

INSPECTION REPORT

PONDHU PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Austell

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111984

Headteacher: Mrs C Aston

Lead inspector: Mr A Fullwood

Dates of inspection: 27–29 April 2004

Inspection number: 257204

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3–11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	231
School address:	Penwinnick Road St Austell Cornwall
Postcode:	PL25 5DS
Telephone number:	01726 74550
Fax number:	01726 74550
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Daines
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in St Austell in Cornwall. It has 231 pupils taught in eight classes and is an average sized primary school. This includes 43 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis and 27 children being taught in the reception class. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and there is much unemployment in the area and a significant number of low paid workers in the tourism industry. Most pupils live in rented accommodation. Ninety-eight per cent of pupils are of White-British origin and only one pupil is at an early stage in the acquisition of English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, 17.7 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, 21 per cent, is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need. There is approximately a 20 per cent movement of pupils to and from the school at times other than the normal admission or transfer to secondary school. The attainment of children on entry to the school is below average, particularly with regard to their language, literacy and communication skills. The school received an Achievement Award for its results in national tests in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21184	Mr A Fullwood	Lead inspector	Science Music Physical education English as an additional language
31758	Mr E Tipper	Lay inspector	
32375	Mrs A Bosworth	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Art and design
2751	Mr J Carter	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Design and technology
12116	Mrs C Morgan	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Pondhu Primary is a satisfactorily effective school with a strong and caring family ethos that provides a sound education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and, generally, pupils achieve as well as they should. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in mathematics, art and design and the singing aspect of music are good.
- Standards of written work are below average across the school and pupils' achievement unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and the school promotes their personal development well.
- The use made of assessment information to more consistently challenge all pupils is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall.
- Systems and procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are underdeveloped.
- Pupils' levels of attendance are unsatisfactory and well below the national average.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements with regard to the performance management of teachers.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- The school has a positive partnership with parents, the community and other schools and this impacts well on pupils' learning.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 6 in national tests in mathematics and science have improved but standards in English are lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues from the last report, particularly with regard to improving standards in music and design and technology. Recent improvements in establishing whole-school assessment procedures are enabling the school to track more closely pupils' attainment and progress but using assessment information to challenge consistently all pupils is in need of further development. There is still work to be done in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The headteacher is aware of what the school needs to do to improve and the school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are above average in mathematics. Standards in science are average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. They are below average in both year groups in English, particularly writing. Standards in art and design and the singing aspect of music are good and pupils achieve well. Standards are average in information and communication technology (ICT) and in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards in other subjects, where there is sufficient evidence to make a judgement, are average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily except in English in Years 3 and 4 where they underachieve.

Overall, children's attainment in the Foundation Stage is on track to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in their mathematical, creative and physical development. Children will reach the goals expected in their personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, due to their low attainment on entry to the school, most children will not achieve the goals expected in their communication, language and literacy skills. Children are making good progress and achieving well in all areas of learning.

Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. **The promotion of pupils' personal development is good, as is the promotion of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory education. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where the pace of lessons is brisk and challenging activities are provided for all pupils, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Generally, the pace and challenge of work in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. However, teaching in English in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory. The use made of assessment information to plan work to meet the needs of all children is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall.

The curriculum is satisfactory but insufficient time is given to history and geography to ensure they are covered in sufficient depth. There are good opportunities for curriculum enrichment outside of the school day. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Staffing levels, the accommodation and learning resources are good. The school has good links with parents and very good links with the community and other schools. The school provides good care and satisfactory guidance and support for all its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The governance of the school is good and governors meet their statutory requirements except with regard to the performance management of teaching staff. The headteacher promotes a supportive and caring ethos for pupils, parents and staff and, together with the governors, has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve. She is soundly supported in these endeavours by the deputy head, senior management team and subject co-ordinators. However, systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and better informing school self-evaluation are not established. The financial management of the school is good and best value principles are applied appropriately.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are good. Parents are supportive of the school and are made to feel welcome and encouraged to take a full part in their children's education. Pupils' views of the school are good and they enjoy coming to school. They feel supported well when they need help and enjoy the practical activities provided for them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve pupils' standards of written work across the school and their achievement in Years 3 and 4.
- Make better use of the school's assessment information to challenge all pupils more consistently and establish manageable assessment procedures for all subjects.
- Introduce systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement by senior staff and co-ordinators.
- Improve the overall level of pupils' attendance.
- Improve the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that procedures for the performance management of staff are kept up-to-date.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average in mathematics but below average in English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in mathematics are good.
- Standards in English, particularly writing, are in need of improvement.
- Standards in art and design and the singing aspect of music are good.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school is below average, particularly in their language skills. They make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes across each area of learning so that most are on course to achieve or exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of their reception year. However, despite good progress in developing their language skills, this area of learning remains below average when children move into Year 1. Children achieve well because the quality of teaching they receive is good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (14.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.9 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The results of the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 were average in reading and below average in writing in comparison with all and similar schools. Standards showed an upward trend between 1999 and 2001 but fell in 2003. Girls performed better than boys but not significantly so. However, in 2003 there was a significantly higher proportion of boys than girls and standards declined as a result. Inspection evidence indicates that currently pupils in Year 2 are achieving well and that most pupils will reach the expected Level 2 standard. However, few show evidence of achieving the higher Level 3 either in their reading or writing. This reflects a decline in standards noted at the time of the last inspection in 1998.
3. The results of 2003 national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 2 were well above average in comparison with all and similar schools. Standards have shown a consistent upward trend since the last inspection. Generally, girls and boys perform similarly. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment in the current group of Year 2 pupils are above average and that pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1. The good standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
4. Teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils in science showed their attainment to be below average in 2003 but that the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that the current group of Year 2 pupils is attaining average standards. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

- Standards in art and design are above average. Standards in information and communication technology, design and technology and music are average. Standards in these subjects have been maintained. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement of pupils' attainment in other subjects where lessons were only sampled.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.2 (27.8)	24.6 (22.3)
science	28.6 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The results of 2003 national tests in English at the end of Year 6 were below the national average for all schools and well below average in comparison with similar schools. Pupils' achievement was well below what they achieved at the end of Year 2. The school's targets for the percentages of pupils who would achieve Level 4 or Level 5 in 2003 were reached. Standards improved significantly in 2001 but have shown a downward trend since then. Generally, girls perform significantly better than boys and better than girls nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that the current group of Year 6 is making satisfactory progress but that their achievement in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2 is unsatisfactory. This is due to the lack of progress pupils made in Years 3 and 4. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection but also lower than the standards the school often achieves.
- The results of 2003 national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 6 were above average in comparison with all schools and well above average in comparison with similar schools. The school's target for the percentage of pupils who would achieve Level 4 in 2003 was almost reached but the ambitious target for the percentage of pupils who would achieve at Level 5 was not reached. Standards have varied from year to year but shown an upward trend since the last inspection. Generally, girls perform better than boys but not significantly so. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current group of Year 6 are above average and that pupils are achieving well in relation to their capabilities. The high standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
- The results of 2003 national tests in science at the end of Year 6 were average in comparison with all and similar schools. Results in national tests showed an upward trend between 1999 and 2002 but fell sharply in 2003. Generally, boys and girls perform similarly. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 6 are below average but that pupils are achieving appropriately in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2.
- Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 in ICT are average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards in design and technology and music have improved and are in line with national expectations, however, standards in the singing aspect of music are good. Standards in art and design are also good. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in these subjects and achieve well in reaching above average standards in art and design and singing. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement of pupils' attainment in other subjects where lessons were only sampled.
- Achievement and progress of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Good support is given to pupils by teaching assistants in lessons and by the special educational needs teacher when pupils are withdrawn for intensive individual support. This is effective in addressing pupils' weaknesses in basic literacy skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, and their behaviour in and around classrooms is good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, and has a positive impact on pupils' relationships. Attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school fosters very good relationships.
- The school places strong emphasis on developing pupil confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils are eager to come to school and enthusiastic about learning.
- Behaviour is good and pupils respond well to the consistent approach adopted by all staff.
- Pupils welcome opportunities to take responsibility.
- The school does not yet systematically identify and provide for gifted and talented pupils.
- The school is not doing enough to improve the level of attendance.

Commentary

11. This aspect is a real strength within the school. Pupils are keen to come to school and enthusiastic about learning. They have very good relationships with each other and with all staff, and are interested in what they are learning. Pupils are proud of the school and appreciate and value their surroundings. Pupils' behaviour is good. High expectations are set in both behaviour and concentration. In lessons pupils are seen to work well in pairs and small groups, developing their discussion and listening skills. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in lessons. They seek the views and responses of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in a sensitive way. All staff make consistent use of praise, encouragement and rewards and the pupils respond very positively to this. This has a significant impact in raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem. If minor lapses in behaviour occur they are dealt with unobtrusively and effectively.
12. Pupils welcome the opportunity to take responsibility and are encouraged to do so. The school council is effective and valued by all as a forum for involving pupils in developments within the school to the benefit of all. They organise fund-raising events and have recently purchased more benching for the school playground in response to suggestions from pupils. Pupils are keen to become members of the 'friendship squad' and proudly explain their role in offering support to other pupils, helping out at playtimes and lunchtimes. The school recently held a bullying awareness week and approaches this very seriously. Discussions with pupils indicate a clear understanding of actions to take if bullying occurs and that any incidents of this kind are dealt with promptly and effectively.
13. Overall, the quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and has a positive impact on pupils' relationships. Social and moral development are very good and pupils' have a clear understanding of their responsibilities within the school community. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the difference between right and wrong are good. The school places significant emphasis on respect for other people's feelings and beliefs through the whole school caring ethos and through personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE/C), religious education (RE) and collective worship. Opportunities to develop spiritual awareness are provided through prayer or reflection in school and class assemblies. Cultural development is satisfactorily provided for through the school curriculum, particularly through work in art and design, RE, PSHE/C, and through awareness raising displays around the school.
14. The school does not yet systematically identify and provide for gifted and talented pupils although there are plans to do this in the future.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.6
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.

15. Attendance has declined since the last inspection and last year was within the range of the bottom ten per cent of schools across the country. The school has tried to address the situation and there are indications that an improvement has been made this year. However, the lack of a computerised system limits the scope for regular analysis of patterns of non-attendance. This, linked to the limited encouragement for good attendance in terms of individual and class rewards, is preventing the school from making a significant improvement. Most pupils who do attend school are eager to do so and arrive in time to ensure a prompt start to the school day.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	172	6	0
White – Any other background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	3	0	0

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

16. The relatively high number of exclusions in the last reporting year concerned two pupils listed as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. One is now educated at home. There have been no exclusions in the current school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory and levels of staffing, the accommodation and learning resources are good. Links with parents are good and those with the community and other schools are very good. Pupils' care is good and they receive satisfactory guidance and support.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory but the use made of this information in planning work for pupils is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good.
- The teaching of English in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory.

- The use made of assessment information to plan suitable work to support pupils of differing abilities is unsatisfactory.
- Work in English is not consistently planned to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	3 (7%)	21 (46%)	21 (46%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because the teaching is good. Staff provide a wealth of well-planned and stimulating learning opportunities that motivates and interests the children. They provide good role models and work very effectively together in teams to support and encourage the children's development. There is a good balance of teacher focused and self-chosen learning activities that provide the children with opportunities to learn independence. Skilful support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and to those for whom English is a second language which enables the children to participate fully in the curriculum. Good use is made of assessment information in planning the next stages in children's learning.
- The teachers in Years 1 and 2 are lively and enthusiastic in their approach, make good use of praise and encouragement in boosting pupils' confidence and self-esteem and ensure that pupils apply themselves to their work and concentrate well. Good use is made of a range of teaching strategies to interest and involve the pupils. Pupils are consistently informed about what it is they are expected to have learned by the end of lessons and are given the opportunity to evaluate how successful they have been in achieving these objectives.
- Good teaching was observed in classes in Years 3 to 6 but teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned but the pace and challenge of work, although generally satisfactory, need to be improved if pupils are to make good progress.
- From the observation of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' books, the teaching of English is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can attain are not high enough. The pace and challenge of lessons are slowed by long introductions with pupils having to listen for too long and their interest wanes as a result. In Year 3 much of the pupils' work is unmarked and in Year 4 too few opportunities are provided for pupils to write in a variety of different formats. Pupils are underachieving as a result.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils' work shows that teachers' planning does not make consistent use of assessment information to identify challenging activities for pupils of different abilities within each class. As a consequence, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Too great a reliance is placed on open-ended tasks to which pupils respond as well as they are able. However, such tasks do not always have the structure needed to guide the development of pupils of differing abilities and ages. Assessment information is not consistently used to identify where pupils need to develop better understanding and this limits their opportunities to achieve as well as they could.
- In mathematics, teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and in English in Years 1, 2 and 6. Generally, teachers make satisfactory use of targets to improve pupils' performance but these are not specific enough, or easily understood by pupils, to be effective in informing pupils of how they can improve their work. The marking of pupils' work is supportive but varies in quality and does not consistently inform pupils of how they can improve.

23. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in other curriculum subjects where lessons were only sampled.
24. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Teaching assistants are generally used well in Years 1 and 2 to support these pupils but in other year groups are largely used to help lower attaining pupils access the same tasks as the rest of the class rather than addressing their individual needs. In a few lessons in English, they are not used profitably for significant parts of lessons. The learning support teacher is effective in addressing weaknesses in basic literacy skills. Pupils are withdrawn on a regular basis for intensive individual support on the basis of careful diagnosis. Pupils' individual education plans are regularly reviewed and monitored. Targets are generally precise and measurable. However, in English, the extent to which they are addressed within the class situation is limited as little of the work in classes is planned to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory in providing a broad and balanced experience that meets statutory requirements. Opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, are good. The quality of accommodation and quantity of resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Generally, the curriculum is broad and balanced.
- The curriculum provides very effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE/C).
- The curriculum is inclusive providing equal access and opportunity for all pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Opportunities for enrichment activities are good.
- Storage facilities are limited.
- Developments in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are affected by the lack of a designated computer suite

Commentary

25. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities catering satisfactorily for the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. The school has implemented the required changes in curriculum provision since the last inspection and meets satisfactorily all statutory requirements including provision for religious education. However, the time allocated for teaching geography and history in Years 3 to 6 is not sufficient to ensure that pupils cover the curriculum in adequate depth. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
26. The school places considerable emphasis on promoting high quality personal and social skills. PSHE/C is timetabled weekly for all classes providing a more formalised arrangement than at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum includes sex and relationship education and attention to alcohol and drugs misuse. The success of PSHE/C is particularly evident in the way pupils relate to each other and to adults both in and outside of the classroom. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. For example sponsored events and competitions are held raising the profile of subjects, with the proceeds being used to enhance resources.
27. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils in lessons and the SEN support teacher provides well for pupils when they are withdrawn for extra help with basic literacy skills. Pupils' individual education plans contain specific and measurable targets for pupils to achieve. However, the

extent to which they are addressed in English in Years 3 to 6, within the class

situation, is limited as little of the work is planned to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils. There is no established policy for identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils and this limits the progress they make.

28. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities throughout the school year. At the time of inspection clubs included rounders, nature, tennis, country dancing, choir, ICT and athletics. External provision of before school, after school and holiday activities on the school site are also worthy of note. A good variety of visits and visitors into school is also evident. There is good evidence of regard and attention to multicultural and diverse aspects of modern society in the form of posters and displays in and around the school.
29. The quality of the accommodation is good providing a stimulating and welcoming environment to all. The high quality displays, general good order and cleanliness project a very positive image and reinforce the message that this is a very caring school. The school is resourced well although storage is limited and represents a constant challenge. Similarly the design of the building limits the creation of a designated ICT suite although the school has made an effort to overcome this through the purchase of laptops and a trolley to provide a mobile resource. This solution has not been without problems and developments in the use of ICT remain affected. The school has sufficient teaching staff and employs a large number of well-trained teaching assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. Staff expertise in music, PSHE/C, design and technology and ICT are used to good effect in the activities provided on a weekly basis for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils and provides them with satisfactory support, advice and guidance. It actively seeks the views of pupils and acts on them in an effective manner.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop very trusting relationships with adults within the school from whom they receive good personal support.
- Pupils are very well cared for in a safe and healthy environment.
- Very good arrangements exist for pupils joining the school to allow them to settle in quickly.
- The school council is proving successful as a means of enabling pupils to influence their life within the school.

Commentary

30. Teachers and their assistants get to know their pupils very well with the result that the overwhelming majority of pupils feel confident there is someone to turn to if they have any concerns. This close relationship ensures pupils receive a high level of support for their personal development. The limitations in the implementation of the assessment system, however, mean they don't get such good support for their academic progress.
31. The school has very effective arrangements for ensuring the safety of pupils. The everyday vigilance of the caretaker and teaching staff ensures any identified hazards are promptly addressed. This is supported by a regular audit of the school by a governor who has occupational experience in the field of health and safety. The problems, identified in the last inspection, outside the school at the beginning and end of the day still exist mainly due to the inconsiderate parking of some parents. Emphasis is also placed on ensuring the security of the school building to protect those within it. The headteacher is fully trained in implementing the appropriate child protection procedures and ensures that all members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in this area. The school is looking to educate its pupils in the

importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are encouraged to use water bottles in the classroom and there is soon to be a healthy school week but the school has some way to go before it will be eligible for the Healthy School Award.

32. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the way the school prepares themselves and their children for life at school. Most start in the nursery, whose staff make pre-school home visits, and they have several opportunities to visit the school before joining. Very good booklets are produced to introduce parents and children to life in the nursery and the reception class. Pupils who join during the school year are given a tour of the school and class members are nominated to help them settle-in while the class teaching assistant keeps an eye out for them.
33. The school council is proving a useful means of allowing pupils to put forward proposals concerning improvements to their life in school. For example, they decided they wanted some tables and benches for the playground and then helped to raise money to purchase them. Their views are also sought from time to time as, for example, to places they would like to visit on the forthcoming trip to London. While there is no regular survey of their views, especially on matters of an academic nature, pupils who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire and were interviewed during the inspection felt that their opinions were valued. They also felt involved in setting their own targets in literacy and numeracy.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a good partnership with its pupils' parents and carers and a very good relationship with the wider community. Its links with other schools and colleges are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the local community do much to improve pupils' learning and develop their social skills.
- Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- There are very good relationships with the secondary school to which most of the school's pupils transfer.

Commentary

34. The school has developed some very good links with the local community. It has a range of visitors, such as a nurse and traffic warden, who talk to pupils about their jobs and the District Police Youth Affairs Officer is also a regular visitor and has his own noticeboard in the school. All pupils visit the parish church and Years 3 to 6 hold their Christmas concert there while the choir sings at churches, musical events and a nearby residential home. A trip to the fire station not only helped Year 2 pupils understand the dangers of fire but also led to a design and technology project of making a moving fire engine. The school actively encourages members of the local community, such as the guides and yoga and keep-fit clubs, to use its facilities. It also allows a private organisation to run sessions before and after the school day as well as on Saturdays and through the holidays; these are open to children from the surrounding area who do not necessarily go to the school. These lettings provide a very useful additional income for the school as well as bringing it closer to its community. The school has also actively sought to embrace the local business community. As a result, they receive practical support in the form of donations such as those from a superstore, garden centre and borough council which helped to create the wildlife area. Employees from a local supermarket, meanwhile, have visited the school to help pupils make pancakes and then organise pancake races. The pupils particularly enjoy the 'right to read' scheme where members of a civil service department visit the school to listen to them read. These extensive community links have very clear benefits for the school in financial terms and for its pupils in enhancing their learning and developing their social experiences.

35. Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's education. Several help in the school and the Friends of Pondhu School actively raises funds through a range of activities. These are used to purchase, among other things, computers, books and musical equipment. Parents are generally appreciative of the efforts made by the school to help them assist their children with their work at home. However, their response to a range of workshops to help them do so has been disappointing. They welcome the regular newsletters which, with the other documents produced by the school, keep them well informed. However, they are not as satisfied with the information they receive on their children's progress. They appreciate the meetings with teachers each term which allow them to discuss this but the annual reports are not very informative. The content varies between classes but few tell a parent where a child is in terms of national expectations or how performance compares with individual capabilities. Also, there is little comment on what needs to be done to improve or targets which are specific and meaningful.
36. The school has developed particularly good links with the two secondary schools to which most of its pupils transfer. The one, a sports college, runs football, dance and basketball sessions at the school and teachers visit, such as the one who helped Year 5 pupils design and make masks in art. The school also makes use of the secondary school's physical education, science and art facilities. Links with the other secondary school, a language college, include foreign language sessions taken by one of their teachers. The school also takes part in joint activities such as musical productions. Arrangements for pupils to transfer to the two schools are also very good with several visits to the school by the Heads of Year 7 to talk to parents, pupils and staff. Year 6 pupils also study transition units in English, mathematics and science during the second-half of the summer term which helps to make the transfer from primary to secondary education smoother.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher provides sound leadership. She is particularly effective in promoting a warm and positive ethos so that children enjoy school and learn in a secure and happy environment. The management of the school is generally satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the school's systems for reviewing and improving its performance. The work of the governing body is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher promotes good pastoral care and a strong commitment to supporting the learning of every child.
- The governing body is active and well informed, and provides effective challenge and support for the school.
- The quality of subject leadership in English and mathematics is good.
- Financial management is good and helps the school achieve its educational priorities.
- Procedures to review and improve the achievement of pupils are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The work of most co-ordinators is not having sufficient impact on standards in their areas.
- Arrangements for the performance management of teachers do not meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

37. The headteacher provides supportive leadership and sensitive care for pupils, parents and staff. Together with staff and governors, she has established a welcoming and positive ethos in which pupils are keen to learn and in which children and adults feel valued. There is a strong commitment to supporting the learning needs of every child. The headteacher ensures that staff receive appropriate training for their areas of work but the performance management requirements for teaching staff have not been met. Satisfactory progress is being made in introducing measures to manage the workload of staff in accordance with workforce reform.

38. The headteacher and governors have a clear view of what needs to be achieved at the school. They have introduced some appropriate strategies to improve pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of leadership and management. New systems to assess pupils' progress and to set more challenging targets in literacy and numeracy have been adopted, and a range of additional support provided for specific groups of pupils. Support has been obtained from LEA consultants who have observed staff and assisted the school to draw up appropriate action plans and programmes, and a greater emphasis placed on the work of co-ordinators. However, despite the often considerable progress made in putting these measures in place, many are relatively new and are not yet having a measurable impact on pupils' achievement.
39. The deputy head and newly formed senior management provide sound support for the headteacher and meet to discuss an appropriate range of issues associated with the performance of the school. Their involvement in whole school review and evaluation is at an early stage of development.
40. The quality of subject leadership is satisfactory except in English and mathematics where it is good because the co-ordinators have a clear vision for improvement and provide energetic and determined leadership. Leadership of the Foundation Stage and other subjects is satisfactory. Co-ordinators have developed insights into the provision in their areas but most do not have the detailed knowledge of teaching and learning in their subjects that is necessary to challenge staff and raise expectations. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs provides good leadership in an advisory and administrative capacity. However, her role in monitoring the effectiveness of provision is underdeveloped. Developing the work of co-ordinators has been a major school focus in recent years.
41. The governing body provides good support for the school through its effective committee structure and systematic reporting procedures. Governors are well informed by the reports and presentations they receive from staff, from the regular visits they make to the school as link governors for different aspects, and from their involvement in the school improvement plan. Consequently, they have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of the strategies that are being used to address priorities. They feel confident in being able to challenge the school, for example, in respect to the school's response to the 2003 English results, and to debate the merits and costs of different strategies. They consider the long-term development of the school carefully, including major projects such as the building of a computer suite. The governing body fulfils all its statutory responsibilities except for the performance management of teaching staff. Teachers have not been observed for two years, as part of the school's performance management policy, in order to establish whether previously agreed targets for development have been achieved and to set new targets for improvement.
42. The school improvement plan is the result of a thorough process that involves teachers, support staff and governors. The three-year overview provides a clear direction to the school's long-term development. Priorities are appropriate and include raising standards in English, mathematics and ICT, and developing the role of the co-ordinator. Detailed action plans are provided for the current year. Progress is monitored termly by the head and priority leaders but this is an informal process that lacks sufficient rigour to be sure that the plans impact on standards.
43. School self-evaluation has also been an area of recent development and a useful timetable of activity is in place. Some appropriate processes have been strengthened, for example, increasing the amount of monitoring by co-ordinators and senior leaders and developing the work of the senior management team to include the analysis of test results and other information. However, the evaluation processes generally lack rigour because they are too infrequent and informal. There is little evidence of impact on standards because little is recorded.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	542,738
Total expenditure	537,252
Expenditure per pupil	2,464

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	33,060
Balance carried forward to the next	17,597

44. The financial management of the school is good and best value principles are applied appropriately. The Finance Committee provides strong support and direction for the school in its spending decisions. This has ensured that funding is used to support school priorities and that the school is well resourced in most curriculum areas. Governors are committed to supporting pupils' individual needs and have therefore allocated a higher than average proportion of the budget for the employment of teaching assistants. The school has also invested heavily in the training of support staff to improve their range of skills. Generally, observations throughout the inspection showed that this policy is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Additional funds and grants, including those for ICT, are spent wisely. The large balance accumulated last year has been carried forward to offset foreseen rises in staffing costs in the current year.
45. Overall, taking account of pupils' satisfactory achievement and the sound quality of education provided, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**, as it was at the last inspection. Younger children are taught in the nursery for five sessions a week before moving to the reception class after their fourth birthday. The school works very closely with parents to ensure that new children settle quickly and happily in the nursery, and that parents are involved in the assessment of their children's progress.

The school is seeking to achieve the Quality Assurance Mark for the Foundation Stage. It has carried out a thorough audit of Foundation Stage provision and is making good progress in addressing the issues raised by the audit. In particular, significant improvements have been made to the development of assessment through the introduction of a simple but effective tracking system for pupils in the reception year. This has not yet been extended to the nursery.

Links between the nursery and reception are generally informal but have ensured the use of common planning formats and assessment procedures. However, the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage and consequently her knowledge of practice across the stage is not secure. Opportunities for staff to share and discuss their practice through regular meetings and observations are limited.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to achieve well and most will achieve the expected goals.
- Staff provide a stimulating, secure and effective learning environment.
- The organisation of the classrooms and daily routines encourage independence and good opportunities for discussion.

Commentary

46. Teaching is good throughout the Foundation Stage, enabling children to make good progress in developing their personal skills through an exciting range of well-planned, self-initiated and adult-led activities. The classrooms are carefully set out with good quality resources and learning opportunities that enable children to be creative and imaginative in their play.
47. Staff provide a secure and calm start to the day. Nursery children confidently enter the classroom, register themselves using their name cards and go to an activity of their choice. They politely answer the teacher when the register is called and listen attentively when the choice of activities is explained. This ensures children know what is available and settle quickly to their activities. This and other well-established routines such as snack time help younger children to become increasingly self-reliant. They are learning to look after themselves well, for example, putting on coats to go outside and aprons when painting, without reminders or help from the staff.
48. The good organisation of learning helps children to be confident in their surroundings. They move from one activity to another with enjoyment and purpose. In the nursery children work alongside each other harmoniously, chatting about what they are doing when building with bricks or painting pictures. They learn to take turns and tidy the equipment away afterwards. By the time that children reach the reception class, they are able to concentrate for longer periods. They listen respectfully to other children, work well in groups and look after themselves and their work responsibly.

49. Children behave very well, showing concern and care for others, for example, in role play when talking to those who have brought sick animals to the 'Vet's Surgery'. Teachers use well-chosen stories and scenarios to help children to explore their feelings. Reception children display a range of emotions when listening to a story about a child moving to a new house and empathise with her feelings of sadness. They appreciate the efforts of others and clap spontaneously when the teacher tells them who is 'star of the day'. Children develop a clear understanding of right and wrong through the good role models provided by adults and such activities as circle time when they discuss examples of good and bad behaviour. They learn how to care for animals when they handle the hamster and design a playground for it.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high priority is given to developing effective communication and language skills.
- Children make good progress in developing their language skills but many who start from a low base will not achieve the early learning goals.
- Good use is made of high quality role play areas to stimulate speaking skills.
- Some activities are too long for children's concentration spans.
- Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are not planned sufficiently well.

Commentary

50. Many children enter the nursery with communication, language and literacy skills that are below average. Teachers and support staff place a considerable emphasis on these skills and provide a wealth of opportunities for children to develop and improve their language skills. Most children make good progress across both classes. Listening skills develop well but many children lack the confidence and vocabulary to speak at length. Children's reading and writing skills are developing steadily and standards in the current reception class are higher than those of previous year groups. However, a significant minority of children is unlikely to achieve the learning goals in these areas of learning.
51. Children are usually attentive and well motivated except when activities last too long. Particularly good use is made of imaginative and well resourced role play areas. In the nursery, extended telephone conversations take place as the 'receptionist' at the 'Vet's Surgery' rings the owner [an adult volunteer] of some sick pet mice to report on their progress at frequent intervals. The 'secretary' records visitors in the 'appointments' book' while a number of 'vets' are busily x-raying and inoculating various injured animals.
52. Children enjoy choosing books, reading to themselves and having stories read to them. Reception children handle books confidently and are able to recognise and read a number of key words. They have a sound understanding of the elements of a story. Some are able to retell the story of Red Riding Hood from memory, to compare the two versions of the story as told in different books and to re-enact the story in the attractive role play area. Many are able to write simple sentences on their whiteboards although others are only able to write a few words. Appropriate early writing skills are developed in the nursery through such activities as writing with chalks and felt pens, taking the register in role play and focused sessions with an adult where the children are taught how to form their letters correctly.
53. Letter sounds and word building are taught systematically in the reception through such games as 'pin the letter on'. Children are motivated by these approaches and respond eagerly to the lively and purposeful teaching. Pupils with English as a second language and special educational needs are well supported to learn alongside other children.

54. Adults support children in their activities through some well timed interactions and discussions that help children to develop their learning further although staff have not identified specific vocabulary that they wish to promote in these conversations. In group or class activities, skilful questioning is often used to encourage children to reply in extended speech rather than in short answers. However, such questioning is not used consistently across all activities and adult talk dominates some discussions allowing little opportunity for pupils to speak at length.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children will exceed the learning goals by the end of the reception year.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.
- Learning is carefully matched to pupils' individual needs.

Commentary

55. Pupils' achievement in mathematical development has improved since the last inspection. While most children will achieve the goals expected for their ages, a significant number are working beyond this level.
56. Children achieve well in the nursery. They develop their counting through many activities, for example, hide and seek games, hopscotch on the playground and by singing nursery rhymes. They develop their understanding of pattern and shape when they make necklaces of different coloured beads, and quilts from fabric squares. Some children are able to count reliably to 10 using different objects and can identify which is the largest group when comparing different amounts. Children in the reception also make good progress. Many confidently count to 20 and beyond, can add or take away from a given number and know simple number combinations such as $5 + 5 = 10$. They apply their mathematical understanding to other activities, for example, when counting the number of snails on the log, or discussing the shape of their shells.
57. Teaching is good. Children are keen to learn and well motivated. They enjoy the mathematical opportunities provided, whether drawing numbers to make their own ladder on the playground, counting lego bricks or engaged in a more formal session. Teachers make effective use of assessment to match learning to individual needs, for example, by providing different levels of challenge for children in a focused counting activity in the nursery. This approach is continued in the reception through appropriate teaching of more advanced skills in line with children's abilities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of well planned exciting activities promotes effective learning in this area.
- Children's learning is extended by the good quality questioning and discussion.

Commentary

58. Most children will achieve the expected learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress in this area because of the wide range of high quality experiences and opportunities provided to them, including attractive displays and well organised resources and role play areas.
59. The children enjoy using their senses in a variety of activities, such as tasting and making different foods and exploring ice. Nursery children develop their understanding of the environment when they tend the nursery garden, visit the local woods and make a nest for a duck. Children in the reception class show great interest in the snails and other creatures in the aquarium, comparing their sizes and discussing why the snails have lined up together. They understand the difference between man-made and natural objects in the environment and are able to sort them accurately into appropriate groups.
60. Children throughout the Foundation Stage use small toys, construction kits, building blocks and other materials with imagination and concentration. They build model vehicles, farms and houses that reflect their understanding of the world around them, and larger objects such as an 'ice cream factory'. Children enjoy using computers. In the nursery, they confidently control screen images with the rollerball and mouse while younger children experiment with the keyboard to find out what it does. Children in reception use computers including laptops within their wider learning, showing good control and knowledge for their ages. Carefully planned topics help children to appreciate the work of different people from the community, and to develop a sense of time by understanding how they have changed since a baby.
61. Adults, including volunteers, support learning well. They engage children in conversation while they work and ask them questions which help to extend their learning, for example, at the water tray, asking children if they can find a way to make an object sink, or to explain why they think an object has already sunk. As children grow older, more formal sessions are provided for them in the reception class. Occasionally these are overlong and the pace of learning too slow.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children are on course to exceed the expected goals for their age.
- Children move with control, confidence and agility when using large equipment.
- Their skills in using smaller objects such as paintbrushes and pencils are well developed.
- Outdoor areas are often used well but are not fully integrated into learning throughout the year.

Commentary

62. Children achieve well in their physical development and many will exceed the expected goals for their ages. Children move safely with both control and imagination in their physical activity. They happily play on the seesaw, use wheeled toys, build a high castle with plastic blocks and show good control when rolling and jumping to make different shapes. They invent games with such equipment as hoops, rolling them across the playground, laying them end to end and stepping through them, counting as they jump. They enjoy using the climbing apparatus, travelling around, over and under it with agility and confidence. They use pencils, paintbrushes, felt pens, scissors and other tools confidently, showing good control.

63. Children are motivated and interested in their activity, and work hard. They are well supported by staff who have a good awareness of safety issues and who challenge the children to extend their play, for example, by discussing ways they can make their games more interesting. Formal physical education lessons are well managed.
64. Some very appropriate use is made of the outside areas in both the nursery and reception when teachers integrate them into the daily provision. This enables staff to extend the opportunities offered to the children across each area of learning. However, the external areas are not used intensively throughout the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and many will exceed the expected goals for their ages.
- A wide variety of stimulating creative experiences is provided.
- Teachers plan well for different role play scenarios that stimulate children's imagination.

Commentary

65. Children make good progress in both classes. Adults provide a wide range of exciting and challenging learning opportunities to promote children's creative skills. They support children informally but also provide direct instruction, for example, in how to use scissors correctly.
66. Children work with concentration and enjoyment in developing their creative skills. In the nursery, they mould objects using playdough, print with sponges and make delightful cats from collage, complete with long curly tails achieved by cutting a spiral of card. They use tools with growing accuracy, control and independence, cutting and sticking with scissors, painting with brushes, and drawing with pens, crayons and chalks. The children in reception also achieve well across an appropriate breadth of experiences. They build imaginative models from construction kits, balloons from paper mache, and 3-dimensional robots from junk materials. They paint mature self-portraits and use collage to produce some highly individual 'funny faces'. They experiment with joining methods to make inventive shopping bags for 'Teddy'.
67. Children in both classes thoroughly enjoy musical activity. They sing action songs and nursery rhymes with enthusiasm but appreciate the difference between these and the prayer at the end of the day which they sing with quiet feeling. Children enjoy music making with a variety of instruments including the electronic keyboard.
68. Children's creative development is well supported by the use of attractive role play areas. These are very popular with the children and used intensively. Children enjoy dressing as a character from Little Red Riding Hood. They know the story well and act it out with great enthusiasm, repeating the words from memory and extending it with their own imaginative ideas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching is good in Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership.

Commentary

69. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average language and literacy skills. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables the majority of pupils to achieve the nationally expected level in both reading and writing by the end of Year 2. However, too few pupils in the current Year 2 show evidence of higher levels of attainment, either in their reading or writing. This reflects a decline in standards since the last inspection in 1998.
70. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because of weaknesses in the teaching in Years 3 and 4. The current Year 6 class were broadly average in the results of national tests at the end of Year 2. However, although their attainment in reading remains average, standards in writing are below average. An analysis of the school's own pupil tracking records shows that when in Year 3 and 4 the majority of these pupils, of all abilities, made little or no progress. Although the current teaching in Year 6 is good and pupils are making satisfactory progress, there is too much ground to be made up for these pupils to achieve the nationally expected levels. The school is aware of weaknesses in the current teaching in Years 3 and 4, which must be addressed if this pattern of underachievement is not to be repeated. This again reflects a decline in standards since the last inspection.
71. Across the school, standards of spelling remain problematic across all ability groups. Intensive and targeted phonics sessions in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to have an impact but there are inherent weaknesses in the upper junior classes which have not been sufficiently addressed. Recent initiatives, such as the introduction of regular guided reading sessions are proving successful in developing pupils' reading comprehension skills. However, pupils' higher order reading skills, such as their understanding of motivation and causation and their ability to compare the work of different authors, remains limited. Pupils in Year 2 use a range of skills to decode unfamiliar text but this often slows their reading to the point that meaning is lost.
72. Issues mentioned in the previous inspection report of 1998 remain unaddressed. In particular, the lack of a consistent whole-school handwriting policy is undermining the presentation of pupils' work and their capacity to get their ideas rapidly and fluently onto paper. Overall, there is still a lack of consistency between year groups in the approach to teaching writing. In Year 4, there is a reliance on grammar exercises at the expense of opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of different purposes and in a range of narrative genres. In Year 3, the scrutiny of pupils' work revealed low expectations of what pupils can achieve and a significant amount of unmarked work.
73. The quality of teaching is consistently good in Years 1, 2 and 6. In other year groups, teaching is satisfactory with some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4. This judgement is based both on observation of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Where the teaching is best, teachers' marking is evaluative and suggests ways in which pupils can improve their work. However, the targets in pupils' books are not in a form which is comprehensible or useful to pupils and are rarely referred to in teachers' marking.

74. Nor is the work set matched to the needs of the range of abilities in each class. Although useful assessment and recording procedures are in place, information from assessment is not used to provide tasks that match the learning needs of different groups of pupils. In the junior classes one task is set for all pupils and the highly skilled and conscientious teaching assistants are used to support lower attaining pupils in achieving it. This intensive support enables pupils to achieve in the short term but when thrown back on their own devices, many of these pupils reveal shortcomings in their understanding of what has been taught. Assessment is used well to identify those pupils who would benefit from intervention programmes and when pupils are withdrawn for additional help that targets their specific learning difficulties, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In particular, the Beacon literacy programme is beginning to have an impact on individual pupils' progress in basic skills. However, in most classes the large number of extra adults is not used as effectively as they should be to support lower attaining pupils on tasks matched to their identified learning needs.
75. Equally, there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in the tasks set. Often, they finish the work quickly and are given more of the same to fill the remaining time. The additional tasks are not qualitatively different in the amount of challenge which they provide.
76. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are very good and underpin learning in all classes. Pupils listen well to adults and work co-operatively when required. In several classes, introductions are too long and teaching is insufficiently interactive, yet pupils remain well behaved. Routines are well established and pupils settle quickly to activities. They work conscientiously, even when not directly supervised and when the tasks are not intrinsically interesting.
77. The co-ordinator for English is knowledgeable and experienced and provides good leadership. She is aware of the weaknesses in teaching and overall provision and in the short time that she has been in the school has put in place measures to address them. The school improvement plan has identified areas for improvement and several of the initiatives are beginning to have an impact. For example, the school library is attractive and valued by pupils and guided reading sessions are used well to develop pupils' reading comprehension skills. Further work is necessary to ensure that there is a consistency of approach and expectations across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

78. The school has not yet systematically built in planned opportunities for extended writing across other curriculum areas although these sometimes occur incidentally. Much of the work in history and geography is structured by worksheets with few opportunities for longer pieces of writing. Other subject areas are occasionally used as the focus for work in literacy lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are above national expectations.
- Progress is good over time.
- Planning is thorough and carefully structured.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The variety of teaching and learning styles used is good overall.
- The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.
- Assessment systems are not fully developed.
- Problem solving and investigational work are underdeveloped.

Commentary

79. Standards in mathematics are well above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and above in Year 6. In comparison with similar schools they are well above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. Standards seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. Analysis of pupil tracking information shows that good progress is made over time throughout the school, as was the case in the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through effective use of teaching assistants in supporting their learning. The school makes appropriate use of intervention programmes, delivered efficiently by support staff, to enable pupils to catch up with their learning.
80. Planning in mathematics is clearly linked to the National Numeracy Strategy and the school now has a common format for recording, a developmental point from the last inspection. All teachers' planning shows attention to matching the work to the needs of individual pupils although in some cases the level of challenge for the higher ability pupils is underestimated or unimaginative.
81. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good and was satisfactory overall. Learning is further enhanced by the variety of strategies employed particularly in Years 1 and 2 where teaching is good. In the very good lesson seen the teacher's secure subject knowledge and clear understanding of how pupils learn were used very effectively. A broad range of carefully focused activities were used to support and challenge pupils' learning resulting in rapid progress. The pupils were enthusiastic and willing to work hard. Activities planned for the main part of the lesson involved pupils applying their knowledge to measurement of length and weight. Pupils were able to choose and use appropriate equipment and worked productively in groups. The teaching assistants were well informed and able to support identified pupils with special educational needs appropriately whilst encouraging opportunities to show independence. The lesson concluded with pupils assessing their own understanding and the teacher extending the learning to the next stage.
82. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are positive, as was the case during the last inspection. They work independently and in groups with concentration at a good pace. Pupils respond well to high expectations in terms of behaviour and all staff demonstrate very effective use of praise and reward.
83. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and is developing a more rigorous approach to assessment and analysis, monitoring and evaluation although she acknowledges there is still some work to be done in this respect. Little use of information and communication technology or problem solving and investigational work was seen during the inspection and these aspects have been identified by the co-ordinator as areas for development. The numeracy governor works closely with the co-ordinator, is very supportive and fully informed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use, consolidate and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 make 'right angle gobblers' in design helping to reinforce and support their understanding of angles. In Year 6 pupils use conversion graphs and draw graphs to represent data in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are below national expectations.
- Pupils' scientific enquiry skills are promoted well.
- Work is not always sufficiently adapted for all pupils, particularly the more able.

Commentary

85. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In Year 2 most pupils are on track to achieve the expected Level 2 and a small minority of more able pupils will achieve the higher Level 3. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that all pupils complete the same work. However, from the lessons observed, good support is given to lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, by teachers and teaching assistants. Sufficient challenge is also given to more able pupils through good questioning, which extends their understanding. However, this is not always evident in their written work.
86. Standards attained by pupils in the current Year 6 are below average. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection and below those usually gained by the school in national tests. This is because this year group contains a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The work of pupils in the current Year 6 indicates that they are making good progress so far this year, due to the good teaching they receive, but that their achievement over time is satisfactory. Higher and average attaining pupils draw clear conclusions from their investigations and this helps them to understand scientific concepts. Lower attaining pupils are supported well in completing their work but tend to describe what they have done rather than draw conclusions from their experiments. Good opportunities are given to pupils to design their own experiments in response to a question posed by their teacher and as a result pupils' skills in scientific enquiry are promoted well. This was observed in a lesson in Year 6 when pupils designed their own experiments to measure the amount of friction created by different surfaces. Pupils were allowed to make mistakes and good questioning from the teacher, teaching assistants and an adult volunteer, ensured that pupils corrected their experiments to ensure a 'fair' test. Most pupils are achieving as well as they should but work is not always adapted to challenge more able pupils and they underachieve as a result. Pupils have good attitudes to science and enjoy the practical work they are given.
87. In the lessons seen during the inspection teaching and learning were good in Years 1, 2 and 6 and satisfactory elsewhere. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and provide interesting activities for pupils to complete. In the better quality lessons, a brisk pace is maintained and work is suitably adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The quality of planning is good. In some lessons the pace of learning and the challenge of work could be improved. In one instance the teacher talked too much and the pupils had to listen for too long and this slowed the progress they made. In another the teacher did not make clear his expectations of what pupils should achieve by the end of the lesson and pupils completed the work at their leisure. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well and this results in an orderly working atmosphere. Generally, the marking of pupils' work is good. Frequent supportive comments are made and questions, such as 'What does streamlined mean?' or 'Did co-ordination and reaction times improve?' probe pupils' understanding.
88. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has provided staff with training in developing pupils' scientific enquiry skills and has demonstrated lessons for colleagues. However, she has had limited opportunity to observe lessons. Assessments

are made by teachers at the end of units of science work but there are no whole-school tracking procedures in place to ensure that pupils are progressing as well as they should. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. Use is made of pupils' ICT skills when accessing the internet to find information or linking a microscope to a computer to observe images, but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to make better use of ICT in science. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily used in recording their work and measuring results.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of ICT skills is good.
- Good strategic planning ensures an appropriate level of modern resources is maintained.
- Procedures for monitoring teaching, learning and the curriculum are not effective.
- The assessment of pupils' progress and achievement is underdeveloped.
- The use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

89. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make steady progress in the development of their ICT skills so that most attain average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, sometimes with specialist equipment, and make good progress. Pupils make some appropriate use of the internet for research to support their learning in history or geography and are able to use word processing for different purposes. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 know how to create a spreadsheet, enter data, and construct a formula to calculate. They have developed the basic skills needed to operate databases and to use sensors and computers to control such applications as the lighting sequence on model traffic lights. In some facets of their work, pupils are attaining standards that are above average, for example, in controlling a Roamer robot in Year 2, and in their database work in Year 4. However, there is little use of e-mail past Year 4.
90. The teaching of ICT skills seen during the inspection was good. Teachers plan thoroughly, using the national guidelines as the basis for most of their lessons. This helps to ensure appropriate coverage of the ICT curriculum and progression in the development of pupils' skills. Most teachers have a good understanding of the subject, in some cases because of valuable training provided by the co-ordinator. Teaching assistants provide skilled support for pupils. Learning in ICT is good because there are sufficient modern resources and because pupils are highly interested. They concentrate well and make good progress in acquiring skills, working effectively in groups when appropriate.
91. The school has adopted an innovative approach to overcoming the lack of a computer suite by providing a 'mobile suite' of laptop computers for classes to use on a regular basis. However, the battery life of the laptops has restricted the availability of these computers and governors are currently considering alternative long-term solutions to the problem. Budget planning for ICT including the updating of resources is good and has ensured that the school has an appropriate level of good quality equipment including digital cameras, data projectors and a small number of computers in each classroom.
92. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Strategic planning for the development of ICT is effective and the co-ordinator provides good support and advice to staff. However, the monitoring of ICT to ensure appropriate levels of achievement and the use of ICT across the curriculum is not effective, and the assessment of pupils' progress and achievement is underdeveloped.

93. Although there has been improvement since the last inspection in the number and range of computers available, improvement overall is unsatisfactory because standards have declined since the last inspection and assessment and monitoring remain issues for improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. ICT is not used effectively to support learning across the curriculum. During the inspection, very little use of ICT was seen outside of the direct teaching sessions. Pupils were rarely seen using the computers in the classrooms. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicated some use of ICT in English, geography, history and mathematics but there is little evidence that computers are used regularly or systematically to support learning across the curriculum. The school recognises this and has identified this area as a priority for school development.

HUMANITIES

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.

Commentary

95. From the lessons observed, discussions with pupils and staff and a scrutiny of pupils' work, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expectations of the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and have been maintained since the previous inspection.
96. The work seen in pupils' books indicates that progress is good. In Year 6 pupils give some thoughtful and mature responses expressing their opinions on God, faith, ways of worship and other religions. They show good development of the ability to describe key beliefs and features of religion and to have a growing sense of belonging and empathy for others. In Year 2 pupils are developing the ability to express simple ideas and feelings and to have some understanding of "special" books, places and objects. Marking of pupils work is encouraging and sometimes developmental giving pupils an indication of how they can progress further. Pupils take a pride in their work and the subject is valued.
97. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. A similar picture was found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good. They are able to discuss confidently and work collaboratively. All pupils were fully involved in the lessons seen and those with special educational needs were supported effectively by teaching assistants. Literacy skills, such as dictionary use and writing in different formats, are used well to support the teaching of RE. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is underdeveloped.
98. Resources have been extended to ensure that pupils have access to relevant books and artefacts to support their learning. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a sound understanding of the subject and the areas for future development. These include extending the use of visits and visitors, opportunities for further professional development particularly in different faiths and continuing to raise the profile of the subject within the school. The co-ordinator recognises the need to extend the monitoring and evaluation aspects of the management role and to develop a systematic approach towards assessment.

99. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the overall provision made for **history** and **geography**. Work from specific topics is used occasionally as a focus for work in literacy lessons and cross-curricular links are beginning to be made. However, coverage of the curriculum is variable and the school does not ensure that a satisfactory balance of time is allocated to these subjects. Insufficient use is made of visits to support learning in these areas, although visitors to the school help to make learning more immediate and relevant.
100. The programme of work is currently based on national guidelines. The school is slow in adapting these to create a unique curriculum in these areas which reflects its specific circumstances and environment. Individual examples of teacher enterprise are helping to create a lively curriculum in some classes. For example, Barnaby Bear (a soft toy taken by pupils when they go on holiday) has travelled very widely in Year 2, including visits to the Himalayas and the Caribbean. A project on rivers in Year 6 involved in-class practical work but would have benefited from field work to give it a meaningful context.
101. The co-ordinator is relatively inexperienced and has yet to establish a whole-school overview of provision in these areas.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

102. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in **art and design**. However, from the two lessons observed, discussions with pupils and staff and a scrutiny of pupils' work, the good standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils are given opportunities to successfully test out a range of ideas and techniques and to learn about work of famous artists. Displays throughout the school are of high quality and indicate that pupils are working at a level above expectations and that progress is good overall. Displays demonstrate the value placed on the arts within the school. Evidence from displays and discussions indicate pupils have frequent opportunities to learn about traditional art from diverse cultures. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has had limited opportunity for monitoring the subject although she has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the subject.
103. Three lessons were observed in **design and technology** and samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning were examined. The subject is now well established in the school's curriculum and provision for design and technology is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. Planning based on national guidelines ensures that pupils gain experience of a range of materials and techniques and develop satisfactory skills in designing and making a variety of products. Younger children make moving pictures using levers while pupils in Year 2 have designed and built model fire engines of a good standard. Pupils in Year 3 have experimented with simple pneumatics to create a monster with opening jaws and have worked with a designer to use African techniques to produce high quality textile designs. Older pupils have made motorised buggies. Evidence from the lessons seen and from finished models and other work around the school indicates that the teaching of design technology is satisfactory and sometimes good. Children are taught to evaluate their finished work by asking themselves how they could improve its design or operation. The co-ordinator has ensured that the subject is well resourced but does not monitor provision effectively across the school.
104. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the provision for **physical education** (PE). Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Discussions were held with pupils and the co-ordinator and teachers' planning scrutinised. The co-ordinator does not monitor provision effectively across the school.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards of singing are good.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved.
- The teaching of music is good.
- The curriculum provided in Years 3 to 6 has improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

105. Standards in music are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve as well as they should. They achieve well in singing. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to sing in assemblies and school performances. Most pupils develop good pitch and clear diction in singing a range of songs from memory and are able to keep their own part in performing two-part songs. The school choir performs for a variety of audiences and further impacts on the good standards pupils achieve.
106. From a scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff, the curriculum provided for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has improved since the last inspection. The specialist music co-ordinator teaches these year groups and the quality of teaching is good. Teaching is also good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have regular opportunities to listen to music, play tuned and untuned percussion instruments, to compose their own music and to appreciate music from a range of different cultures.
107. Teaching observed during the inspection was of good quality and ensured that pupils made good progress in their learning and achieved well. Lessons have a brisk pace and the activities provided are structured well to keep pupils' interest and to motivate them to give of their best. Consequently, they enjoy the subject.
108. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and carries out informal observations of her colleagues. The co-ordinator organises school performances and musical events to provide opportunities for pupils to perform in public and this impacts well on the standards they achieve. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. There is a good range of untuned percussion instruments but the range of tuned percussion is limited. Currently, there is no instrumental music tuition available to the school and this limits the progress more able and gifted musicians can make.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

109. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about provision in **personal, social and health education and citizenship** (PHSE/C). Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to discuss ideas, feelings and matters of importance within a context of trust and mutual respect in classes, school council meetings, and in religious education. PSHE/C is timetabled weekly and detailed schemes of work are in place across the school. All staff set high expectations, provide good role models and have well developed skills in using praise and reward to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviour. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily and has a good understanding of the current position and areas for future development.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
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	3
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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).