

INSPECTION REPORT

Gunnislake Primary School

Gunnislake

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111952

Headteacher: Mrs M Willis

Lead inspector: Mr J Palk

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th April 2004

Inspection number: 256303

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	84
School address:	Chapel Street Gunnislake Cornwall
Postcode:	PL18 9NA
Telephone/Fax number:	01822 832685
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Smale
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Gunnislake is a small community primary school. Pupils are from socio-economic circumstances that are below average, although few pupils are receiving free school meals. All the pupils are of white British origin. There are below average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, ranging from moderate difficulties to physical needs. Two pupils have a statement for their particular needs. There are no pupils in the school who are in care. The reception children start school at different times in the year and are taught with year 1 and 2 pupils. There is one class with year 3 and year 4 and some year 5 pupils. The third class caters for the remaining year 5 and year 6 pupils. The attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average.

The number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual times is above average. During the inspection temporary teachers taught the youngest class because of staff absence. Since the last inspection the school has decreased in size by the equivalent of one class. There have been a number of temporary headteachers and considerable staff absence that has affected organisation. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23630	Mr J Palk	Lead inspector	English History Geography Music
13911	Mrs J Gallichan	Lay inspector	
24528	Mr G Muton	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Physical education Religious education
28014	Mr P Buckley	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is providing a **sound** education for its pupils and under the guidance of the headteacher and governing body is improving quickly. Standards are satisfactory, although some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The teaching is satisfactory overall, but is not sufficiently demanding of more able pupils. The budget is used wisely to bring about improvement and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is giving a firm steer in raising standards and improving pupils' learning.
- The standards achieved by pupils in year 2 are below average.
- Throughout the school pupils are not achieving well enough in information and communication technology (ICT), science and religious education (RE).
- The teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons and there is good provision for those with special educational needs.
- Lessons are not always well enough planned to meet the wide range of needs in classes.
- Subject managers are not sufficiently involved in leading improvements.
- There is a strong partnership with the community and other schools that extends the curriculum.

Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Whilst inspectors judge that the school is now improving, standards have not improved significantly and have declined in some areas. The quality of teaching English is improving but in some other subjects teachers' low expectations affect pupils' achievements. Some issues from the last inspection have not been fully addressed. Since the arrival of the headteacher leadership and management has strengthened and the school is improving in a number of key respects. The curriculum is better organised and the governing body is fully involved in strategic development.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 , compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E	D	D
mathematics	E	D	C	C
science	D	D	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The number of pupils taking the tests are small and fluctuates year on year. Test results need to be treated with caution because any changes in the nature of cohorts has a disproportionate impact on results.

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Children in the reception class make a satisfactory start and are on course to meet the expectations of the early learning goals by the time they start in year 1. In years 1 and 2 less able pupils make good progress in English because of the support they receive in lessons. For some of the year 2 pupils progress is patchy and they do not achieve what they are capable of. In years 3 to 6 pupils achieve at variable rates. Pupils are achieving well in writing because of some good teaching. Standards in English are average. In mathematics standards are average but some more able pupils are not adequately challenged and do not reach the standards they are capable of. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils, throughout the school, do not achieve well in investigative science because this receives less

attention and opportunities for independent work are too limiting. Pupils are also underachieving in ICT because of the lack of resources, reliable hardware and regular teaching.

Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. They behave well but older pupils lack enthusiasm because they are not given enough independence in their learning. This has a negative impact on their progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall with some good features. Teachers work hard. Lessons are well managed and introductions motivate and engage most of the pupils. Teaching support is well organised and makes a significant contribution to the learning of reception children and the less able pupils throughout the school. In too many lessons the work given to pupils is not matched accurately enough to their needs. Teachers encourage pupils to think by asking questions but overly direct lessons. This slows the pace of learning.

The curriculum is organised well to ensure there is continuity of learning in the mixed age classes. However, the weekly timetable of lessons is such that the computers, which are grouped together in the library, and the hall are seldom used. This diminishes the overall provision in these subjects and limits the opportunities for pupils to practice their ICT skills. Community links have improved rapidly and provide for a range of additional practical experiences that enrich pupils' learning. Pupils are well cared for throughout the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides good leadership and management and has acted quickly to implement systems and procedures that help the school check on its performance. Other staff are not yet sufficiently involved in helping evaluate school development. The governors' role is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are reasonably positive. They appreciate the headteacher's efforts to involve them in improving the school. Communications between school and home are getting better but parents do not receive a clear picture about their children's progress.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in year 2.
- Improve standards in ICT, science and RE throughout the school.
- Ensure lessons are meeting the needs of all pupils.
- Involve teachers in monitoring the work of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Standards are below average by the end of year 2. They are average by the end of year 6 in English and mathematics, but below average in science. There is some difference in the achievements of boys and girls in national tests. Inspection found no difference in the achievements of boys and girls throughout the school. More able pupils do not make enough progress in some subjects because the work is not challenging enough.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Less able pupils make good progress in English throughout the school.
- Pupils are not achieving well enough in their practical science work and religious education.
- Pupils are not making enough progress in ICT and standards are well below average by year 6.
- More able pupils in years 1 and 2 are not achieving as well as they should because work is not consistently demanding enough.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (14.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (12.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.6 (15.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Too much reliance on test data can be misleading as the numbers are small and some years the nature of cohorts dramatically affects the school's results. Taken over the last three years the trend in performance in the national tests for year 2 pupils has been below the national trend. In the main this is because the more able pupils do not reach the higher levels and too many pupils do not reach average levels.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (26.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. These results are average overall and in the last three years the improvement has been better than the national trend. Less able pupils and those of average ability who were with the school between year 3 and year 6 did not make the progress expected in writing but made satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. More able pupils made satisfactory progress compared with pupils in similar schools. Girls have done better than boys in all tests over the last three years.

Inspection findings

3. Children meet the goals that they are expected to reach in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the end of the reception year. Their personal, social and emotional skills are well developed. Scrutiny of pupils' work from years 1 and 2 indicated that, for many, progress is erratic and standards are below average overall. The more able pupils are not being extended in their reading and writing. Grammar and spelling are still weak features of pupils' written work. Less able pupils are making good progress because of well-targeted literacy support. Work in mathematics is not challenging all pupils to use their calculation skills and they are not developing a secure base of mental arithmetic skills. There is insufficient practical work in science that is matched to the pupils' abilities, and investigative skills are below average.
4. Through years 3 to 6 average and less able pupils have been given extra support in English and mathematics. The use of information about their prior attainment and good additional teaching, including additional lessons and specific programmes, is proving effective and these pupils are reaching the standards expected. Pupils with special educational needs have plenty of adult support and well-matched tasks, and they make satisfactory progress. There is a strong structure to support the teaching of reading and writing and expectations are high. This improvement in teaching writing is successfully addressing earlier weaknesses and has raised standards. The more able pupils are adequately stretched to produce good quality writing but this is limited to work in English lessons. There is good emphasis placed on introducing and using high quality vocabulary and handwriting skills that is lifting standards.
5. Standards in mathematics are average but should be higher for some more able pupils. They are not rising quickly enough. This is mainly due to weaker teaching of strategies for calculation and unchallenging work in using data. There is better assessment information available but this is not used consistently to plan ambitious work for them. This holds up their achievement.
6. Whilst pupils have good speaking skills this is not utilised in all lessons and affects pupils' achievements in science. Many pupils' explanations in their science work are weak and contribute to below average standards. They have little experience of good quality practical work in science and do not consolidate their scientific knowledge and vocabulary.
7. Work set for pupils in religious education is too limited to encourage them to think more deeply about faith and their knowledge of other religions is below that expected.
8. Despite the best efforts of the headteacher to bring resources up to standard, pupils are not making up the lost ground in their ICT skills. Teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject and the irregular opportunities provided to pupils to practice new skills is having a negative impact on achievements. The overall lack of opportunities for independent and collaborative work in ICT also has an adverse effect on their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour, including the incidence of exclusions, are satisfactory. Other aspects of personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural are satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes of five, six and seven year olds are good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they act responsibly in classrooms.
- Opportunities are missed for developing aspects of pupils' personal qualities.
- Some older pupils do not have positive attitudes to school.

Commentary

9. At the start of each school day most pupils join in enthusiastically with the morning 'wake up' (aerobic exercises led by a teacher). Five, six and seven year olds maintain this enthusiasm, and good attitudes were maintained at all times throughout the day, even when they were taught by temporary teachers. The younger pupils listen well when their teacher is talking and settle down to independent work quickly. Older pupils often respond well to teachers' questions, however some find it difficult to concentrate when lessons do not engage them. In discussion several of them complain about the sameness of lessons. Inspection evidence supports pupils' view that there are too few opportunities to find things out for themselves. For example, undertaking research or organising their own tests in science.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
91	1	0
1	0	0

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

10. One pupil was excluded last year for unacceptable behaviour. Behaviour in all classes is good, despite the distraction caused by one or two older pupils with emotional and behaviour problems. Behaviour on the playground is also generally good and there is no evidence of persistent bullying. However there are too many recorded incidents of inappropriate and sometimes unkind behaviour. From talking to many pupils it is clear that name-calling and teasing happens too often in the playground. There is a behaviour policy in place but it does not list in detail the procedures to be taken in the cases of continual bad behaviour. As a result there is some confusion between staff, parents and pupils about what happens in these cases. The headteacher is currently reviewing the behaviour policy to ensure these issues are addressed.
11. The school has made a good start on encouraging positive attitudes, including rewards for good effort. The good range of extra curricular clubs, visits and visitors is also helpful in this regard and pupils value the achievement assemblies on Fridays. However there is insufficient attention paid to making learning itself enjoyable and lessons do not give older pupils sufficient opportunities to express their own views or to work independently or collaboratively. Consequently some of them show unsatisfactory attitudes to school.
12. The headteacher is very committed to pupils' personal development. She has improved the arrangements for collective worship that now include well planned themes and the use of music to help create a special atmosphere. Pupils appreciate these changes. There are good examples of pupils' views being valued in the school. Projects such as the importance of water to peoples of the world, along with community and charity involvement, ensure satisfactory development of pupils' cultural awareness. School and classroom rules are giving pupils a sound understanding of right and wrong.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory education. Action is being taken to improve pupils' learning in lessons but the curriculum is not well enough planned to meet the wide range of needs. Relationships in the school are good, and pupils are taught in a positive and encouraging manner.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Assessment information is not used consistently to provide pupils with work that is matched to their stage of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage their pupils well; pupils are included well and lessons get off to a good start.
- Teachers' questions and the expectations they have of pupils are not always well matched to pupils' needs.
- Too much of the work is planned for the age of pupils and not their ability; this limits what the more able are capable of achieving.
- There is good support from teaching assistants and this contributes to the good achievements of less able pupils.
- The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory and consequently pupils are not learning fast enough.

Commentary

13. Children in the reception year and in years 1 and 2 were taught by their teacher one day and by two temporary teachers over subsequent days of the inspection. The planning of the lessons with the teaching assistants ensured there was no break in the children's learning. The teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of reception children through their careful tracking of what the children have learnt. The staff match work carefully, providing just the right amount of direct teaching and learning through exploration. The literacy and numeracy activities in the morning are well resourced and the relationship between adults and children ensures some effective learning in the areas of learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	9	12	2	0	0

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

14. Teaching and learning are variable through the school. Teachers provide a range of activities that stimulate pupils and engage them in the first part of the lesson. Less able pupils and those with special educational need are successfully encouraged to participate by the assistants. Too often questions are aimed at pupils with their hands up and the teachers do not use strategies to involve all pupils in working out answers.
15. Some teaching is good, particularly where there are clear objectives and the support from other adults is well linked to the lesson objectives. On some occasions the teachers make good use of assessment information to help them group pupils and match the work to abilities. Teachers are good at adapting literacy lessons to meet the needs of pupils in years 3 to 6 and groups are well organised to ensure good management of the time. The lack of ambitious planning in other subjects, such as science, means that some pupils coast in the main part of the lesson and the more able pupils are not extended. Some of the lesson planning is not precise enough in identifying the particular skills taught to pupils of different abilities. Consequently the pitch of lessons too often falls to the average level with more able pupils not being challenged and less able struggling unless there is additional support available. Inspectors scrutiny of work confirmed

that all too often all pupils are expected to do the same work. This prevents pupils from progressing as well as they could.

16. Teachers give good direction to the teaching assistants so they can meet the varied needs of pupils. Teachers share their expectations of the lessons with teaching assistants and regularly get feedback on how pupils have learnt. Throughout the school, support staff take an active part in helping pupils' learn. Pupils value this help and make the most of it by being attentive and working hard. The flexible use of teaching assistants is particularly beneficial in raising literacy standards. Teaching assistants use their time wisely, for example, making notes of pupils' progress or responses. They take small groups of pupils during lessons or work with individual pupils to support them. Small group sessions outside the classrooms for pupils in need of extra support are effective, whether taught by teachers or support staff. In one well taught small group lesson for year 6 questioning encouraged pupils to work out how to improve for themselves, which was highly motivating and raised their self-esteem.
17. The recent introduction of assessment records for all subjects is strengthening teachers' understanding of how skills progress. A particularly strong feature is the opportunity for teachers to assess two or three objectives in their lesson, which makes a clear distinction between ability. This is too new a system for it to have any impact on achievement at present. A sound system exists for tracking and assessing the progress of those with special educational needs and they receive good support based on this information. Marking is better in English than other subjects, although even here there are times when it is hard to see how the pupils know when they are getting better. The lack of confidence in teaching ICT is a barrier to pupils' achievement. Despite recent ICT training, teachers are not systematic in assessing pupils' skills.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum adequately, except in ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits, extra curricular activities and links with the local Community College support learning well.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The number of support staff is high, and they are well used so that they make a good contribution to the pupils' achievements.
- Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory.
- Very good improvements have been made to the accommodation since the last inspection, but the hall and the ICT suite are underused.

Commentary

18. Visits to museums make a good contribution to the history curriculum whilst the opportunity to participate in festivals and activity days makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. The headteacher has extended the collaboration with the local Community College that now involves the school in a wide range of sporting activities with local schools and a specialist teacher visits to teach dance. There is also a good range of extra curricular activities that includes art, drama and music tuition.
19. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the school life and receive good support through planned work delivered by caring teaching assistants. Support for pupils with behavioural and physical needs is unobtrusive. The progress of children with special educational needs in the reception class is carefully monitored and they make good progress. However, the individual education plans of other pupils are not sharp enough, reviews are lacking in precision and consequently the achievement of pupils' with special educational needs is satisfactory rather than good.

20. Despite the best efforts of the headteacher the provision for ICT remains unsatisfactory. The ten computers in the suite are insufficient in number for a whole class to work at the same time. Notwithstanding this obvious drawback teachers are not flexible in their use of the suite and whole classes are timetabled for one session per week. As a result the suite is underused at other times. The networked system is unreliable and the shortfall in teacher expertise compounds the situation. An ICT technician, provided by the Community College, has had insufficient time to improve the reliability of the hardware. The belated programme of staff training has had limited impact on teachers' confidence.
21. The improvement in the accommodation since the last inspection, particularly in the provision of a hall, has not been effectively exploited. Despite the 'Healthy Schools Initiative' the timetable does not reflect the opportunity for more frequent but shorter sessions in the hall, particularly for the younger pupils. The hall spends most of the week empty.

Care, guidance and support

There is good provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance based on monitoring. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to express their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good induction procedures help children make a confident start at school.
- There is good attention paid to pupils' care and welfare.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in contributing their ideas to school improvements.

Commentary

22. The school provides good opportunities for pre-school children to join in activities with the reception children, already happily settled at school. Jelly Tots, a mother and toddler group and village pre-school groups enjoy weekly sessions and are invited along to special school events. These regular sessions, together with home visits made by the class teacher and teaching assistant, help to ensure both children and their parents become familiar with the school and its staff. Parents value these procedures. Staff get to know the children well and can plan to meet their individual learning and personal development needs.
23. A number of procedures and policies which underpin the health, safety and care of pupils have been reviewed recently. Health and safety and fire inspections have been carried out to ensure children work and play in a safe environment. All staff have taken part in training for child protection and first aid. Staff know pupils well and deal sympathetically with their needs, for example if they are feeling unwell whilst at school.
24. Since the headteacher's arrival she has surveyed the pupils' views on school life and has taken action to resolve a number of the issues raised. For example, the playground was seen as uninteresting. Pupils have been invited to come up with suggestions and designs for improvement. Funding has been secured through the parents' association and work will begin on improvements this summer.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with the community and other schools is a strength of the school. The partnership with parents is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning opportunities are greatly enhanced by the school's close links with the nearby College.
- Very good links are established, and continue to develop, with the community.
- A great deal of effort has been made to seek parents' views and act upon their concerns.

Commentary

25. Good advantage is being taken of the opportunities and expertise that are offered through Callington Community College, which specialises in sport. Links are not limited to sporting activities; pupils have enjoyed science days in the College's specialist 'space centre' and years 5 and 6 are taught French each week by a visiting teacher. This regular interaction between the schools helps to ensure pupils make a smooth transition to their next stage of education.
26. Good use is made of facilities available in the local area. There is a tradition of joining the community for events, such as Christingle, and inviting people in to school. Attendance at the recent Christmas musical was overwhelming. Local businesses give good support to fund-raising events. There have already been visits to the school by teachers from the new dance studio in the village, illustrating well the school's desire to make positive links with organisations and facilities in the area which benefit pupils' learning.
27. Parents' response to the Ofsted questionnaire shows a small but significant number of parents are dissatisfied with a number of aspects of the school. However, the inspection team judges that the headteacher has taken very positive steps to resolve parental concerns. On joining the school she circulated a comprehensive questionnaire to seek parents' views. The survey results were thoroughly analysed and action taken on the main areas of concern. Parents concerns about communication are being addressed rapidly. For example, pupils' annual reports issued last year did not meet requirements and gave insufficient information about children's attainment and progress. A new format is being used this year to address these shortcomings. There was good consultation with parents about the new school uniform and the homework policy is under review.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The headteacher demonstrates strong determination to address the school's weaknesses. The leadership of other staff is unsatisfactory and subject co-ordinators do not play a significant role in school improvements. Management is satisfactory. The governance of the school is sound and statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has acted quickly to address weaknesses in order to raise standards.
- Governors are fully involved in school development; they have a good understanding of the needs of the school.
- Systems are in place for checking on standards and the quality of teaching, but as yet subject co-ordinators are not fully involved in this.

Commentary

28. The headteacher shows good leadership. She has a clear sense of educational direction and a calm but evident determination to move the school forward. She is forging trusting relationships with the community and parents and has secured the commitment of all staff and governors to implement some necessary changes.

29. A good set of management systems, including regular monitoring of teaching and learning, are in place. These have led to an improvement in teaching English and the reception children but time has been too short for them to have had an effect on academic standards and progress overall. Teachers' expectations of pupils are being raised through the collection and organisation of previous attainment information which is being regularly reviewed to evaluate pupils' progress. Long term curriculum planning has been successfully developed and is bringing more cohesion to the curriculum for mixed age classes. This is a necessary development to secure a long-term improvement in teaching. The curriculum provides a secure platform for a more innovative curriculum that is the vision of the headteacher. Recent successful innovation was observed in the teaching of history and physical education.
30. The programme for checking teaching quality has helped improve provision and is beginning to raise standards. Staff absence and changes in personnel have limited the impact of this on pupils' learning and standards in years 1 and 2. The headteacher's return to a teaching commitment will bring much needed stability to the teaching team in the lower part of the school.
31. Subject co-ordinators have not had enough opportunities to develop their leadership and management skills. They have been unable to check on developments and improve their awareness of subject strengths and weakness through the school. Given the small size of the school this is surprising and has contributed to unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Staff now receive help from the headteacher and the local education authority to help them strengthen their understanding of strategic management. Other than in English, this has yet to have a positive benefit on standards. The headteacher has taken very positive steps to improve strategic planning, which is thorough. However, some subject action plans lack clear, manageable targets that would enable regular monitoring to take place in order to maintain rapid improvement.
32. The headteacher has given a strong lead to the governors and they are extremely supportive of the school. Governors are suitably trained for monitoring the demanding targets they have set for pupils in year 6. They work hard, have a clear understanding of the newly formed aims of the school and how these are to be achieved, and convey this well to the parents. It is early days for them to play a key role in strategic development planning but they demonstrate enthusiasm for this.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	280,397	Balance from previous year	47,303
Total expenditure	283,919	Balance carried forward to the next	43,781
Expenditure per pupil	3,086		

33. The large underspend was inherited by the headteacher. Since then monitoring of the budget by governors is regular. The funds have been used wisely this financial year¹ to safeguard staffing levels and provide much needed staff development and training. The anticipated carry forward is within current recommendations.

¹ Financial year ending 2004.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

34. The reception children are taught in the same class as year 1 and year 2 pupils although the planning for them is securely based on the early learning goals. This is well managed by the teacher and two well trained teaching assistants. An additional room is suitably equipped for children and well organised to provide room for large apparatus. However, the planning arrangement means that in the mornings one teaching assistant is largely responsible for all the teaching of communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development and this means children do not benefit from the class teacher's strong input. Children's achievement in these areas is satisfactory.
35. The provision is well managed overall by the class teacher who ensures that she monitors the weekly progress of the reception children, and their individual Foundation Stage profiles are well maintained. There are close links with the local pre-school groups and effective arrangements for children to start school help them settle quickly into school. The class teacher, as co-ordinator, working with the headteacher has improved the provision for the children since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between children and adults are well promoted through good teaching and high expectations.
- The daily routines offer security and lead children towards increasing independence.

Commentary

36. Most children are on course to reach or exceed the goals expected in this area of development by the end of reception. All staff work very hard at promoting good relationships with children and, as a result, all children are happy and relaxed and benefit from a good range of activities. An indication of the childrens' security was seen during the inspection when they easily adapted to being taught by two temporary teachers. When necessary the class teacher and teaching assistants correct the children firmly and consequently they quickly learn how to behave. Discussion times are well used to raise awareness of, for example, their needs, views and feelings. Children understand the routines and rules associated with independent learning through play, for example checking how many friends are on a given activity before joining in. During activities they talk to each other politely, play collaboratively, and know how to take turns when using the large apparatus.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of early reading and writing skills.

- Planning to ensure the coverage of the early learning goals is good, but adults do not use every opportunity to develop children's language skills.

Commentary

37. Most children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The development of reading skills has a high priority. A good programme of teaching sounds, often accompanied by songs, stories and movements to reinforce them contributes to pupils' satisfactory progress in learning to read. All children are encouraged to take home their reading books to share with their parents. This is well supported by parents and has a positive impact on the children's reading development. Careful records are kept of each child's progress so that appropriate help can be given to help them move on.
38. Attention is given to developing writing skills using white boards and a good range of paper and pencils when children choose to write in their independent play, and by the more formal teaching of letter formation. Teaching assistants are good role models when they write in children's 'Chat Books' for them to copy and draw accompanying pictures.
39. Role play is regularly planned for, but because the room that the reception children use in the mornings is cleared for lunches daily theme areas are not developed and this inhibits the opportunities for extending pupils' speaking and listening skills. In one lesson children were encouraged to play the role of the 'Hungry Caterpillar', but it was rushed because lunchtime was approaching and opportunities were missed to ask them, for example, to explain their feelings as they searched for food.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are secure in their counting and number recognition.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to use number or for further exploration of mathematical activities.

Commentary

40. Most children are on course to reach the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. The teaching assistants have clear guidance to help them teach the children to count through games and rhymes. Children respond well and enjoy this. Their recorded work shows sound number formation, that they can make simple calculations with numbers to 10, and recognise basic two-dimensional shapes. In an assessment activity all pupils explained the difference between the sizes of two shapes and placed them above or under each other as required.
41. Opportunities were not evident during the inspection for children to work and think mathematically during other activities. For example, the maths 'caterpillar boards' were the only mathematical activity out of approximately ten for the children to choose from.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned activities specifically for the reception children follow whole class introduction.
- Good questioning by teaching assistants extends children's skills.

- There is not enough regular provision for teaching ICT.

Commentary

42. Evidence from two short activities shows that most children are on course to broadly achieve the early learning goals. Children listened well to the introduction by the class teacher and joined in the discussion before they started their own activities. They showed interest in the houses in their own village, one recognising a photograph of their house. The good questioning encouraged children to consider where to place buildings on a play map and create a model village. In another lesson the children showed a good understanding of how animals and plants grow. Work was appropriately matched for each of them and the teaching assistants gave good individual support. From their topic books their learning has been wide ranging and includes religious education. However there was little evidence of regular ICT experience and this weakens the overall effectiveness of the provision.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

43. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this area of learning as no physical activity in the hall was seen. Children have regular access to the wheeled vehicles inside and outside. However there is only one timetabled session in the hall per week and this reduces the number of movement lessons children experience.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

44. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this area of learning. Work on display covered a wide range of media such as bubble prints, finger painting, collages, and colour mixing. Planning shows that the children explore sounds and sing simple songs.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Less able pupils in years 1 and 2 are achieving well in reading and writing but the average and more able lack the challenge needed to raise their attainment.
- Pupils are achieving well in their written work in years 3 to 6 because there is sharp focus on what is needed to raise attainment and teaching is good.
- Handwriting skills develop well and this is having a positive impact on spelling and presentation.
- Marking and evaluation of progress is still weak and the co-ordinator has taken insufficient charge of this aspect.

Commentary

45. The teaching in years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Reading standards are average and are rising as a result of improved teaching. Less able pupils receive good support in learning to write and the systematic approach to structuring the writing is leading to good development. There is plenty of emphasis given to the structure of writing but progress in composition is still slow. Pupils have a weakness in punctuation and the idea of a story is still limited to a few more able pupils. In the main this is because the opportunities for writing are less rewarding to pupils, and as a result the quality of stories produced by the average and more able is below the expected standard. Work is not assessed in depth to help teachers track progress and the more able pupils make too little use of drafting to improve their work.

46. In years 3 to 6 a good range of strategies benefits reading skills. The use of additional strategies in teaching reading is having a good impact on achievement and standards are average. Teaching assistants provide good support for the structured approach to learning sounds and this has led to gains and improved progress by less able pupils. The small group reading sessions, supported by an adults are well planned and, where pupils' comprehension skills are limited, are beneficial. For the more able older readers the quality of books is limited.
47. Teaching of writing in years 3 to 6 is particularly effective because teachers are using frameworks to help pupils' plan their writing. Pupils' standards are average, with a reasonable proportion above average. The teaching of grammar is engaging, and a good example of this was seen where pupils had to work as a group to find new contractions. There is still an over-reliance on mechanistic exercises that do not target particular needs but are given to every one in the class. The introduction of checklists so that the pupils can assess the structure of their writing has helped them improve. These also help to make sure the writing says what the pupils' intended. Teachers are becoming more confident assessing pupils' writing. Consequently they provide a good range of texts for pupils to edit, draft, and rework and this helps them with their grammar. There were some good examples in pupils' workbooks where the teachers' purposeful intervention in the writing of the less able led to improved grammar. However marking is inconsistent and not enough guidance is given to all pupils on how to improve.
48. Handwriting is taught systematically and the introduction of a joined script in year 1 and 2 is helping both spelling and presentation of pupils' work. Many less able, through the school, have a good handwriting style and presentational skills are improving well. Although this was only evident in English work.
49. The opportunity to write in other subjects and for a range of purposes is not sufficiently practised beyond English lessons and this limits the achievements of the most able. Whilst work set for homework is a good extension of lesson activities the marking is too casual and not rewarding of the pupils' good efforts.
50. The evaluation sheets, which form part of the assessment of English, are not helpful because they do not clearly describe individual pupils' progress. Consequently regular tracking lacks a sharp focus on what the next goals should be for pupils. The targets are too general and this gives a mixed message to pupils, some of whom have clearly achieved their targets. The co-ordinator is not doing enough to check up that assessment and tracking are taking place.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. The writing opportunities in history are developing well, for example writing about the life of Boudicca and John Lennon, but too little work in science, geography and RE is undertaken to ensure that writing skills systematically develop. The opportunities afforded by ICT to write and present work are underused.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Six and seven year olds have not achieved well enough and standards are below average.
- Achievement of eleven year olds is improving and standards in numeracy are broadly average.
- Appropriate action is beginning to be taken by the headteacher and subject co-ordinator to remedy weaknesses and improve teaching and learning.

Commentary

52. Uncertain leadership has affected the achievement of all pupils in mathematics. In addition too little attention has been paid to the differing capabilities of pupils and this has resulted in a lack of challenge being provided for some groups. The planning of lessons for years 1 and 2 has at times been erratic and this has affected pupils' progress. Pupils in years 1 and 2 are not secure in number calculation and use a limited range of strategies to solve simple problems. For example, in year 2 few pupils use methods such as doubling and halving numbers in addition and subtraction work. Standards achieved by year 6 are broadly average. In particular they have a secure grasp of the four number operations and are confident about working with high numbers. They know their tables and most pupils have a good recall. Most use their tables competently to solve practical problems. Standards are still not as high as they should be. Not enough is expected of more able pupils in shape and space work and data handling and they underachieve.
53. The quality of teaching in years 1 and 2 is improving. Teaching assistants play a key role in supporting pupils with their learning. With three age groups in the same classroom the class teacher is very reliant upon the teaching assistants in ensuring that each age group has effective adult support. Teaching in these year groups is being strengthened as the headteacher will be spending most of her teaching time with this class. Teaching for pupils in years 3 to 6 was better than the evidence from workbooks would indicate. Teachers use good questioning skills and make sure that everyone is included in the lesson. In the lessons observed the work was well matched to the abilities of pupils. However, the evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that this is not done consistently and there are pupils who could achieve more if the level of difficulty of their work was consistently matched to their needs.
54. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils learning especially for pupils with special educational needs or those with below average capabilities in the subject. Lessons tend to be very tightly controlled by teachers with too little emphasis upon independent learning. Evidence from their books shows that pupils are given few opportunities for independent investigation or problem solving. This reduces the potential for pupils' progress and for the enjoyment of the subject. Opportunities are missed for using ICT to enhance pupils learning. This is especially the case when developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of data handling and solving problems.
55. Provision in the subject is less effective and pupil performance weaker than at the time of the last inspection. However the new subject leader is committed to improvement and has made a satisfactory start in her new role. The headteacher is very aware of areas for improvement. She has begun a process of monitoring lessons, supported by advisors from the local education authority, and has introduced new assessment schemes. She has implemented a system for tracking the progress of pupils through the school so that underachievement can be identified quickly. Teachers are keeping records of pupil performance in lessons to help them provide appropriate support or challenge in the next lesson. This system is in an early stage of development and has not yet resulted in all pupils being challenged appropriately.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. This is unsatisfactory overall. There was a good example of how mathematical knowledge and skills can be used and applied when pupils in years 3, 4 and 5 designed and made containers for an Easter Egg. However, in general this aspect of the subject is underdeveloped particularly in the many opportunities afforded by the use of computers to reinforce mathematical ideas and find new ways of using them.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below average.
- There is insufficient emphasis upon practical work.
- The new headteacher has specialist knowledge in the teaching of science and this has strengthened the provision.

Commentary

57. No lessons for six and seven year olds were observed during the inspection so no judgement on the quality of teaching for these year groups can be made. However from an analysis of pupils' work and teacher's planning it is clear that these younger pupils have had too little practical experience for them to start developing their enquiry and investigation skills. They set out their work well but this is mostly based on pencil and paper work rather than pupils testing things out for themselves in order to build up their knowledge and understanding. In this aspect their work is below average.
58. Throughout the school there has been insufficient attention paid in the past to the different capabilities of pupils. Too often pupils of all capabilities have been offered the same tasks and challenges. However the knowledge and understanding of the majority of year 6 pupils is close to national expectations although fewer than average are exceeding these expectations. Older pupils are unsure of how to set up tests that take into account factors that may influence their results or how to set about measuring accurately their findings. Pupils' workbooks show that explanations of what they have found out through investigation are weak.
59. Teaching overall is judged satisfactory because pupils have produced an acceptable amount of work on a range of different science topics. A new assessment scheme has been implemented. However assessment information is not yet used effectively enough to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged and the expectations of teachers have been too low to promote good achievement. Teachers provide practical demonstrations to enrich pupils learning and one of these observed during the inspection was effective. Pupils have a positive attitude towards these lessons but are eager to have more practical work. However they are given too few opportunities to work independently or collaboratively to devise and modify their own investigations and this contributes to below average standards.
60. Provision and standards are not as good as at the time of the last inspection. However the headteacher, in her short time in the school, has gained a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and has taken on its leadership herself. She has made a satisfactory start to bringing about improvements, including an important decision to teach the subject herself in years 1 and 2 and to strengthen teaching in years 3 to 6 by helping teachers with planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ICT suite is attractive, but the persistent problems with the hardware and software inhibit teaching and as a result pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Recently introduced staff training has had insufficient time to impact on pupils' standards, which are well below national expectations.
- The suite is under-used and the time allocated to the teaching of ICT is insufficient to make a rapid improvement in pupils' standards.

Commentary

61. Pupils' standards by year 2 are below average and by year 6 well below average. Year 6 pupils word process their work satisfactorily but have had limited access to the Internet and have not used databases or spreadsheets. This has inhibited the development of their research and analytical skills. They have not used ICT modes or simulations to help them make decisions and there is no equipment to teach the use of ICT in control and monitoring events.
62. The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory. In a lesson with year 1 and 2 pupils the supply teacher was given inadequate planning, over half of the computers failed to load the programme and as a result pupils' learning was unsatisfactory. During a lesson with year 3, 4 and 5 pupils the teacher gave a good introduction, projecting the computer screen on to the whiteboard and explaining how to move and replace text. Pupils listened well, answered sensibly and understood the tasks, which were different for each age group. However, due to the inadequate number of computers in the suite only the year 3 pupils could tackle the task. There was no planned time until the following week, although there is no pressure on the use of the suite, for the remainder of the class to access the computers.
63. Despite the best efforts of the headteacher, the provision for ICT remains unsatisfactory. The 10 computers in the suite are insufficient in number for a whole class to work at the same time and as yet no creative approaches have been taken to get around this problem. The co-ordinator, well supported by the headteacher, is managing the subject satisfactorily and the school improvement plan has a clear focus on raising standards, but both need external expertise to make an impact on teachers' confidence and knowledge. A scheme of work based on national guidance has been introduced and current staff training is designed to support the teaching of these units. An assessment record is in place but has not been completed. This does not adequately cover a record of pupils' process skills to help teachers deal with the backlog of skills. In the meantime, the networked system is unreliable and the shortfall in teacher expertise compounds the situation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. This is unsatisfactory overall. ICT is not planned into the curriculum. Isolated examples do exist, such as year 5 and 6 pupils accessing the Internet for further information following their visit to a water treatment plant. Pupils' ICT skills are insufficiently developed to use them across the curriculum. The older pupils are not encouraged to use the computers in the ICT suite unsupervised, or with teaching assistants' support, to develop their research skills through independent learning.

HUMANITIES

65. **Geography** was sampled. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards achieved. A scrutiny of books indicated that little geography had been covered. Geography work in years 1 and 2 lacks coherence. Presentation is unhelpful to the pupils; largely a series of unconnected worksheets that lacked any challenge for the more able pupils. There is a lack of differentiation between the year groups through the school. Marking is unhelpful; a series of ticks does not encourage pupils to value what they are seeking to achieve. In years 3 and 4 pupils demonstrated a reasonable understanding of differences between a town and village through their studies. The practical work was based on their experiences and covered a range of areas but the work was not well set out and lacked any clear sense of purpose. The work in year 6 was of good quality if limited. A visit to the water works provided a starting point for research into water and rivers. A series of key questions served as a prompt for research, and pupils reviewed the whole project well to cement their understanding.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work in years 1 and 2 is not challenging enough.
- Research skills develop well in year 6 and good use is being made of current guidance.

Commentary

66. A broad range of local visits supports pupils' learning. Pupils in year 2 have developed an acceptable knowledge of Florence Nightingale. In a year 1 and 2 lesson a good range of questions prompted pupils to compare and contrast two photographs of the village. The planning in years 3 and 4, lacks clearly differentiated objectives for the differing abilities. A stimulating practical activity in years 3 and 4 encouraged systematic research skills when undertaking an archaeological dig. This was a good activity for developing ideas based on evidence. The pupils had many ideas to share with each other that showed they could support their hypotheses.
67. Year 5 and 6 work is extensive and embraces a range of skills. It is well differentiated. The teacher, who is also the co-ordinator, uses the county guidance well, setting out key questions for the pupils to research, based accurately on their previous knowledge and understanding. This work develops their chronological skills and interpretative skills well. There is greater challenge than in other classes for pupils to present their work in informative ways that also helps develop writing skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is unsatisfactory and standards achieved are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been insufficient to maintain standards.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and questioning skills.

Commentary

68. In common with many schools much of the teaching and learning is done through stories and discussion. Nevertheless the amount of recorded work for both year 2 and year 6 pupils is insufficient.
69. In order to strengthen a judgement on standards, discussions were held with pupils. Pupils display sensible attitudes and older pupils have strongly held views and a genuine interest in aspects of the subject. However pupils have little knowledge of stories from the Old Testament or about stories told by Jesus. Seven-year-olds' understanding of the concepts of 'belonging' or 'special' is underdeveloped. Much of the knowledge these younger pupils have derives from their own books and videos rather than from learning experiences in school. Older pupils have a reasonably secure knowledge of Sikhism and about aspects of Christianity. However their knowledge and understanding is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
70. No lessons were observed in years 1 and 2. In the good lessons observed in years 3 to 6 teachers used accurate language and a range of questions to provoke pupil thinking. Teaching in years 3 to 6 overall is satisfactory. The teaching is accurate but lacks variety and imagination. Older pupils especially express a wish to find out more and to do more interesting things. Lessons are enriched from time to time by visits to local churches and to Truro Cathedral but opportunities for enlivening learning experiences through art, music and drama are missed. There are not enough resources to support pupils' learning.

71. The subject leader has ensured that the curriculum meets statutory requirements but has done little else to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The overall provision and standards are not as good as at the time of the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Work in **design and technology**, **art and design**, **music** and **physical education** was sampled.

72. There were no music lessons observed, although discussion with the co-ordinator indicates the required curriculum is being taught. From teachers' planning and examples of work around the school there is sound teaching of DT. One is immediately struck by the particularly impressive range of headgear from different times and cultures in the entrance hall.
73. Only one art and design lesson was seen during the inspection. In this year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils studied pictures by a variety of landscape artists and used the medium of chalk to represent their chosen picture. They showed good observational work and technique. Pupils benefit from the regular visits of a local artist and have worked on a collaborative mural to improve the appearance of the dining hall.
74. The provision of a new school hall has provided a very good facility for teaching PE. However this is not being taken full advantage of. Younger pupils only have one long session of PE each week and this is inappropriate. Arrangements for encouraging participation in sport are covered elsewhere in this report.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

75. The caring school ethos satisfactorily supports pupils' personal development. A number of talks and demonstrations inform and extend pupils' learning in this area. Regular visits from those working in the local community such as the river warden, police youth officer or school nurse give pupils valuable insights into life in the community. The teachers' use of circle time² provides good opportunities to share feelings and to discuss different topics. However they are too infrequent for pupils to appreciate that their views really matter. As pupils get older, insufficient responsibility is given to help them develop as independent learners.

² Circle time: an opportunity for pupils to discuss their views and opinions about a range of matters relating to the curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

