

INSPECTION REPORT

Probus Community Primary School

Truro

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111865

Headteacher: Mr R Adams

Lead inspector: Mr J Palk

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th January 2004

Inspection number: 260554

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	168
School address:	Ladock Road Probus Truro Cornwall
Postcode:	TR2 4LE
Telephone number:	01726 882647
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D W Hayhoe
Date of previous inspection:	September 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Probus is a small, community primary school and draws its pupils from the village and from several outlying villages. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are broadly average although very few pupils are receiving free school meals. The majority of pupils are white with a few of mixed heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. There are below average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, which range from moderate to specific learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are taught in single year groups with a mixed year 3 and 4 class and one class of year 4 and 5 pupils. Children start school full time in the term that they are five years old. Their attainments on entry are average. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual times varies from year to year. Since the last inspection the size of the school has increased by the equivalent of one class. The school received a school achievement award¹ for 2002 and it has been awarded the *Quality Mark* for teaching basic skills and the *Active Mark* for physical education.

¹ School achievement awards are made to those schools where there has been an improvement in national curriculum test results.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23630	Mr J Palk	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History
33673	Mr N Gallichan	Lay inspector	
3607	Mr A Fraser	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education
33709	Ms J Abbott	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is providing a **sound** education for its pupils. The majority of pupils reach average standards, but not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels that they are capable of. The leadership provides a clear sense of purpose and strategies to raise standards are beginning to have a good impact. The teaching is satisfactory with much that is good. Older pupils are making up lost ground in some key areas of their learning, but some lessons do not provide enough challenge. Pupils benefit from a good range of experiences and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in year 6 are below average in writing and science.
- Pupils through the school achieve well in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and music, but older pupils do not achieve well enough in geography and history.
- Teaching and learning in the reception class and years 1 and 2 are good; too many lessons in years 3 to 6 are not demanding enough of more able pupils.
- The school is well led and managed and there is a good partnership with parents.
- The curriculum is enriched through links with the community and opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Pupils are well cared for and those with special educational needs make good progress.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards achieved are similar. Teachers are making better use of what they know about pupils to group them in lessons but the activities are not always demanding enough of the more able. Weaknesses in provision are being firmly tackled. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and reception class children make a good start to their learning. The management of developments by the headteacher and key staff is more effective.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Inspection found that children achieve well in the reception class, and at the start of year 1 exceed expected levels in literacy, mathematics and social skills. By year 2 all pupils achieve as well as they should and most reach average standards in reading, writing and science. They are above average in mathematics. There is still a residue of low expectations that affects how evenly pupils are learning in years 3 to 6. Overall, however, standards are better than recent test results show. The decline in performance has been halted. The best improvement has been in mathematics. In English, standards in reading are better than writing. Standards in science, history and geography are too low and more able pupils are not achieving as well as they should because not enough is expected of them. There is good support for average and less able pupils who achieve as well as they should. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. They have a good attitude towards learning, and they respect each other and their teachers. Attendance levels are above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**.

Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. There is good teaching through the school but it is generally better in the reception and years 1 and 2. In these year groups lessons are well matched to children's needs and the work is challenging. Teachers' expectations in years 3 to 6 are not sharp enough. They do not always plan their lessons precisely enough to extend pupils' learning. Teaching assistants provide good support. They are well informed about what to teach and this gives them the confidence to support pupils effectively.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is broad and balanced and there is good curricular enrichment that is helping raise pupils' enthusiasm for learning. The geography and history curriculum is not planned precisely enough to develop pupils' skills. Pupils are well cared for and the school has a good relationship with parents. Provision for those with special educational needs is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher is clear about what the school needs to do to improve and approaches this systematically. The work being done to raise standards and improve teaching is beginning to have a good impact on some subjects. The work of the governors is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of the school's aims and ensure that statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied. They feel that staff work hard to provide a varied and interesting education for their children. They value the school's commitment to their community. Pupils like their school. They like their teachers and the way they are given responsibilities to make the school a happy and safe place.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in writing and science.
- Improve standards in history and geography.
- Provide greater challenge for more able pupils in the lessons in years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory overall, and standards are broadly average. The standards are rising in most subjects but not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels that they are capable of. Achievement is good for pupils in reception and in years 1 and 2. It is good throughout the school for pupils with special educational needs. By year 6 standards are average in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and ICT but are below average in writing and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing and science are improving through the school but are below average in year 6 because the more able pupils are not reaching expected levels.
- Pupils in all year groups are achieving well in mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils are reaching above average standards in art and design but do not achieve as well as they should in history and geography.
- Children achieve well in literacy and numeracy in the reception class.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (14.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.9 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Results have generally been average or above, but with more fluctuation in writing than reading and mathematics. There was improvement in the 2003 results following the dip in performance of boys in the 2002 tests; however the overall rate of improvement is below the national trend. When compared to similar schools the results in 2003 were below average in writing and mathematics and well below in reading. This is because the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was below average. Teacher assessment in science indicates very good scientific knowledge but well below average investigation skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (26.4)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	24.7 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.5 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. These results are well below average overall and in the last three years the improvement has been below the national trend. Pupils of an average ability who were with the school between year 3 and year 6 did not make the progress expected in writing and mathematics. Girls have done better than boys in English and science; there has been little difference in the performance

of boys and girls in mathematics. In 2003 more able pupils reached similar standards in English to those of most schools and the school's targets were met. The more able did not reach their targets in mathematics.

Inspection findings

3. The school has worked hard to improve the achievements of average pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This has largely been successful because of well-targeted support and good teaching. Children exceed the goals that they are expected to reach in literacy and numeracy by the end of the reception year. Their personal, social and emotional skills are well developed. In years 1 and 2, standards are average overall. The more able pupils are being extended in their reading and writing and are working at expected levels. Work in mathematics is challenging all pupils to use their calculation skills and they are developing a secure base of mental arithmetic skills. Practical work in science has had a good impact on investigative skills and standards are now average.
4. Through years 3 to 6 average and less able pupils have been given extra support in English and mathematics. Additional lessons and specific programmes are ensuring they achieve as well as they should. The use of information about their prior attainment and good additional teaching is proving effective and these pupils are reaching the standards expected. An improvement in teaching writing is successfully addressing a weakness in writing skills. This has raised the overall standards of boys. However, the more able pupils are not adequately stretched to produce good quality writing in other subjects, such as history and geography, which affects standards. There is not enough emphasis placed on introducing and using high quality vocabulary, which affects the standard they achieve. Their restricted vocabulary also affects the quality of their science work. Many pupils' explanations in science work are weak and contribute to below average standards in science.
5. Standards in mathematics are rising quickly through the school and are above average in year 2 and now average in year 6. This is mainly due to better numeracy teaching. There is greater emphasis on rapid mental calculation and learning a variety of strategies for calculation. There is better assessment information linked to target setting that supports the good teaching. Pupils' investigative skills in science are improving as a consequence of more opportunities to organise and record experiments. However, pupils rarely explain their findings or draw hypotheses and this limits achievement in their last year.
6. There is good information about the progress of pupils with special educational needs, which ensures that they have plenty of adult support and well-matched tasks. Through the school boys are responding well to the practical work in mathematics and science and their achievement is similar to that of girls.
7. Standards in years 1 and 2 in history and geography are average but are below average by year 6. In the main this is because too much of the work is undemanding of pupils. Conversely work in art and design and music is challenging and well-matched to the skills the pupils have already acquired and they achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development overall. Attendance is above the national average and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners, showing interest in their lessons and after-school activities.
- The school promotes good relationships well and sets high expectations for pupils' conduct.

- The school teaches the responsibilities of living in a community well.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

8. Pupils enjoy attending school and like their teachers. The good range of clubs brings them into contact with other teachers and adults from the local community and this contributes to their confidence and maturity. They behave well in lessons and move around the school in an orderly and polite manner. They wait patiently in a queue for lunch and respond rapidly to requests for quietness or assistance by staff or peers. Children in the reception class are encouraged to take responsibility and they respond well. Throughout the school pupils are polite and confident in conversations with staff, visitors and one another. No incidents of bullying were witnessed; pupils and parents state that incidences are very rare and dealt with effectively. There has been one fixed term exclusion. This pupil is being successfully supported in school and fully included.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
175	1	
1		
1		

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

9. The school ensures that pupils experience the traditions of a wide range of other cultures by bringing relevant visitors into the school. A good multi-cultural and multi-faith mix in the assembly programme, which contains many moral stories from around the world, further supports the culture of tolerance. Assemblies also successfully encourage pupils to value themselves and the achievements of others. Pupils feel well supported and repay this by their positive attitudes. Pupils' moral and social understanding is well developed because adults are good role models and there are high expectations of how pupils conduct themselves.
10. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. Pupils in year 6 have significant roles at play times and lunchtimes, responsibilities they take seriously. The distributions of these duties are very well monitored to ensure all year 6 pupils develop a positive attitude to living in a community.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The work of the support staff and the care given to children encourage good attitudes towards learning. There is some good teaching through the school and pupils' learning is supported well by an interesting range of activities.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The most effective teaching is in the reception class and years 1 and 2. Teaching in years 3 to 6 varies from very good to unsatisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations and the very good use of support staff in the reception and years 1 and 2 mean that children learn well.
- Teachers' questions of the more able pupils in years 3 to 6 and the work set for them is not demanding enough.
- Teaching assistants support teachers very well and contribute to the good achievements of less able pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (23%)	19 (48%)	10 (26%)	1 (3%)	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.

11. In the reception class and years 1 and 2, groups are well-organised to ensure good management of the time. Lessons are distinctive in providing resources and support that is precisely matched to the needs of the individual. The teachers have high expectations of the children and this is characterised by their response to the pupils, indicating what they want them to learn next. The teachers make good use of information about what pupils have already learnt and follow this up with good marking. Rewards are regular and pupils know how they are improving. A good range of questions is accurately pitched at individuals to give encouragement and challenge. Consequently pupils learn well in nearly all lessons. Teachers manage the children well and there is a positive sense of purpose.
12. Teaching and learning are variable in years 3 to 6. Some is very good, particularly where there are clear objectives and the support from other adults is well linked to the lesson objectives. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory or satisfactory rather than good, there is not enough pace in the lessons. Too much time is spent on introducing the lesson and not enough on extending pupils' thinking. Too often the questions asked of pupils do not take their learning further. Moreover unnecessary time is wasted, as the teachers do not use strategies to involve all pupils in working out answers. On some occasions the teachers make good use of assessment information to help them group pupils and match the work to abilities. This is not happening regularly enough in lessons, and in these instances expectations are too low.
13. Throughout the school support staff take an active part in helping pupils learn. Pupils value this help and make the most of it by being attentive and working hard. The flexible use of teaching assistants to work in a number of classes is particularly beneficial in raising literacy and numeracy standards. Teaching assistants use their time wisely, for example, making notes of pupils' progress or responses. They take small groups of pupils during lessons or work with individual pupils to support them. Small group sessions outside the classrooms for pupils in need of extra support are effective, whether taught by teachers or support staff. In one very well taught small group lesson for year 6, the key strength was in the questioning that encouraged pupils to work out how to improve for themselves, which was highly motivating and raised their self-esteem.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the reception year. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There are many opportunities for enrichment within and beyond the school day. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum adequately overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- ICT is used well to develop skills in other subjects.
- Pupils' literacy skills are not challenged or extended in other subjects.
- There is a good partnership with the community that extends pupils' learning.

Commentary

14. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well across the school. This is in part due to the very good use of teaching assistants. Work is carefully planned for these pupils; their individual needs are identified and targets are put into place to help them achieve. Teaching assistants are clear about the targets and recommendations in the individual education plans (IEPs) for the pupils whom they support.
15. The quality of the curriculum is continually monitored and evaluated leading to some good developments in the provision for art and sport. The curriculum is adequately modified to take account of mixed age classes and teachers group pupils successfully to value their previous experiences. Recent developments in teaching styles have led to a more practically based curriculum that is particularly benefiting boys in subjects such as science and design technology. ICT has also been used well to extend subjects, particularly numeracy and art. However, the development of literacy skills has not been planned for routinely and this limits pupils' achievements in writing. Although literacy has been a main focus for the school, the potential for other subjects to supplement and provide additional writing experiences has not been systematically developed.
16. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' experiences at school. The good programme of activities available outside of school hours enriches the curriculum and is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school. This includes drama, art and sport. Almost all the pupils involve themselves in one or more of the school's extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for in a safe environment. They receive satisfactory advice and guidance. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' to share their views on the work of the school and its development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school ensures that pupils work in a safe environment.
- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle.
- There are good procedures for the induction of children into school.

Commentary

17. Staff take a keen interest in the welfare and development of all pupils. Midday staff are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and work well with pupils to ensure they are safe and happy at lunchtimes. The school's attention to matters of health and safety has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors have carried out a comprehensive health and safety audit of the premises and there is good provision in place to ensure pupils' safety on

school trips. All staff members are trained in first aid, appropriate records are kept of injuries sustained by pupils and parents are advised accordingly. All requirements relating to child protection are now met.

18. The school monitors pupils' personal development routinely and this ensures that all pupils are helped to grow in personal confidence. The formal personal, social and health education provision includes regular circle times² in which pupils have the opportunity to discuss any issues that are concerning them. One consequence of these discussions is the pupils' involvement in a successful campaign to provide a range of healthy snacks at break times. The pupils have also worked with the catering service to create healthy and appealing lunchtime menus.
19. Parents agree that arrangements for children starting school help them to settle in quickly and it is clear that new pupils are quickly integrated into playing a full part in school life. The very good communication with the pre-school group helps the school identify those children that may need extra support in the early years, and form an early partnership with parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed good relationships with parents and carers, other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information given to parents about their child's progress is good.
- The school helps parents to support their children's work at home.
- Links with the community do much to improve pupils' learning and develop their social skills.

Commentary

20. Parents are provided with a range of good quality information about the school including a regular newsletter. Good reports and frequent opportunities to meet with teachers, both formally and informally, ensure that they feel informed about how their child is progressing. Parents feel able to make use of the genuine open door policy if they wish to raise any concerns and are confident that the staff will respond quickly.
21. Reading diaries are used to clarify how parents can help and are regularly checked by staff to help them judge pupils' reading progress. After canvassing parents' views, the school organised a successful training event for parents on reading and writing skills. This has had a noticeable improvement on pupils' attitudes, and parents' confidence in helping their children.
22. There are a rich variety of projects that extend pupils' experiences and embrace the wider community. The stepping stone project³ has brought residents from the village into the school during the day to use the computer suite. The teachers and pupils have benefited because the computers are maintained to a high standard, leading to successful lessons. Some of the adults stay on to help in the school, hearing readers or making reading resources. This has benefited the strong sense of community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides effective leadership. The leadership of senior staff is good and they provide positive support for the headteacher in his drive for school improvement. The governance of the school is sound and statutory requirements are met.

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

³ Stepping stone project: an adult education programme organised by Truro college.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors have a good focus on strategic development.
- The headteacher is committed to continual improvement and his leadership enables subject co-ordinators to fulfil their roles adequately.
- Strong team work has been established and the deputy headteacher makes a good contribution to helping to raise standards.
- The strategies for monitoring standards are leading to improvements.

Commentary

23. The governors have addressed the weaknesses in their own awareness of the school and now have links to individual subjects. Governors are now prepared to challenge and debate on matters of strategy. A recent development has been to hold a meeting each term specifically to evaluate the progress being made in the school. However, these procedures are relatively new and governors are still dependent on information received from the headteacher and deputy.
24. There is a good team ethos and members of staff are supportive of each other. The headteacher and senior management team are providing a clear lead to move the school forward. Strategic planning is well focused upon raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Consultation has included all parties including the pupils. The vision about the school's future development has been communicated well to all staff, governors and parents and there is a strong sense of purpose about achieving it. Weaknesses in leadership and management identified at the previous inspection have been dealt with and there is now a clear agenda for the school's further improvement.
25. Teaching has been effectively monitored and the systems in place are leading to improvements in teaching. Appropriate training is identified and there are good systems in place to ensure that benefits gained are disseminated to the whole staff group. The headteacher has taken a strong lead in raising pupils' expectations of what they can achieve as well as those of staff and this is working its way through the school. Good use is now being made of assessment information to track pupils and direct support staff to where they make the most impact. Consequently there has been good improvement in raising standards in mathematics through the school. The deputy head is effective and provides a positive and inspiring role model for other staff, particularly in her role as literacy co-ordinator.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	410,181	Balance from previous year	17,159
Total expenditure	379,391	Balance carried forward to the next	47,949
Expenditure per pupil	3,179		

26. The school budgets systematically reflect the priorities in the school development plan for all expenditure and decisions about spending. The larger than average carry forward is because money has been set aside for additional building work. The finance committee is effective with a good level of expertise and evaluates the school's spending plans in order to help with the process of securing best value.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

27. Provision is good for children in the Foundation Stage and they achieve well. Children enter school with a wide range of attainment, but overall this is average for all areas of learning. The management of the provision was an issue for the school at the last inspection and this is now a strength. The school, working with the Local Education Authority has made good progress in improving provision, particularly for creative development and physical development. Teaching and learning are now consistently good in all areas of learning, typified by a good variety of practical activities to stimulate the children and support their learning well. There are high expectations of the children, who are achieving at a faster rate in their writing and mathematics this year than last year. In the main this is because the tracking of children's progress is well established and used effectively to modify activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children exceed the standards expected for their age at the end of reception year because of good teaching.
- The very good relationship between children and adults encourages children's independence and good social behaviour.
- There are clear expectations of how children should behave towards each other.

Commentary

28. Staff provide a secure environment where classroom routines are quickly and securely established. All children enter the room quietly and sit politely, listening carefully when the register is taken. They co-operate well with each other during group activities and already work well independently without an adult when necessary. There is a lovely atmosphere in which children learn to respect each other and adults. They are polite. The adults manage behaviour well, giving children clear messages about how to take turns and how to talk to others in the class.

29. Very positive relationships have formed between adults and children and the children themselves, which is leading to effective teaching and learning. Children's personal and social skills successfully develop through activities, such as co-operative games and role-play. The children are regularly encouraged to take responsibility, for example, in choosing a friend they may want to help them or asking questions of the class. Children are listened to and know that their efforts are valued.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff make good opportunities to develop the children's language skills.
- Early writing skills are taught systematically and well; children exceed the expectations in this area of their learning.

Commentary

30. Most children are on course to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception year. Children learn well. During the first part of literacy lessons, when children are together, the teacher maintains a good level of challenge for different abilities. In one lesson, she encouraged the children to follow the story closely and invited them to say what they thought would happen next. She quietly insisted that children explained accurately what was happening, and was effective in extending their spoken vocabulary. The activities that followed were well organised and ensured that communication skills were taught in an exciting manner. For example, through role-play less able children learned how to sequence the events of the story correctly. More able children were encouraged to write an ending for the story, which they did successfully. Some wrote one or two linked sentences with a good standard of spelling and handwriting.
31. The teacher and teaching assistants have high expectations of children developing their writing skills and provide areas for children to write independently. Teaching assistants work alongside children, prompting them with challenging questions that encourage them to develop their vocabulary. Areas of the classroom, such as *the surgery*, are sufficiently equipped with printed notices to encourage children to develop reading and writing skills independently.
32. Good use is made of computer skills to support children's literacy development, for example, in writing and printing prescriptions for use in *the surgery*. The story sacks⁴, often used in literacy lessons, provide a good medium for learning to read, and the library area is well stocked with books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children experience a good variety of approaches to learning about numbers and as a result achieve well.
- Adults pay good attention to mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

33. Children have a good understanding of numbers that is above average for this stage of the year. Most children are already calculating using numbers to 20. Many opportunities are used for counting activities, such as the morning register and singing counting rhymes. In one session, children counted forwards and backwards with great enthusiasm and enjoyed telling a puppet where to start counting and how many to count on. The teacher placed very good emphasis on the language and rephrased questions to extend the more able. This resulted in some good learning. During number activities, the teacher and teaching assistant encourage children to approximate, describe the patterns and explain the relationships between numbers. Activities are purposeful and the adults regularly check on the progress individuals are making during the small group work. Consequently, the sessions are just the right length of time to retain children's enthusiasm for mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

34. Some work in knowledge and understanding of the world was sampled but it is not possible to judge the quality of provision. Some good discussions about babies, supported by photographs,

⁴ Story sacks. These typically contain a book and a collection of puppets or soft toys representing the main characters. In addition there may be board games to involve children in re-telling the story or rehearsing the main themes of the story.

helped children learn well about how they have changed. Children are using computers competently.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children use their bodies well to move in a range of ways and are starting to link movements.
- Children are already starting to evaluate their own and each other's work.

Commentary

35. The children enjoyed a very successful dance lesson in the hall. They learnt well to develop expressive movement in time to the music. The lesson was very well planned and included opportunity for children to plan and rehearse new sequences. Children learnt to watch each other's movements and think quietly about how they might improve their own. The lesson was demanding of more able children because it asked them to link three distinct elements of movement together. The teacher had provided 'silk' scarves and these provided all the children with the chance to add other elements to their movements such as turns and leaps.

36. Since the last inspection, planning and resources have been improved for outside physical play. Large wheeled toys are handled competently and children handle balls and small equipment to develop their manipulative skills. There are now regular daily activities outside, although the lack of a covered area somewhat diminishes this provision.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to use a range of materials and take part in role-play.

Commentary

37. The *Probus Surgery* provides an exciting and well-equipped play area. This has a good collection of dressing up clothes to role-play patients and carers. Although a structure is often provided for modelling and artwork, children are given good opportunities to make choices and show creativity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Writing standards are rising. They are average in year 2 but are below average in year 6.

- Most lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives that are explained to the pupils at the beginning of lessons.
- Some lessons lack challenge for the more able pupils.

Commentary

38. Overall standards are average. Speaking and listening skills are average through the school. Teachers develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills appropriately through regular opportunities for pupils to discuss with each other or talk to the whole class. The school encourages reading and the enjoyment of books in a variety of ways; this enjoyment results in average reading fluency by the end of year 2 and year 6. Library skills are satisfactory through the school. The writing standards in year 6 are below average because there is little writing that shows good quality vocabulary and sentence structure. However, there is an improving trend working through the school. This is a result of better teaching. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching as a result of regularly monitoring lessons, and evaluating the pupils' work and test results. The action taken has been effective, and consequently teachers give more attention in their lessons to seeking the views of boys, and in directing them to books and subjects that they find appealing to write about. Much of the focus has been on less able and average pupils and these pupils are now making good progress. The co-ordinator has clear plans to move the emphasis towards more able pupils, identified through the school's assessment information. There is a more challenging range of fiction such as Tolkein and Shakespeare available to the more able.
39. Most lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives that are explained to the pupils at the beginning of lessons. In the best lessons, the level of challenge is high. In these lessons, careful consideration is given to how the teaching will match the needs of pupils across the ability range. Very good teaching was seen in a year 1 English class, where the teacher set out to get pupils to improve the quality of their story writing by structuring the beginning, middle and ending. By the end of the lesson, the pupils appreciated how to make their stories more exciting. All the pupils enjoyed the lesson because the teacher took care to involve and inspire them at the right levels for their potential, with different activities and support.
40. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to check pupils' writing and spelling skills and this is another factor leading to improving standards. Teachers use their assessments to set the targets pupils are expected to achieve by the end of each year. Pupils in year 6 have specific personal targets for writing that they now refer to in lessons to improve their writing. However there are few comments or indications in marking to help them improve their own work.
41. Some lessons lack challenge for the more able pupils with too low an expectation of the quantity of writing to be produced. Additionally, for these pupils, the opportunities to develop writing skills are frequently not presented because of too close an adherence to the main lesson objective. For example, in one class, pupils were learning about the characteristics of myths; greater challenge could have been presented to the more able pupils if they had been allowed to develop the characters rather than solely focusing upon the conventions of the opening of a myth. In many lessons, questioning is used well to make and emphasise teaching points and to direct the course of the lesson. However, questioning is sometimes not well targeted to present challenge across the ability groups, particularly for the more able pupils.
42. Staff and teaching assistants have been trained by the co-ordinator to teach reading and writing ensuring that their teaching in lessons is very effective.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. Overall this is unsatisfactory. Opportunities to systematically develop older pupils' writing in other curriculum areas, for example in history and geography, are missed. ICT is generally used well to support reading; for example with research and the use of word processing and presentational software.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good; planning is good and good use is made of support staff.
 - The teachers know how well pupils are doing and this helps them match work appropriately.
 - Pupils' work is inconsistently marked and this reduces its impact on their learning.
44. All pupils are achieving well and standards are better at both year 2 and year 6 than the recent test results would indicate. Improvements have been well managed. By year 2 standards are above average. Pupils in years 1 and 2 have a secure grounding in number calculation and use a good range of strategies to solve simple problems. For example, in year 2 all pupils confidently explained what methods they used for doubling and halving numbers and how they used these to find a mid-point between two numbers. Standards achieved by year 6 are broadly average. Areas where pupils have been weakest are being successfully taught. In particular they have a secure grasp of the four number operations and are confident about working with high numbers. They know their tables and most pupils have a good recall, because of the regular and successful strategies that encourage them to learn their tables and test themselves. Most use their tables competently to solve practical problems.
45. The national numeracy strategy has been successfully implemented and this is having a very positive impact on teaching and the pupils' learning. The headteacher and the co-ordinator regularly carry out monitoring of teaching. The co-ordinator has run training sessions for both the teaching and the non-teaching staff to address weaknesses. This has resulted in improved use of the final part of lessons and effective teaching of strategies to solve word problems. In addition all teachers have worked with leading mathematics teachers to strengthen their practice. The evaluation of test data has been shared with staff and teaching assistants assigned to providing extra teaching in these areas. The school makes good use of available help and support programmes to make sure that pupils in year 6 leave the school knowing as much as they can about how numbers work.
46. In years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress. Work is altered to meet the needs of the pupils and expectations are suitably high. The lessons are well planned and take into account the different levels of ability so that all children are helped. In both years 1 and 2 the teaching assistants make a very positive impact on what pupils manage to do. They work in close partnership with the teachers and provide individuals and groups of children with good support.
47. Good provision is made for pupils in mixed aged classes, particularly when they are taught in two groups, which ensure, that all pupils are appropriately challenged. National planning guidance is adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils and allows appropriate emphasis to be placed on using and applying mathematics. Teachers prepare their lessons well and ensure that work builds on previous learning by using up-to-date assessment information. Teachers explain ideas carefully and use questions to make sure that pupils know what they are going to learn about and what they have to do.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. Numeracy is well developed in other subjects. For example, in art and design pupils use their measuring skills to make sure that their representations are the right size. Data handling skills are well developed in ICT and science where pupils use pictograms, pie charts and block graphs to present information. Pupils use their knowledge of nets to relate a two-dimensional plan to their three-dimensional model in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in year 6 are below average and higher attainers are not achieving well enough.
- There is good emphasis on practical work and this is helping to raise attainment.
- There is not enough emphasis on developing scientific vocabulary.

Commentary

49. Standards in year 2 are average. Teachers use experiments well to help pupils to apply and extend their knowledge and these are well supported by resources. When necessary, pupils receive help in the form of adapted worksheets or support from teaching assistants. High standards of presentation are insisted upon and diagrams, charts and tables are neatly presented and well labelled. This is helping pupils to report clearly on the result of their tests.
50. Standards achieved through years 3 to 6 are improving and are better than the recent test results would indicate. Lessons are well planned to address the gaps in pupils' investigative skills and practical work is well organised. Boys enjoy the practical work and are enthusiastic. However, there is not sufficient challenge in the questioning at the start of lessons and pupils working independently could achieve more. Too often the lessons seek to ensure every pupil learns the same scientific facts without developing thinking skills. For example, in a well-resourced year 6 lesson, opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking by allowing them to set up their own experiments into dissolving were missed by the teacher. Consequently, lower attaining pupils did not improve their understanding of why the tests were fair and the higher attainers were not challenged to explore what processes were at work. The teachers make satisfactory use of the guidance for planning lessons provided by the co-ordinator. However, the teachers are not using the final part of the lesson to ask the penetrating questions that will take pupils' learning further.
51. Whilst teachers in years 3 to 6 make every effort to introduce new vocabulary, this is not highlighted effectively through regular reminders. Pupils' scientific vocabulary is insecure and many lack the ability to explain their thinking. Some pupils' weak writing skills limit recording, but teachers are beginning to use strategies such as charts or diagrams to help children explain their findings. In this respect they receive good support from teaching assistants who now support pupils with recording and evaluating their findings.
52. The subject has not improved enough since the last inspection when standards in year 6 were average. The strongest feature of the management has been the evaluation of past test papers to target resources and modify the curriculum. Regular assessment, with the capacity to identify pupils' investigative skills, has only recently been introduced and is not yet influencing lesson planning. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor how teachers are teaching so she can provide them with support. Both of these were issues from the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well managed by a co-ordinator with a clear vision for its development.
- There is a good supply of resources, including software, and the suite is of high quality.

Commentary

53. The standard of work seen by the end of years 2 and 6 is in line with expectations. An effective programme of staff training, the good use made of support staff and the development of the computer suite have all made a major contribution to the pupils' good achievement, and improvement in provision since the previous inspection. The collaboration with Truro College has helped raise the profile of ICT in the school and provides regular technical support to teachers. There has been considerable progress in developing control and modelling skills since the completion of the computer suite, and the co-ordinator has prepared an action plan to introduce further materials and training for staff.
54. By the end of year 2 pupils use word processing, clip art and art programs independently and well. Teachers plan work to build well on skills that have been attained in earlier years. For example, in a year 3 lesson pupils had to guide the screen turtle through a maze, estimating angles and distances required. They derived pleasure and satisfaction from the activity, which presented them with new challenges. Pupils in years 5 and 6 are proficient in using presentational material and have created presentations about themselves that include clip art, word processing, digital photography and data presentation. The ICT activities are well used to enhance the environment of the school through colourful and interesting displays. The variety of work on display provides a stimulating environment and shows that pupils are offered good levels of challenge to develop their skills. By keeping a rota system of computer usage, staff make sure that all pupils have equal access to the computers. Pupils have good access to the computers during play and lunchtimes and they are well used, for example, to word-process the school magazine.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. The lessons are appropriately linked to other subjects, which increases the enthusiasm of the pupils. Year 3 and 4 pupils use the Internet to research historical information about Egypt. All classes use data handling skills to record mathematical information such as pictograms, pie charts and block graphs. Word-processing skills are well used in English to write stories, poems, invitations and caption headings for their work. With a range of effective software, ICT makes a good contribution to supporting the learning of pupils who have special educational needs. Good use is made of relevant software to support work in art.

HUMANITIES

Religious education (RE), history and geography were sampled.

56. One **religious education** lesson was observed in year 2 and a discussion was held with pupils in year 6. Standards are average overall. During the lesson, pupils talked about their ideas of jealousy with their listening partners before sharing these experiences with the class. Pupils could empathise with the characters in the story of Joseph, by relating their own feelings and behaviour to those of Joseph's brothers. Pupils in year 6 have a sound understanding of the principal features of world religions. They have a mature approach to discussing the importance of religious events and experiences. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and find the work interesting and inspiring because it is well presented by teachers.
57. In **history** there was insufficient work to judge standards by the end of year 6. Not enough history has been studied by the pupils through years 3 to 6, therefore, achievement is unsatisfactory. Discussion with pupils and the headteacher confirm that the subject has had little attention. Whilst sufficient time has been allocated for history studies, it is evident from the small amount of work in pupils' books and their own uncertainty, that the time has not been used to advantage. In contrast, the work from years 1 and 2 indicates a considered approach to the subject and standards are average. Research skills are developed well and a good range of sources are used to help pupils answer their own questions about the past.

58. In **geography** standards are average in year 2. In one lesson the teacher skilfully used drama to compare and contrast the daily life of two different communities. The work covered in geography last term was sufficient for pupils in year 6 to gain a general knowledge about mountains and deserts. However, in discussion with pupils it is clear they have insufficient experience of geography skills such as mapping and do not have sufficient breadth of knowledge and understanding. There is some well-intentioned fieldwork but opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding are missed. For example, in a year 3 and 4 lesson pupils had carried out a litter survey but the teacher's questions were not probing enough to enable them to explore important characteristics of land use. Standards were broadly average at the last inspection but have fallen. This is because of a lack of consistent leadership in the subject and a lack of attention to monitoring the planning and the quality of pupils' work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology and music were sampled.

59. A visitor to the school is immediately attracted by the colourful and exciting range of pupils' **art and design** work on display. The striking work includes masks inspired by the Venetian Carnival. Pupils in year 6 spoke enthusiastically about how they had created them and explained the techniques they had employed for the different effects. Pupils reflect on their work critically; their opinions are mature and reflect an understanding of using different artistic techniques. Pupils have many very good opportunities to learn a variety of techniques and to use a wide range of media. Many learn to work with good attention to fine detail; this was evident, for example, in careful watercolours of daffodils. Cross-curricular links with history, RE and literacy enrich pupils' learning. In years 3 and 4, for instance, having studied Sakhmet, the goddess of war as part of a topic on Ancient Egypt, pupils write and carefully illustrate their work with close attention to detail.

60. **Design and technology** is a popular subject and pupils recall with enthusiasm their favourite projects. Work on display is above average. Pupils in years 5 and 6 showed a good understanding of the techniques needed to produce a pair of slippers, using a variety of materials and fixings to hold on decorations. Younger pupils evaluated their work on moving vehicles, stating how they needed to improve their measurements to position axles more accurately. In the year 3 and 4 lesson observed pupils worked well independently on their models and listened intently as a pupil described the techniques he had used to make a model of a television and video, complete with remote control.

61. Pupils are achieving well through the school in **music**. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are average in year 6 with above average standards in year 2. This is because of the very good teaching from a specialist teacher. She uses her good knowledge of how to work with all pupils across the ability range to ensure they participate and benefit fully in lessons. The end of lesson reviews, shared with the class teacher, are used very well to ensure that the pupils have good opportunities to discuss what they have learnt.

Physical education

Provision in physical education (PE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils experience a good range of games skills and have a healthy attitude towards sport.
- Teaching of dance is good.

Commentary

62. Pupils have positive attitudes towards sport and are keen to work co-operatively. Discussions with pupils indicate that there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities in which they take part. This is a strength in the school. Pupils of all ages take part in inter-school competitions at county level and have met with much success, particularly in soccer and cricket. The school has given PE a high profile and has gained the *Sport England Active Mark*.
63. In a year 2 dance lesson pupils worked individually and then collaborated well in small groups to combine their movements gracefully. The more able pupils began to develop sequences of movements leading to a simple dance routine. In a year 6 dance lesson, pupils showed good awareness of space while learning how to compose well-executed dance routines. Again very good collaborative skills were demonstrated.
64. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has mapped out an ambitious programme of future development. Teachers are knowledgeable because lesson guidelines and training have been well targeted to address their needs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development and the teachers' use of circle time provides good opportunities to share feelings and to discuss different topics. The sessions help pupils to build confidence and to have respect for themselves and each other. As pupils get older, teachers give them increasing responsibility, preparing them very well for the next stage of their education. By the end of year 6, the pupils are very confident and independent individuals.

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	3
Attitudes	3
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

