilful questioning to involve, challenge and assess the pupils' understanding sustained very good learning for all the pupils.

5. By the end of the lesson, planned learning objectives had been achieved; for example, the pupils demonstrated their understanding that there are different points of view to be considered, recognised informal language and complex questions and developed their skills in using connective words to present their writing. This was another very successful lesson.
6. The visiting part-time music teacher also showed very good skills and combined rigorous expectations with warmth and encouragement. None more so than in the music lessons seen, where in response to the teacher's prompting and the learning support assistants' sympathetic advice, all pupils from a very young age sustained concentration, acquired skills, played xylophones and sang with enjoyment at a standard more usual for older pupils.
7. Across the school pupils with special educational needs are fully included and achieve as well as others in relation to their prior attainment. Inspection clearly shows that by using and sharing their talent, dedicated teachers and support assistants are promoting the pupils' learning extremely effectively.

**The school excels in managing pupils' social and moral development and ensures that spiritual development is very good and, as a consequence, the pupils respond extremely positively to teachers' high expectations of them and this enriches their learning.**

8. A warm, caring and encouraging atmosphere greets all those who work at or visit the school and an infectious response flows from its recipients, especially from the pupils. The beautifully maintained surroundings, the welcoming faces and the demonstrably helpful gestures promoted strongly by all the adults in the school, and increasingly shown by the pupils as they grow and mature, combine to create an environment where people, especially pupils, feel valued and, consequently, want to learn well.
9. Governors, staff and visiting parents or guest speakers cultivate and enjoy excellent relationships and they use these diligently and productively to put pupils at ease and to build their confidence for the learning challenges to come. It is a warm environment but is also highly expectant and challenging and is clearly focused on pupils achieving as well as they are able.
10. The beneficial impact of these aspects was clearly visible in all the lessons observed and it was a particularly supportive factor in the pre-school 'Stepping Stones' session in the 'early years' role-play area. Children settle very quickly into the day-to-day routines that support their learning and soon develop a determined approach to their work that significantly enriches their achievement. This was evident in the written work completed by the pupils, especially in their English books, where in response to the high quality of the teachers' marking and encouragement, the pupils' entries are beautifully recorded, reflecting their excellent attitudes. The scrutiny of the pupils' writing, their recorded investigations in science, their letters written as if first-hand participants in historical events and their carefully presented diagrams and calculations in science and mathematics, all show the positive impact such application has on their learning.
11. The excellent role models provided by adults in the school were further demonstrated in daily assemblies where the headteacher and teaching staff set a consistent combination of high expectation and warm appreciation of the pupils' effort. A good example of this was the celebration assembly where pupils from across the school received certificates acknowledging their valued contributions. Visiting speakers from a local faith group also presented an excellent example to the pupils in how to value others as well as oneself. The consistency of the lessons presented underpinned the validity of the message to the pupils and promoted their independent will to be a caring individual. This form of strong provision for the pupils' spiritual development is enriched further in lessons where teachers and support assistants value and respond positively to the pupils' ideas. For example, in a lesson in the Year 4, 5 and 6 class the teacher praised the sensitive way that the pupils shared their views about the Second World War. Such lessons also provided excellent experiences to support the pupils' moral and social development, equally effective elements in promoting the pupils' excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships that supported their learning so successfully. Increasingly the teachers are identifying opportune moments to highlight these aspects in their daily lesson planning; for example, in Years 2, 3 and

4, where the pupils were encouraged to consider the right of King Henry VIII to seek a male heir to the throne. Such focused learning significantly enriched the pupils' understanding.

12. Staff are very responsive to the pupils' emotional needs and are fully understanding of the way pupils learn from mistakes as well as success. Pupils feel secure in the knowledge that even if things go wrong they will receive equally sensitive and supportive help. This was seen during the inspection when one learning support assistant identified a young pupil in distress and consulted a colleague to ensure that the pupil was comforted and his needs addressed effectively. The detailed knowledge that staff possess and share about each pupil is used to good effect in promoting their welfare and achievement in all facets of school life. Parents, too, know that the staff care and this encourages them to support the school fully. In turn, the pupils see these positive relationships, value the work of the school and apply themselves with renewed and fruitful vigour. As they grow older the pupils increasingly show these qualities themselves; older pupils show consideration to the youngest children, and they undertake responsibility carefully whenever it is offered.
13. In their discussion with the inspector, pupils in Year 6 readily expressed their appreciation of the system of 'House Captains' and highlighted the positive value of these captains taking part in the 'Sharing Assembly' where the pupils' efforts are recognised in front of the whole school. Inspection shows that the school's strong ethos of high expectation of effort and achievement, and its equal commitment to the pupils' well-being, are key reasons why all pupils, even those who have spent considerably less time in the school, achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment by the time they leave.

**The headteacher's excellent example, strongly supported by colleagues and governors, underpins an equally successful shared commitment for improvement and capacity to succeed that constantly evaluates and enriches pupils' learning.**

14. In recent years, the headteacher has been diligent in updating and extending her personal skills. She has achieved this by working closely with colleagues in nearby 'Beacon Schools' and by completing additional professional training. At the same time she has been totally committed to involving the whole school community in plotting the improvement and future direction of the school, and staff and governors have also derived much benefit from joint training and communications with partner institutions. These initiatives and the school's subsequent responses have led to the following developments:
  - increased and more effective monitoring of the quality of provision, especially the quality of teaching and learning and the planned curriculum, which have led to significant improvements in these aspects and these have raised the overall standards attained by the pupils;
  - improved and now very effective use of assessments of the pupils' work and performance to promote the pupils' very good learning. These include the setting of well thought out targets to promote pupils' achievement, the detailed analysis of the pupils' performance in national and optional tests and the high quality marking and responses to the pupils' work;
  - staff, governors, pupils and parents now have a clear awareness of what pupils are attaining and this is enabling them to focus even more effectively on how to promote improvement and to raise standards. For example, the decision to locate new computers in classrooms that is having a beneficial impact on the pupils' learning in Years 2 to 6 and the well formulated school development plan that sets out future initiatives.
15. As a consequence, the quality of the headteacher's leadership is now excellent and it is enriched by the very strong support of governors and staff colleagues. The school's search for improvement and ability to achieve this are now also excellent. Inspection clearly shows this in the following respects:

- the quality of provision in almost all areas has shown at least good improvement since the last inspection and with most being very good, including the quality of teaching and learning, and some being excellent, including the provision for the pupils' moral and social development;
- all the key areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been significantly improved, especially the quality of teaching and learning in ICT;
- the standards of pupils' attainment have risen at a rate that is above the trend found nationally year on year. This has been accomplished despite substantial variations in the number of pupils seeking entry to the school, the number of pupils entering and leaving the school other than at the normal time and the prior attainment of the pupils. All pupils, regardless of background and prior attainment, now achieve very well by the time they leave the school;
- the excellent quality of the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships that underpin their successful learning.

16. Inspection shows that Sithney is a very effective, self-evaluating, self-improving school.

**Pupils develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) very well and use and extend these productively to improve their learning across the curriculum.**

17. The promotion of the pupils' literacy skills and their increasing and very successful use to support learning in other subjects are particular strengths of the way the curriculum is taught across the school. This was clearly evident in the lessons observed during the inspection. For example, in a lesson in the reception and Year 1 and 2 class the teachers clearly planned and focused emphasis on technical terms, such as 'multiples, calculations and repeated addition', significantly extended the pupils' vocabulary and enriched their understanding of mathematical concepts. In an English lesson in Years 4, 5 and 6, the pupils were required to build a 'bank' of useful terms such as 'on the contrary' and 'unpredictable' to support their consideration of how to argue a case and these were developed and used further to strengthen their studies of the twentieth century in history. This productive and consistent reference to key vocabulary was also clearly apparent in the pupils' recorded work. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 wrote about the 'commercialisation of Christmas' in their religious education studies and stated that 'life was very hard' when writing letters home as a Roman Legionnaire in their history studies. These types of activity significantly enrich the pupils' understanding in these subjects. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 used their literacy skills to produce non-fiction books about an Indian village in geography and described in detail how they set up a fair test in science to measure how long it took for ice to melt. These strategies extended their learning very well. In general, the high quality of the pupils' recorded writing and the presentation and coherence of their sentence construction, significantly promote their progressively improving knowledge and understanding in the range of subjects.
18. Numeracy skills are also stressed across the curriculum and aid the pupils' learning in subjects such as science and geography. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 compare and contrast differing environments and use their improving data-handling skills to create graphs of population figures relating to Croydon and Sithney. Pupils in Year 3 have used 'Venn Diagrams' to identify similarities between Sikh and Christian festivals. In a history lesson in Years 2, 3 and 4, the pupils' investigations concerning the accuracy of the records describing the actions of King Henry VIII were strengthened by the pupils' ability to compare and subtract dates to note the differences.
19. With the relatively recent acquisition of new computers, especially in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, teachers and pupils are using ICT very effectively to support learning across the curriculum. At the same time, literacy and numeracy skills are also utilised and extended. The scrutiny of the pupils' recorded work revealed many examples of ICT being used to good effect. For example, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 accessed a weather site and used a digital camera to show activities at the school when it snowed. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 used ICT to enhance their entries in their version of the 'Cornish Mail' by locating texts about a wrecked oil tanker and references to the footballer 'David Robert Joseph Beckham'. Across the school, the pupils use ICT regularly to support their learning in lessons. During the inspection, very young children in reception were observed using a computer to operate a mathematical program. In Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils used computers to gather information from CD-ROMS and used 'cut and paste' techniques skilfully to

add to their profile/evidence sheets. In this work the pupils showed their increasing independence and used computers to promote their historical research skills. In Years 4, 5 and 6, the pupils' ICT and literacy skills improved rapidly as they interrogated text on computer screens to locate the connectives used to link sentences.

20. The teachers are skilled in ensuring that the pupils utilise their developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to the full to support all aspects of their learning. As a consequence, pupils are achieving very well across the whole curriculum.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The low rate of pupils' attendance in relation to that found nationally.**

21. The school's overall rate of attendance for 2001/2002 was 91.1 per cent and this was low in relation to the national average of 94.1 per cent. The figures include above average authorised absence at 8.2 per cent (national average = 5.4 per cent) and above average unauthorised absence at 0.7 per cent (national average = 0.5 per cent). Taken together, these figures are poor when compared to those found nationally but they reflect the significant statistical impact that absences relating to one or two pupils have on a very small school, such as Sithney. Other inspection evidence, from discussions with staff, parents and pupils, shows that pupils like coming to school. The vast majority attend regularly and achieve very well, indicating that non-attendance has a detrimental effect on the learning of a very small number of pupils, and far fewer than the statistics may suggest. Even so, inspection also shows that attendance could be raised by more effective promotion of good attendance. The school has already begun to strengthen this provision by:
  - enlisting support for families from the local authority's education welfare officer;
  - ascertaining reasons for absence on the first day;
  - encouraging parents to take holidays outside school term times;
  - supporting termly consultations with parents by supplying a record of the pupils' attendance.However, these have not been in place long enough to have their maximum impact.
22. An analysis of the pupils' attendance during the autumn term 2002 and during this spring term 2003 continues to show extended periods of absence, mainly due to illness, of a small number of pupils. Evidence also indicates that current methods of recording attendance, although satisfactory, lack the support of the following elements that would help to raise attendance:
  - incentives to encourage good attendance, both for individual pupils and for classes;
  - clear codes for highlighting the specific reasons for absence;
  - completion of a daily record of the school's total attendance and absence figures;
  - direct involvement of governors in promoting good attendance;
  - reports of the school's attendance figures in the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents being additionally referenced by comparisons with the national averages.
23. In order to raise attendance it is essential that the school emphasises this issue with all members of the school community and adopts a consistent approach in addressing the problem.

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

24. In the context of the school's many strengths and in order to continue its successful development and bring all aspects of its provision to a high standard, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- Raise the rate of the pupils' attendance by strengthening the procedures for recording and promoting attendance.
- (paragraphs 21-23)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	3	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	75	25	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than eight percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	56
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	7

#### 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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5



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

Data relating to National Curriculum tests is excluded because there were fewer than 11 pupils in each year group tested.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	53	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	18.1

**Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

*FTE means full-time equivalent.***Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	111,064
Total expenditure	122,216
Expenditure per pupil	2,263
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,485
Balance carried forward to next year	9,333

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.7
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	33
Number of questionnaires returned	21

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	24	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	38	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	25	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	48	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	81	19	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	76	14	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	19	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	24	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	24	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	38	5	0	0

### Other issues raised by parents

The vast majority of the parents consulted felt that Sithney is a very good school that continues to improve. Several parents have concerns about road safety and the limited parking facilities provided for parents and visitors to the school.