

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Longdendale High School**

Hyde

LEA area: Tameside

Unique Reference Number: 106267

Headteacher: Dr R G Kirby

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Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward

11049

Dates of inspection: 6 – 10 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707988

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Spring Street Hollingworth Hyde Cheshire SK14 8LW
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Appropriate authority:	LHS governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Corrie
Date of previous inspection:	March 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mark Woodward, RgI		Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Equal opportunities Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Special educational needs SEN assessment Assessment Curriculum
Sarah Drake, Lay Inspector		
Raymond Cardinal	Religious education	
John Dutton	Science	
Janet Flisher	English KS4 (Drama)	
Michael Gallagher	History	Learning resources
Norman Godfrey	Art	Staffing
Jeffery Hardman	Information technology Design and technology	KS4 (Business studies/NVQ)
Paul Ingram	Mathematics	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Peter McKenzie	Modern foreign languages	Efficiency
John Morrell	Music	KS4 (Expressive and performing arts)
Gillian Salter-Smith	Physical education	KS4 (Dance)
Barry Smith	Geography	Accommodation

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- .Pupils make good progress overall and in particular in English, mathematics, science, geography, dance, design and technology food and graphics; and art at Key Stage 4
- .There is strong commitment to achieving high standards
- .There is an intellectual dimension to the leadership offered by the senior management team and the advanced skills teachers
- .Teachers are well informed about issues facing the school and are included in decision making
- .The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages
- .The attitudes of the great majority of pupils are positive and this contributes to the progress that they make
- .Relationships in the school are very good and staff morale is high
- .The commitment of staff is high and they provide good role models for the pupils
- .Governors provide a good service to the school
- .The good analysis of pupils' performance informs target setting and contributes to the raising of standards
- .The provision of extra-curricular sport is very good
- .Financial control is excellent
- .The school enjoys good support from the parents
- .The school provides excellent value for money

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I.The very poor level of funding is having a detrimental impact on standards of attainment and impairs the school's capacity to improve
- II.Attainment is low in relation to national standards in information and communication technology, and in drama at Key Stage 3
- III.The negative attitudes of a significant minority of pupils to the religious education course at Key Stage 4 have a detrimental effect on their progress
- IV.The unsatisfactory level of attendance of a minority of pupils in Year 11 lowers their performance at GCSE
- V.In many subjects, the level of resources and their condition are inadequate to support the achievement of high standards
- VI.The number of support staff for pupils with special educational needs and technicians is too low to offer the school an appropriate level of service
- VII.Aspects of the accommodation are inadequate to support the teaching of the curriculum
- VIII.Aspects of health and safety arrangements are inadequate
- IX.Line management arrangements are not sufficiently rigorous
- X.Management responsibilities for pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently well co-ordinated
- XI.The information and communication technology curriculum does not comply with statutory requirements at Key Stage 4 nor do most subjects meet statutory information and communication technology requirements
- XII.The distribution of lessons within the timetable and the irregular time allocations of some subjects affect standards by disturbing the continuity of teaching
- XIII.The Key Stage 4 expressive and performing arts course lacks rigour and is an inadequate aspect of curricular provision

Longdendale is a successful school. Its strengths considerably outweigh its weaknesses. Pupils make good progress, which is considerably due to the high quality of teaching. The headteacher and other senior staff have encouraged a culture to develop in which high standards are expected and achieved. Standards, however, are adversely affected by the school's inadequate level of funding. Many of the school's weaknesses are related to its low income. This is an indictment of national and local funding arrangements.

## How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards have risen, as has the quality of teaching. The key issues from the last inspection have been largely addressed. Examination results have risen; resources (though still inadequate) have been improved as finance has allowed; there will soon be a new learning resource centre to improve the library provision; staffing inconsistencies have largely been resolved; setting and grouping arrangements have been improved; and staff expertise is more appropriately matched to the subjects that are taught. There has been progress in developing the information and communication technology provision but it is still unsatisfactory and the school still fails to offer a daily act of collective worship.

## Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds in national tests and GCSE examinations in 1999:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	K
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
Key Stage 3 Tests	C	B	<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
GCSE Examinations	C	C	<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>

Since the last inspection standards of attainment have risen. GCSE results are now close to the levels suggested as a target in the key issues of the report. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, results were higher than in 1998 by all the key measures; they met the challenging targets that the school had set itself and were slightly above national averages. The 1999 GCSE results compared with the results of pupils in similar schools were average when comparing average total points scores, but well above average when comparing the proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-C grades.

The results of the 1999 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests were in line with national averages in English and mathematics, and above average in science. They were above average when compared with similar schools. This indicates good progress during Key Stage 3 because the pupils arrived at the school with below average levels of attainment, particularly in literacy.

## Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Dance, English, mathematics, science, modern languages, food technology, geography, art, physical education, religious education, personal and social education	drama
Years 10-11	Good	Art, dance, English, mathematics, science, food, graphics, modern	expressive arts



		languages, geography, physical education, personal and social education
English	Good	
Mathematics	Good	

In the 171 lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory in 98%, good or better in 62% and very good or excellent in 18%. These are better than average figures compared with the inspection results of schools across the country.

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

#### • **Other aspects of the school**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	The behaviour of the great majority of pupils is good.
Attendance	Pupils' levels of attendance are satisfactory with the exception of a minority of pupils in Year 11.
Ethos*	The school is committed to raising standards and is successful in doing so. Relationships are very good and the majority of pupils have positive attitudes.
Leadership and management	The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher, governors and senior management are all effective in their respective managerial roles.
Curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory at both key stages. A good range of courses is offered to the pupils, the only significant weakness being in the provision for information and communication technology.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Arrangements for the review of pupils' progress at Stages 1 - 3 of the Code of Practice are unsatisfactory and the central role of the special educational needs co-ordinator is not well established.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school gives very good opportunities for pupils' moral and social development. Cultural provision is good and spiritual provision satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The overall level of resourcing is unsatisfactory. This is directly related to the poor funding received by the school.
Value for money	The school gives excellent value for money because the pupils make good progress despite the school's very low income. This is not an endorsement of the low level of funding, it is a reflection of the school's performance in coping effectively with a situation that disadvantages the children.

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

#### • **The parents' views of the school**

##### **What most parents like about the school**

- XIV. Their children enjoy school
- XV. Their children achieve good standards of work
- XVI. The quality of teaching is good
- XVII. Staff are approachable
- XVIII. Induction procedures are very good

##### **What some parents are not happy about**

- XXI. Homework, its level of challenge and the amount that is set (some parents say too much, some, too little)

XIX.Extra-curricular opportunities are good

XX.The school encourages parents to become involved

The great majority of parents are highly supportive of the school. They are appreciative of the staff's work and respect the way that the school is managed. Inspectors agreed with the positive comments of the parents. With regard to homework, inspectors found that it was set appropriately during the inspection week in the great majority of subjects.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The school, governing body and staff should:

XXII. Raise attainment and progress in: information and communication technology, religious education and expressive and performing arts at Key Stage 4; and drama at Key Stage 3 by:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| XXIII. | Ensuring that all pupils receive an information and communication technology curriculum at Key Stage 4 that fulfils legal requirements |
| XXIV.  | Ensuring that all subjects comply with National Curriculum information and communication technology requirements                       |
| XXV.   | Developing strategies in religious education at Key Stage 4 to raise some pupils' levels of motivation                                 |
| XXVI.  | Raising expectations of performance in drama at Key Stage 3 through the development of a more structured drama skills course           |
| XXVII. | Improving the curriculum planning and teaching of the expressive and performing arts course  |

*Paragraphs 5-23,35,37,39,44,45,51,116,120,141,144-153,154-161,185,220,244-5*

XXVIII. Improve the resourcing of teaching and learning by:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| XXIX.  | Raising the quantity and quality of departmental resources   |
| XXX.   | Ensuring that resources are subject to appropriate maintenance arrangements  |
| XXXI.  | Improving the accommodation arrangements for English, science, dance, modern foreign languages, physical education and for dining. |
| XXXII. | Increasing the numbers of support staff for special educational needs, technicians and administrators                              |

*Paragraphs 88-101,105-107,118,127,140,153,169,181,185,188,198,205,220,221,234*

XXXIII. Improve health and safety procedures and practices by:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| XXXIV.   | Conducting regular risk assessments and recording action taken  |
| XXXV.    | Up-dating the health and safety practices to meet current needs   |
| XXXVI.   | Increasing the time and resources available to the first aider role   |
| XXXVII.  | Addressing specific concerns in design and technology, drama, physical education and music (details supplied to the school) |
| XXXVIII. | Improving the queuing arrangements for the dining hall at lunchtime   |
| XXXIX.   | Replacing broken paving around the site   |

*Paragraphs 68,120,181,233*

XL.Improve the organisation of whole-school and departmental practices by:

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| XLI.   | Creating formal line     |
| management structures and regular meetings between linked managers                       |                          |
| XLII.  | Ensuring that schemes of |
| work and development plans are effective working documents                               |                          |
| XLIII.   | Rationalising the        |
| management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs to improve its co- |                          |
| ordination across the school   |                          |

*Paragraphs 42,74-87,107,117,161,217,228*

XLIV.Improve the continuity of teaching by:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| XLV.   | Making the distribution of |
| lessons across the two-week timetable more even    |                            |
| XLVI.  | Increasing the curriculum  |
| time in history, geography and religious education |                            |

*Paragraphs 43-44,106,157,186,193*

## **· INTRODUCTION**

### **· Characteristics of the school**

1. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are broadly average. Around 16% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is in line with the national average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none have English as an additional language. This is below average for schools nationally. The school is of average size with 926 pupils on roll, with even numbers of girls and boys. More pupils apply to join the school in Year 7 than can be admitted.
2. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average in relation to national standards. Results in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests are higher than results in the other reliable tests that the school gives the pupils on entry. These suggest below average level of performance. Attainment on entry has risen in recent years. The attainment on entry of the pupils who completed their GCSE examinations in 1999 was below average, particularly their literacy skills.
3. There are 81 pupils on the special educational needs register in Years 7 - 11. 46 pupils are at Stages 3 - 5 of the Code of Practice and 19 are statemented. 9% of pupils are on the register, which is below the national average, and 2% are statemented, which is in line with the national average.
4. The school's motto is; 'we are all here to learn'. This accurately describes the ethos of the school. The aims of the school are focused on achievement and personal development. They are readily reflected in the work of the school. For many years the school has been setting targets for GCSE performance and is continuing to do so in line with government policy. The school's priority is to enable teachers to continue to improve the pupils' learning opportunities.

#### 4. Key indicators

##### Attainment at Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	90	87	177
4. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	54	55	59	
	Girls	63	58	55	
	Total	117	113	114	
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	66 (73)	64 (61)	64 (63)	
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)	
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	24 (46)	37 (40)	22 (32)	
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)	
4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	40	57	56	
	Girls	59	62	52	
	Total	99	119	108	
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	56 (60)	67 (76)	60 (66)	
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)	
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	25 (34)	27 (43)	24 (31)	
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)	

.....

1 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

##### Attainment at Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest Reporting year:		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	87	92	179
GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G	
Number of pupils Achieving standard specified	Boys	38	75	82	
	Girls	54	88	91	
	Total	92	163	173	
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	51 (48)	91 (84)	97 (92)	
	National	46 (44)	91 (90)	96 (95)	

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of <i>such pupils</i> who achieved all those they studied:	Number	% Success rate
School	9	100
National		

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
through absence for the latest complete	Authorised	School	7.6
reporting year:	Absence	National comparative data	7.9
	Unauthorised	School	2.2
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

1

1

1

## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during		Number
the previous year:	Fixed period	32
	Permanent	1

1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	18
	Satisfactory or better	98
	Less than satisfactory	2

## 1        **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### 1        **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### 1        **Attainment and progress**

1. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is average in relation to national standards. Since the last inspection attainment has risen at a rate that, on the basis of average total points scores and the proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-C, 5A\*-G and 1A\*-G grades, is broadly in line with national trends. GCSE results are now close to the levels suggested as a target in the key issues of the report. Pupils make good progress and parents are pleased with the standards achieved by their children. There is a strong commitment to achieving high standards in the school but this is compromised by its low level of funding.
2. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, results were higher than in 1998 by all the key measures and they met the challenging targets that the school had set itself. The proportion of pupils gaining 5A\*-C grades was slightly above the national average but the proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-G grades and 1A\*-G grades rose most significantly. The same pupils arrived at the school with below average levels of attainment, particularly their literacy skills, and therefore made good progress to reach their GCSE achievements. The proportion of boys gaining 5 A\*-C grades was much lower than the proportion of girls, and boys did less well, compared with boys nationally, than girls compared with girls nationally. The results of boys and girls were closer when comparing average total points scores.
3. The 1999 GCSE results compared with the results of pupils in similar schools are average when comparing average total points scores, but well above average when comparing the proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-C grades. Pupils achieved good results in all three core subjects; English, mathematics and science, as they also did in design and technology food and graphics, French, geography, art and dance.
4. Between 1996 and 1998, GCSE results were broadly in line with the national average. Girls and boys achieved similar results to girls and boys nationally although there were variations between years; for example, boys performed much better in 1997 than in 1996 and 1998. Compared with their performance in other subjects, pupils did well in mathematics, geography, graphics, dance and modern languages.
5. The school sets GCSE performance targets as each group of pupils enters the school and reviews them at least annually. These are based on nationally recognised tests which are analysed independently. The targets are challenging because they are based on the best measure of pupils' performance on entry rather than an average of all the measures (which is what most schools use). The school consistently meets these targets because the pupils make good progress in their studies. This is a good indication that the pupils gain better results at GCSE than might be expected given their performance on entry.
6. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is high in relation to national standards in science, mathematics, geography, dance and art. It is average in English, design and technology, modern languages, history, music, physical education and religious education and low in relation to national standards in information and communication technology and expressive arts.
7. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests were in line with national averages in English and mathematics, and above average in science. They were above average when compared with similar schools. This indicates good progress during Key Stage 3 because the pupils arrived at the school with below average levels of attainment, particularly in literacy.
8. Between 1996 and 1998, pupils achieved results in the National Curriculum tests that were above average in English and close to national averages in mathematics and science. Girls performed better than boys in English and mathematics, but the gap was narrower in science.

9. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is high in relation to national standards in science and dance. It is average in English, mathematics, design and technology, modern languages, history, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. It is low in relation to national standards in information and communication technology and drama.
10. The attainment and progress of pupils are adversely affected by the school's low level of funding. In design and technology, for example, a range of equipment is not available to the pupils because it is broken. This limits pupils' opportunities to develop making skills.
11. Pupils' levels of literacy are sufficient to enable the vast majority to access the full curriculum. On entry, literacy levels are lower than average which means that the school does well to enable the pupils to achieve their slightly above average GCSE results. Most pupils can read with understanding, and high attainers can identify different layers of meaning in texts and respond sensitively both at a personal and critical level. The standards of technical accuracy in pupils' writing are good when compared to their levels of prior attainment. Most low attaining pupils are able to structure their writing into sentences and punctuate these correctly, while higher attaining pupils employ a range of structural and linguistic features to make their writing coherent, clear and interesting to the reader. Almost all pupils are confident and fluent speakers and many pupils are able to explore complex ideas expressing themselves clearly and cogently. Most pupils listen to the teacher and to each other attentively and respond in an appropriate manner either to the teacher's questions or in group discussions. There is a developing awareness in departments other than English that pupils need to be taught the specific styles of writing needed for success in different subjects and some good work is being carried out in classrooms. Subject areas such as modern foreign languages, science and religious education ensure that pupils read for a variety of purposes but pupils are offered insufficient opportunities to read a wider range of texts in other subjects.
12. There are good standards of, and wide provision for, number work in subjects across the curriculum. Algebraic expressions are used in both key stages in science for calculations of density, motion of objects and the forces acting on them. Electrical and energy properties are explored fully and the concept of a balanced equation is used in chemistry. Graphs are used to describe motion and rates of reaction of substances. In design and technology, heat probes are used to measure the temperature of food. The mathematical requirements in design and technology are clearly stated in schemes of work. These include making accurate measurements in all processes, creating accurate scale drawings and the using of spread sheets. In geography, grid references, bearings and scales in map work, data gathering and its presentation in table and graphical forms, give wide opportunities for the use of number. In religious education, a lesson on discrimination illustrated the opportunities for bias in statistics. Pupils use simple number work in modern foreign languages, and in art they are able to create geometrical patterns in design work and to make calculations in order to cut stencils for screen printing.
13. Standards in information and communication technology are low. Only a small minority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 has had the opportunity to follow an information and communication technology course. Most pupils have little opportunity to develop their skills as only very limited provision is provided; as a result the school fails to meet its statutory requirement. Standards are better in Year 7 following the introduction of a new course which is already having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
14. The progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 is very good in dance. It is good in English, mathematics, science, modern languages, history, geography, physical education, and religious education; satisfactory in design and technology, information and communication technology, art and music; and unsatisfactory in drama.
15. The progress of pupils at Key Stage 4 is very good in dance. It is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and art; satisfactory in modern languages, history, music, drama and physical education; and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology, religious education and expressive arts. The progress of a minority of pupils in Year 11 is adversely affected by their low levels of attendance.



16. The good progress that pupils make across the school is directly linked to the good quality of teaching. At the parents meeting and through comments on the questionnaires, parents indicated that they felt that the standard of teaching was generally good and that it had improved in recent years. The inspection team agreed with this judgement.
17. Particularly good progress was seen in dance despite the unfavourable conditions for working. Constant traffic through the entrance hall did not deflect the pupils from making very good progress both within individual lessons and over time. This was due to the highly skilled work of the teacher. Another strong subject is science where pupils are challenged to think. They have to develop understanding through problem solving and this is very effective in developing and reinforcing their learning.
18. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in information and communication technology because the curricular provision is not good enough. It is improving at Key Stage 3 but it does not meet statutory requirements at Key Stage 4. In addition, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently by the majority of subjects. Pupils also make unsatisfactory progress in the Key Stage 4 expressive and performing arts course because it lacks rigour. Some pupils do not make sufficient progress in religious education at Key Stage 4 because of their poor attitudes to the subject.
19. The progress of pupils at all stages of the register of special educational needs is mostly satisfactory, although in geography it is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 because work is not well planned to meet their needs and there is insufficient in-class support. In some subjects pupils make good progress and occasionally very good progress. Pupils make very good progress in English at Key Stage 4 in brainstorming ideas in preparation for coursework and good progress at Key Stage 3 in looking critically and analytically at advertisements. They make satisfactory progress in English at Key Stage 4; for example, in their understanding of a poem about an immigrant having to use an unfamiliar language. At Key Stage 3 pupils withdrawn for intensive work on literacy make good gains in confidence in reading texts. Pupils make good progress in music at Key Stage 3 in composing Christmas poems and tunes. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress in modern foreign languages in learning new material and integrating it with vocabulary previously learnt. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress in mathematics in calculating the area of a triangle and good progress at Key Stage 4 in investigation work. In religious education pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages in achieving work completion targets in their individual education plans.
23. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
20. Throughout the school most pupils consistently show positive attitudes to learning, behave well, demonstrate a mature attitude to life and form very good relationships with both other pupils and teachers. They are contented, motivated, good-natured and reasonable. The school operates as a welcoming and orderly community in which the overwhelming majority of pupils show that they know why they are there – ‘We are all here to learn’ – and make a positive contribution towards allowing all to achieve this end. Parents are very supportive of the school’s work in promoting positive attitudes and behaviour.
21. Pupils are interested in learning. They generally come to lessons well supplied with appropriate equipment and with their homework completed. They listen well to teachers and readily volunteer to voice their opinions or make suggestions. They think about their answers, and also know when to ask the further question that will lead their learning on. Most pupils sustain their concentration well, and many are prepared to persist when they find tasks difficult. They choose the appropriate tools for the job in hand and treat resources with care. Pupils work well on their own, in pairs and in groups, learning from each other’s mistakes and successes. In an outstanding dance lesson, Year 11 pupils started the lesson full of eager anticipation, concentrated very hard throughout on their own work, on that of their colleagues, which they commented on thoughtfully, and on watching both their teacher and a video extract. They took great pride in their work, persisted even when running out of stamina, and in consequence of their efforts, made very good progress. A minority of pupils are not always so well motivated. Some lessons are interrupted by pupils, in most cases boys, acting in an uninterested, immature and, occasionally, provocative manner, but these instances are few when taken across the

school as a whole.

22. Pupils' behaviour is good. On the first day of inspection the school suffered a power cut at lunchtime but, despite the darkness throughout the building, pupils co-operated very well with teachers' directions, moved back to their form rooms in a relatively orderly manner and behaved sensibly when light was restored. Pupils are generally courteous and respond well to school rules. In physical education they show good sporting attitudes. Pupils say that some bullying does occur but that there is very little persistent harassment. They feel safe in school. There was only one permanent exclusion in the most recent academic year, which is low by comparison with schools of a similar size and type. The number of fixed period exclusions is slightly lower than that occurring nationally. Most exclusions are caused by pupils' persistent disruption of lessons or aggressive behaviour towards staff, with the great majority of incidents involving boys. Most pupils treat the accommodation with respect but some persist in dropping litter for others to dispose of.
23. The quality of relationships in the school is one of its strengths. Pupils generally enjoy each other's company and have sufficient confidence in their peers to be prepared to talk about their life and beliefs in front of others. Boys and girls, those from different ethnic heritages and those with special needs, treat each other with respect and work very well alongside one another. Year 9 pupils generously applauded the winners of their year's merit draw for prizes during their year assembly, while Year 11 pupils admired other pupils' skills at trampolining and were willing to follow their directions for improvement. Year 10 pupils studying 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' listened to others' views with great respect, while in practical activities pupils of all age groups share materials and equipment willingly and help each other if they do not understand a point. This good rapport in the classroom has a positive effect on pupils' understanding and progress.
24. As they move through the school, pupils are increasingly prepared to take on responsibility and use their initiative. They are supported in this by the school's curriculum, in particular through drama, dance and personal and social education. Those who belong to the Eco committee make decisions about how they can improve the school environment and then organise the activities they have agreed upon. Some Year 10 pupils volunteer to help younger pupils with homework during the lunch break while others of various ages act as responsible bullying buddies, literacy helpers, school council members and sports captains. On discovery of a broken window, Year 11 pupils swiftly organised a corridor patrol to ensure the safety of other pupils. On entry to the library at lunchtime, those looking lost are immediately offered help. When leaving at the end of the day pupils stream out of school and down the hill to the buses in a remarkably responsible manner, demonstrating a mature understanding of the need for order during a potentially hazardous activity. Pupils' sensible and tolerant attitude to life contributes positively towards the creation of an effective learning environment.
28. **Attendance**
25. Overall levels of attendance at the school are satisfactory and have remained at around the national average of slightly above 90% for the past few years. Despite efforts made by staff, levels of unauthorised absence are well above the national average and are particularly high in Year 11 where the overall levels of attendance are unsatisfactory. Attendance is less good than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
26. In the most recent academic year, Year 11 pupils' attendance was only above the 90% mark in September and June. Year 11 monthly levels from March onwards, the final build up to pupils' GCSE examinations, were 82% or below. These low levels of attendance had a significant impact on the standards that some pupils achieved. During that year, attendance for Years 9 and 10 was just below 90%, while that for Years 8 and 7 was close to and above the national average respectively.
27. Attendance so far this year shows some improvement. More than half of pupils have been present for more than 95% of possible time, although more than 10% have already been absent for the equivalent of one day each week. Attendance in Year 9 and 10 has significantly increased while that in Year 7 is

good. Attendance in Year 11 is still unsatisfactory, with almost 17% of the year group attending for less than 80% of the time. This has a direct impact on their progress, and on their achievements at GCSE. Some of these pupils have attended for fewer than half of the possible days this term. Boys and girls have similar levels of attendance.

28. Many pupils travel to school on buses, which occasionally arrive late, but generally pupils are punctual, and during the day arrive in good time for the start of lessons. The fact that most pupils arrive regularly and punctually helps them to make good progress.

## 32. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 32. **Teaching**

29. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. In the 171 lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory in 98%, good or better in 62% and very good or excellent in 18%. These are better than average results compared with the inspection results of schools across the country. The very good teaching was largely seen in English, science, geography, art and dance. The commitment of staff is high and they provide very good role models for the pupils.
30. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good. This is a consistent picture across the subjects. In modern languages, for example, teachers provide good role models for the pupils because of their high levels of speaking skills. Teachers in all subjects have a good understanding of examination course requirements as well as good subject knowledge. This is evident in the way that courses are taught and enables pupils to maximise their chances of success at GCSE.
31. Expectations of pupils are high in the majority of subjects. They are very high in art, particularly at Key Stage 4, where the pace of lessons is good and teachers push the pupils to reflect on their work and become self-critical. In English, teachers explicitly tell the pupils what they expect from them. Clear quality benchmarks are discussed which results in pupils working hard to meet their teachers' challenges. Expectations of the pupils are not high enough in religious education at Key Stage 4 where the negative attitudes of a significant minority of the pupils affect the standards they achieve. Expectations of the pupils on the Key Stage 4 expressive and performing arts course are also too low.
32. Teachers' planning is good. In a number of subjects, teachers work very hard to ensure that GCSE requirements are met thoroughly. This is one of the reasons for the high level of success that pupils have in geography. In modern foreign languages, teachers plan work very effectively for pupils of all levels of ability. This motivates them because they are able to succeed whilst being appropriately stretched.
33. The methods and organisation used by teachers are satisfactory. In some subjects such as science they are good. The strengths in science come from teachers' development of pupils' thinking skills. This gives the pupils the independence to actively explore their understanding of the subject. Teachers make particularly good use of experimental circuits. In drama, particularly at Key Stage 3, the teaching does not take sufficient account of the subject's body of knowledge and skills.
34. The management of the pupils is a particular strength of the teaching. It is very good in a number of subjects, namely, physical education, dance, English, art, modern languages and science. In dance, the working methods used by the teachers give the pupils confidence to explore movement as a means of communication in a secure and supportive environment. The seating of boys and girls next to each other in English is a successful strategy. It creates a positive working atmosphere which is particularly beneficial to the boys without having a detrimental effect on the progress of the girls.
35. Time and resources are used well. There is a shortage of adequate resources across the school due to its poor level of funding, but teachers generally use what they have well. Some departments such as mathematics produce good quality resources themselves which enhance the learning opportunities of the

pupils. Most teachers use time effectively; for example, the pace of lessons in art is always high. At Key Stage 4 in religious education, discussions are sometimes held for too long which results in some pupils becoming inattentive.

36. Day-to-day methods of assessment are satisfactory. They are good in science, mathematics and art at Key Stage 4. In science, teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and constructively. They are skilled in asking questions to establish pupils' understanding and, in response, adjust their teaching strategies. Day-to-day assessment is unsatisfactory in design and technology at Key Stage 3 and in music. In design and technology the weakness in assessment practices results in work not being sufficiently well targeted at the full ability range of the pupils.
37. Homework is an issue of concern to some parents. Some felt that pupils received too much, some too little and a number suggested that the homework timetable was not adhered to. Pupils confirmed that homework was not always set on the agreed days, but they also said that they often delayed completing homework which meant that on some days they had a very high work load. During the inspection week, homework was set appropriately in the great majority of subjects. Homework is unsatisfactory in art as it is not used to support classroom work effectively.
38. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mostly at least satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology at Key Stage 3, where individual education plans lack clarity, and planning does not take into account pupils' particular needs. The effectiveness of planning to meet pupils' special educational needs is variable across departments. It is good in art, with schemes of work and tasks suitably designed to meet the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. In some subjects the standard of teaching is good. In English this is characterized by a small steps approach with high expectations from staff and by the use of techniques such as writing frames to enable pupils to succeed. In English the good management of pupils includes frequent attention to their individual education plan targets with praise given when targets are achieved. In modern foreign languages lively and enthusiastic teaching which encourages the use of the target language enables pupils to make good progress. Targets for individual education plans in modern foreign languages are clear and relevant and are closely monitored, although the standard of individual education plans in different subject areas is variable. In religious education, staff show a good awareness of pupils' special educational needs in seating plans and in frequent encouragement given to individual pupils to achieve targets. The small amount of support teaching provided by the school is effective, with staff displaying a good knowledge of pupils' special educational needs. Support staff show sensitivity and judgement in working alongside pupils in the classroom; their expectations are high and they encourage pupils to achieve more.

42. **The curriculum and assessment**

39. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The school meets the DfEE recommendation that 25 hours of curriculum time should be provided for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Overall, the breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory but there are some weaknesses. Some subjects do not plan effectively for continuity and progression and National Curriculum requirements are not met for information and communication technology in Key Stage 4. There is also insufficient use of information and communication technology by most subjects across the curriculum.
40. The Key Stage 3 curriculum covers the required areas of the National Curriculum. Provision is good in modern foreign languages, geography, history, art and religious education. All pupils in Years 8 and 9 take a second foreign language and can choose from Spanish and Russian in addition to the more usual French and German. In geography there is good enquiry work using the local area. Art develops pupils' creative skills and religious education contributes significantly to pupils' intellectual and personal development. In other subjects, apart from music, the provision is satisfactory. The provision in music is severely restricted because there are no opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in their studies and because of the unequal distribution of lessons over the two-week timetable for some classes. The time allocations for history and geography are below the national averages. This disadvantageous situation is managed well by both subjects to minimise the

impact on pupils' progress. Time for religious education is below that recommended by the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

41. The curricular provision in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. The standard range of subjects on offer is extended by the inclusion of business studies, Russian and Spanish. The statutory requirement for all pupils to follow a course of religious education is met through the provision of a GCSE short course. The provision is good in art, history, religious education, geography and modern foreign languages and unsatisfactory in music because of the lack of use of information and communication technology. The curriculum in information and communication technology for those pupils who take GCSE is satisfactory but for all other pupils it is unsatisfactory. They do not receive the statutory curriculum because other subjects do not include opportunities for pupils to use computers in their schemes of work. The expressive arts course is an unsatisfactory aspect of curriculum. The course and the way that it is taught lack rigour. Access to the full range of physical education activities is restricted. Girls are not able to participate in orienteering and boys do not follow a course in dance.
42. Most pupils follow a course of 9 ½ GCSE subjects. Those pupils for whom this is not appropriate have the opportunity to follow the M-Power Plus programme, funded by the Greater Manchester TEC, whereby they are able to spend one day per week on work placement, leading towards the award of a National Vocational Qualification. The school offers special support to enable them to keep abreast of missed lessons. There are other school accredited non-examination courses such as European languages and expressive and performing arts.
43. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school's ability to make better than satisfactory provision is restricted by the lack of detail and clarity in individual education plan targets. Individual education plans are drawn up by each department. In some subjects these are used to good effect but there are major inconsistencies because of the lack of co-ordination. Pupils with special educational needs have good access to the whole curriculum, ensuring their full integration into the life of the school. The corrective reading programme taught to some Year 7 pupils is effective, with a high level of individual support available within a small group for four days out of five each week.
44. At Key Stage 3 the deployment of support staff to classes with a high level of need is also effective, particularly where staff support pupils in several subjects, enabling them to gain a good knowledge of individual needs. Overall, however, there is insufficient support for pupils with special needs. The support option at Key Stage 4 is well planned enabling pupils with a wide range of learning needs to concentrate their efforts on a narrower range of subjects. Good use is made of information and communication technology at both key stages with successmaker, a programme giving effective support to pupils in achieving literacy and numeracy targets. The school's flexible use of the authority's learning support staff is effective in supporting pupils with statements whilst still enabling those pupils to gain full access to the curriculum.
45. The personal, health and social education programme in Key Stage 3 and 4 contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. The quality of the programme is underpinned by good co-ordination and good teaching. It covers an appropriate range of topics including education about health, sex and drugs, study skills, economic awareness, citizenship, social and moral issues and careers education. The Careers Partnership makes an appropriate contribution to the programme, and provision is further enhanced by work shadowing, and work experience and mock interviews with local employers.
46. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. Parents are very appreciative of the work done by staff in this area. Almost a third of the pupils in the school participate in the wide range of sporting activities on offer. This is a strength of the school. Pupils are able to extend their experience in the arts through musical activities such as the keyboard club, choirs, ensembles and orchestra, although the numbers involved in instrumental tuition have fallen because of the charging policy. There are drama and dance productions, theatre visits and the opportunity for pupils to watch visiting theatre groups. At lunchtime and after school pupils have the choice of using the library or the design and technology and information and communication technology facilities, joining the chess club or spelling club and participating in paired reading or the Christian lunchtime club. There are visits to

Berlin and an exchange programme with schools in Germany and France, and an annual ski trip.

47. Most of the key issues connected with the curriculum identified at the time of the previous inspection have been tackled satisfactorily. The match between teaching expertise and subjects is much improved and there is now very little non-specialist teaching. There are no problems associated with grouping and setting at Key stage 4. Although the provision of and access to information and communication technology has not yet been satisfactorily resolved, the school has recently been successful in gaining funding for investment in equipment and staff training, and there is a staged plan to network all departments.

51. **Assessment**

48. There is a comprehensive policy for assessment. This provides clear guidance for curriculum areas on the procedures and practices that are required. A detailed calendar ensures that all staff are aware of the reporting requirements and comply with requirements. The senior management team makes extensive use of assessment and performance data as part of its commitment to raising achievement. The impact of this work is reflected in the standards achieved across the school.
49. The school regularly collects a considerable amount of assessment information and all pupils are assessed for verbal, quantitative and non-verbal ability in Year 7 and Year 9. In Years 7 and 8, departments regularly assess and report pupils' attainment using A – E grades and they also provide effort grades. Departments use their own systems for determining these grades and there are good practices for assessment, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The weakness with the A – E grading system at Key Stage 3 lies in the way that the number of attainment grades at each level are allocated in fixed proportions, regardless of the attainment profile of the group of pupils. They are therefore not linked to standardised measures such as National Curriculum levels. Throughout Key Stage 4, GCSE target grades are used to track pupils' progress. These targets are regularly reviewed making use of the assessment data collected from departments.
50. All pupils are set rigorous targets for GCSE following testing on entry based on their non-verbal reasoning scores. This means that the targets are challenging as most schools set targets on verbal reasoning scores which are generally lower. The school carries out a detailed analysis of National Curriculum test and GCSE examination results and relates GCSE performance of boys and girls to their target grades and to national benchmarks. The results of the analysis are shared with all staff which means that everyone can see which departments have had the most success. This is good practice because it motivates staff to improve their performance in an unthreatening way.
51. The use of assessment to inform curricular planning is variable but there are good practices in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. There are weaknesses in the way that departments use the extensive assessment data available to them. Only in English are pupils regularly made aware of their National Curriculum levels of attainment in Key Stage 3. The use of target setting is variable. Departments such as science and English set pupils measurable targets in Key Stage 3 but they are only discussed informally with pupils and no records are made. Better use is made of GCSE targets grades. There are many missed opportunities to use the information available to negotiate targets with pupils and then direct assessment of pupils' work towards them. Form tutors, however, are given time to discuss targets and progress with each pupil.
52. Pupils' work is generally carefully and constructively marked. Departments develop their own systems which vary in the extent to which they follow whole-school guidelines. Records of achievement are used to regularly inform parents of pupils' attainment and progress. Information builds up as pupils move through the school. Pupils assess their own work and make comments about their effort and progress. National Curriculum levels and GCSE predicted grades are given but teachers provide insufficient information about pupils' attainments and progress and there are inconsistencies in reporting.
53. There are good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs on entry to the school.

A test is administered in the primary schools prior to entry so that pupils with significant reading difficulties can be identified at an early stage. The reading ages of pupils entering the school are quickly identified through tests administered at the start of the autumn term. Systems are in place to enable subject staff to register their concern about individuals who are not on the register of special educational needs. Cognitive ability tests take place in Years 7 and 9. Test information is not generally well used to assist in reviewing progress and the placement of pupils on the register of special educational needs. The school's arrangements for reviewing the progress of pupils with statements are satisfactory. Arrangements for reviewing the progress of pupils at stages 1 - 3 on the register of special educational needs are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of clarity with regard to arrangements for convening reviews and, in a number of instances, no dates recorded for reviews.

**57. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

54. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to maintain the high standards in that report. The school's aims make clear reference to promoting personal responsibility of pupils within an ethical framework, developing tolerance for others of different races, religions and creeds, and gaining insights into learning of human achievement and the aspirations of the human spirit.
55. The spiritual provision made by the school is satisfactory. Since the last inspection subjects have reviewed their contributions to developing pupils' spirituality and a working group has reviewed the arrangements for collective worship in the school. Pupils show a perceptive awareness in writing their records of achievement in English, become aware of the wide range of number values in mathematics, which is linked to the large sizes of astronomical distances in science. Science gives opportunities to appreciate the wonders of the structures of life and, in a contrasting way, dance in physical education has a spiritual aspect. All assemblies and meetings in tutor groups have a theme for the week and pupils' behaviour on entering, during and leaving assemblies is good. Pupils made a good contribution to one assembly with a scene from the current drama production. Not all assemblies followed the theme, in this case art, during the inspection week. One assembly was replaced by important school business; nor was the theme followed in a consistent way in tutor groups. Opportunities for reflection were missed in all observed assemblies and so the school does not comply with the legal requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship.
56. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Teachers are good role models for pupils and set expectations of high standards of behaviour. The school has a strong pastoral system, which is responsible for promoting and monitoring the attainment and progress of pupils. Very good arrangements are made for the induction of pupils into the school and for the initial meeting with parents, so that both pupils and parents are made aware at an early stage of the school's high expectations. All tutors support the personal and social education programme and in this context, and throughout school life, teachers point out the difference between right and wrong. Various subjects make contributions to the development of pupils' response to moral problems. Science deals with environmental pollution, genetics, the siting of a power station and the problems of re-cycling waste. It sponsors the animal farm project and the ecology club. Religious education brings to pupils' notice a range of human social problems such as the misuse of drugs and abortion and our responsibilities for the environment as part of creation. Texts are used in English which stimulate discussion of moral problems. All achievements by pupils are recognised in special end of year and weekly assemblies and pupils are aware of their code of conduct and its possible sanctions. In particular, the number of pupils who are excluded has declined in recent years.
57. The school's provision for social education is very good. All teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning and to be responsible members of the school community. Two senior pupils are observers on the school's governing body. Senior pupils undertake responsibilities as prefects and counsel other pupils who have been bullied. Boys and girls work together in many classes. Pupils made suggestions about the improvement of the whole-school environment at a time when a 'Promised Tree' was placed in the school entrance hall. Very high standards of co-operative working, particularly in science, are observed even when pupil numbers are high. Mathematics provides opportunities for independent working in projects and in physical education there are opportunities for planning all

activities on an individual and collective basis. Pupils work sensibly in groups in English, in which the choice of resources is related to citizenship, and have good opportunities for self-expression in dance and personal and social education. Drama also offers satisfactory opportunities in this area. In geography, the implications of the siting of a local bypass are considered. The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme provides for personal development and service to the community. All pupils and teachers take part in the project week at the end of the school year. The projects range from hill walking, service to senior citizens in the community, and overseas trips. Pupils in all school years in the school choose a charity to support. They demonstrate strong links with the community by taking part in the local charity fund-raising jog. Two pupils obtained distinction by reaching the final of the young citizen of the year competition.

58. Provision for cultural education is good both in subjects and in the extra-curricular life of the school. Pupils can appreciate their own cultural traditions and the richness and diversity of those of others. Dance in physical education includes flamenco dancing and rhythms from Asia and is linked to annual productions in which one hundred girls take part. Art has a display of a wide range of icons from Asian, African, Chinese, European and North American Indian sources. Geography introduces values of peoples in other countries, such as Brazil and Japan, and religious education includes the study of most world religions apart from Buddhism. Committed Christians meet on a regular weekly basis. Some texts in English are chosen from Asian and Afro-Caribbean sources. Number systems from different historical cultures and the importance of geometrical art work in Islam are studied in mathematics. The school has received the national 'Sportsmark' award for the wide range of its games and sporting activities provision. The Christmas carol service, Easter concerts and participation in the 'Vivace Schools Prom' concert on a regular basis give full expression to the musical life of the school.

## 62. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

59. Overall, the school provides satisfactory support and guidance for its pupils. They feel safe in school and consider that staff know them as individuals. Parents are also positive about the support given to their children, and particularly appreciate the mentoring provided for pupils in Key Stage 4. They feel that the caring attitude taken by staff enables the pupils to grow in confidence during their time at school, and to try different experiences within a safe environment.
60. Since the time of the previous inspection, and particularly over recent months, the school has revised its pastoral systems in order to offer pupils more focused support, relating specifically to their age and educational requirements. As yet, the new systems are not fully embedded into school practice, but they have the potential to create a readily accessible overview of each pupil through use of which form tutors and others will have increased information to guide them when they offer support and advice to individuals. Through their regular contact with pupils on a day-to-day basis, and when teaching them in personal and social education lessons, form tutors grow to know their charges well. Individual departments keep academic records and form tutors only really know about their pupils' progress when the half-yearly effort reports go home, or if the pupils cause concern during the year. The school carefully monitors individuals' progress, comparing their test results with their attainment on entry, and this information is used well to identify those, particularly in Key Stage 4, who need extra monitoring. Those pupils are offered regular mentoring which in some cases last year helped them to improve their GCSE grades. Pupils throughout the school are offered one to one support and advice from form tutors at least once during the year, and the headteacher also interviews pupils of all ages on a regular basis to discuss their progress. Last year's Year 11 pupils were very positive about the help offered to them when preparing for their GCSE examinations.
61. The school has effective procedures to promote discipline and good behaviour. School rules are clearly displayed in classrooms, pupils know what they are and, to a great extent, abide by them. As part of the new pastoral arrangements, teachers now have an increasingly clear overview of which pupils are causing concern, but there are still some anomalies between the issuing of behaviour targets by heads of year and learning targets by the special educational needs co-ordinator. There is a lack of clarity in these procedures, with two separate systems for setting targets and no established procedure for addressing behavioural issues through a staged approach via the special educational needs register. The addition of



a support form teacher to one tutorial group in Year 9 is an effective means of supporting individuals whose behaviour is causing concern. All staff and prefects may issue merit slips, and pupils are eager to receive these. Pupils who are trying to improve their behaviour and attitude find the monitoring cards helpful. Pupils also consider that the school has effective procedures to deal with bullying. Staff take incidents seriously and the school has trained pupils as bully counsellors whom other pupils do use as a source of advice and support.

62. Arrangements to promote good attendance are satisfactory. With a new education welfare officer and new pastoral system there have been some teething problems over communication but these are now being dealt with. The school has a very clear idea of which individuals need particularly close monitoring and is introducing first day contact with the parents of those who are absent. Heads of year are growing increasingly skilled at using the computer system in relation to attendance, and are aware of the importance of early and persistent home contact. The school is working closely with the authority's Attendance Support Project regarding pupils in Years 8 and 11.
63. The school tries hard to provide for the needs of individuals. All staff are aware of the arrangements to ensure child protection. The person with responsibility for this area has provided clear, written guidance, keeps confidential records appropriately and, together with other staff, ensures that pupils are sufficiently educated about self-protection. Good procedures are also in place in order to cater for the needs of looked after children. A choice of options beyond the usual GCSEs is available for pupils progressing into Key Stage 4. There are good arrangements to help Year 7 pupils settle quickly into school routines. The personal and social education programme has been strengthened over recent years and is well delivered by form tutors who, under the new pastoral system, are becoming experts in the needs of pupils at particular stages of education. It includes careers education, which is also successfully delivered, with the result that a higher percentage of pupils from this school continue into further education or gain employment than in the authority as a whole. Drama and personal and social education lessons are effective in helping pupils to develop self-knowledge. Parents indicated that the mentoring programme for pupils in Year 11 was successful in helping their children to achieve good GCSE results.
64. Aspects of the arrangements to ensure the well-being, health and safety of pupils are unsatisfactory. A member of the science department acts as the school's principal first aider but, despite being well trained, does not have sufficient time or resources to carry out her role to best effect. The school has adapted the authority's health and safety policy to its own use and governors appropriately re-endorsed it within the last 18 months. Outline risk assessments were also carried out but these are not working documents, no member of staff has received recent training in how to conduct risk assessments and it is left to individual departments to complete their own. There is evidence of good practice in some departments, such as modern languages, science and art, but in many other areas staff are insufficiently aware of potential hazards and inspectors raised many concerns with senior management. Of particular note were areas in the design and technology department, different departments allowing pupils to move on slippery floors with only socks on their feet, and the queuing arrangements at lunchtime which are exacerbated by the inadequate size of the dining room.
68. **Partnership with parents and the community**
65. The school has maintained the good partnership with parents and the wider community that were commented on at the time of the previous inspection. Parents are annually surveyed for their opinions and, over the years, have grown increasingly positive about the school's provision, particularly the good level of communication between staff and themselves. Senior managers take careful note of the issues arising from these surveys and use them as a prime source of information when developing plans to drive the school forward.
66. The prospectus is a useful document that gives a helpful outline of the school's provision and expectations. The governors' annual report gives a good overview of the previous year's work, some time after the event, but parents are kept well informed throughout the year through newsletters and the

Longdendale Voice. The school involves parents at an early stage if there are any concerns about their children. Staff also contact home if pupils have achieved particularly well. Parents are provided with information about what their children will be studying in the coming year and this is repeated on pupils' reports. The school issues mid-year effort reports, while at the end of the year pupils take their records of achievement home. These give a grade for effort and attainment but teachers' comments are very variable in their usefulness. From reading them it is difficult to glean how much progress pupils have made, how well they are performing in different elements of the subject and precisely what they need to do in order to improve.

67. There are good informal contacts with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are appropriately involved in the reviews of pupils with statements. Review procedures at other stages of the Code of Practice are not yet fully established which limits the opportunities for parental contributions.
68. Most parents are interested in and supportive of their children's educational work. Pupils' planners are generally used well as a means of communication and parents attend meetings to discuss pupils' work in large numbers. The Parent Teacher Association organises many events of both a fund-raising and an educational nature, which are reasonably well supported. It enables the school to run its minibus, and this year is mounting many events in order to raise sufficient funds to buy a new bus in celebration of the millennium. A few parents help in school and some provide waste materials for use in, for instance, design technology. Parents occasionally act as expert speakers as, for example, when recently a town-planner informed Year 11 geography pupils about the proposed by-pass for the area.
69. Pupils throughout the school benefit from its links with industry and the wider community. As part of their team building activities near the beginning of the school year, Year 7 pupils undertake a Team Challenge, working with representatives from various local businesses. Year 9 pupils run an Industry Day with help from the Education Business Partnership. Year 10 pupils are currently visiting Tameside College on a regular basis in order to carry out ceramics work that would be impossible in school. Other pupils are attending a variety of courses at the college and extended work placements suitable for those who wish to study a wider curriculum at Key Stage 4. Good partnership with the army has allowed several boys in Key Stage 4 to follow a week-long training course in an apparently successful effort to improve their motivation at school, and girls will have a similar opportunity in the near future. Business people provide mock interviews for Key Stage 4 pupils, help to mentor those who are falling behind with their work, and also welcome Year 10 pupils on their two weeks' work experience during the summer term. The school is used by a number of local groups throughout the week and, as part of its efforts to achieve European Eco School status, pupils have planted 2000 daffodil bulbs for the community to enjoy. All these activities broaden pupils' experience and help to raise their aspirations and standards of attainment.

## 73. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### 73. **Leadership and management**

70. The leadership and management of the school are good. Examination results have improved since the last inspection, high standards are expected and achieved and the ethos for learning is very good.
71. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has a clear sense of purpose and is very effective in communicating this to the whole organisation. Parents attributed much of the school's improvement in recent years to his influence. He is well supported by an able and committed senior management team. They have complementary skills which enable a wide range of management roles to be performed effectively.
72. One of the strengths of the school is that there is an intellectual dimension to its leadership. The headteacher and senior managers, including the two advanced skills teachers, are strategic thinkers who

keep up to date with educational issues. They pass on their ideas in a variety of formal and informal ways, for example through the weekly bulletin. Coupled with this they openly present information about the school's performance. This encourages staff to reflect on their own work and to take responsibility for making improvements.

73. The governors are a major asset to the school. They are well informed about educational issues and are effectively organised to ensure that their business is conducted efficiently. The chair of governors leads well and organises meetings successfully. Responsibilities are well delegated to the chairs of the various committees, who ensure that the full governing body is kept well informed about decisions and recommendations. The involvement of two pupils in the workings of the governing body provides a good link between the governors and those that they serve. The governors are very supportive of the school and oversee its work effectively.
74. Staff, parents and pupils are regularly consulted about the school's work. This is a very effective process which has been reinforced by the requirements of Charter Mark and Investors in People. It enables the school to check its progress and encourages a sense of collective responsibility.
75. The school motto; 'we are all here to learn' is good. It reflects the ethos, which encourages everyone to take their share of the responsibility for self and collective improvement. The school's aims are appropriate but rather too wordy to be memorable. They are, however, strongly reflected in the working practices of the school. Pupils are encouraged to think, to take responsibility, to show consideration and respect, to co-operate, to develop self-knowledge and to develop their potential.
76. School policies are consistent with the school aims. Policy implementation is generally good, but there are some exceptions. For example; collective worship arrangements are detailed and comprehensive, but they are not followed either through assemblies or in registration periods.
77. The work of teachers and departments is effectively supported and monitored. This is done both formally and informally. For example, earlier this year the school organised an in-house inspection. Ofsted criteria were used and the performance of all departments was reviewed through a programme of lesson observations. In addition, senior staff also check pupils' progress by examining samples of books, whilst the headteacher meets a selection of pupils each fortnight to discuss their work. Most importantly, the senior management team have created working conditions in which teachers want to succeed because they recognize the personal and professional benefits from doing so and feel appreciated for their achievements. As a result, staff morale is high.
78. There are some weaknesses in the school's monitoring procedures mainly because line management arrangements are not strong enough. The school is successful because the right conditions have been created for pupils and teachers to succeed. However, the checks to ensure that the organisation is consistently performing effectively are not in place. For example; schemes of work in some subjects such as physical education and music are weak. This means that it is not possible to ensure that there is consistency in the curriculum that pupils are offered. It also means that supply staff and new teachers lack sufficient curriculum guidance. The quality of development plans is also weak in some subjects such as English and physical education, and therefore progress towards targets cannot be monitored effectively.
79. The school has improved in a number of ways since the last inspection. This is due to good planning and effective practice. The school development plan largely reflects the school's aims but it does have weaknesses. It features six relevant development points under three headings – curriculum, pastoral and management - which have been maintained for a number of years. Appropriately incorporated into the development plan are the key issues arising from the last inspection report. Development planning in practice is stronger than development planning on paper. This is particularly the case in departments where some of the written plans lack detail and clarity of thought. The whole-school plan is stronger than departmental plans but it lacks precision in its identification of how success will be measured and in costings.

80. The ethos of the school is very positive. Considerable credit for this is due to the attitudes and practices encouraged by the headteacher. There is a commitment to high standards which are achieved, relationships are very good, the conditions for learning are good, except where poor resourcing has a detrimental impact, and attitudes throughout the school are positive.
81. The school has a staged approach to special educational needs, as recommended by the Code of Practice. Governors are appropriately involved in determining policy, oversight and reporting to parents, with the chair of governors taking a leading role. Governors take a keen interest in special educational needs and were closely involved in planning the introduction of the support option at Key Stage 4. In some respects there is a whole-school approach to special educational needs, with departmental representatives meeting regularly with the special educational needs co-ordinator and with each department setting learning targets for individual education plans. However, the central role for the special educational needs co-ordinator envisaged by the Code of Practice is not well established, with the co-ordinator's role restricted to a relatively narrow range of activities. Procedures for reviewing pupils' progress are not clearly established, with the exception of pupils with statements where all requirements are met. In many cases dates for reviews are not recorded. There is a lack of co-ordination between the setting of learning targets and the setting of behaviour targets. The quality of learning targets set by departments is not monitored. The use of specialist support from outside agencies is very well managed, with the local authority's learning support staff used flexibly so that support can be concentrated according to need.
82. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and it is in a good position to maintain this improvement. Standards have risen as has the quality of teaching. The key issues from the last inspection have been largely addressed. Examination results have risen, resources (though still inadequate) have been improved as finance has allowed, there will soon be a new learning resource centre to improve the library provision, staffing inconsistencies have largely been resolved, setting and grouping arrangements have been improved, and staff expertise is more appropriately matched to the subjects that are taught. There has been progress in developing the information and communication technology provision but it is still unsatisfactory and the school still fails to offer a daily act of collective worship.
83. Statutory requirements are met except for the provision of a comprehensive information and communication technology curriculum at Key Stage 4 and for a daily act of collective worship.
87. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
87. **Staffing**
84. There are sufficient staff with appropriate qualifications to teach the curriculum. Staff turnover is relatively small; 7 teachers have left the school in the previous 2 years and 9 have been appointed. There is some non-specialist teaching, for example in music, science and physical education, and this does have an impact on the progress that pupils make.
85. The number of non-teaching staff is insufficient, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There are too few support assistants for pupils with special educational needs and too few technicians. The number of administrative staff has recently risen and this has improved the efficiency of school organisation.
86. The school achieved Investors in People in 1997 and has recently been re-recognised. The school has also been awarded The Charter Mark. These externally verified awards are testament to the commitment that the school shows to the development of its staff.
87. The designated special educational needs co-ordinator is appropriately qualified and experienced. Specialist support for pupils with statements meets requirements although the level of additional

teaching support is not sufficient to meet the broader range of special educational needs in the school.

88. Teacher appraisal is in place. All staff, including support staff have an annual staff development interview. This is well managed and helps to create an appropriate focus on staff development needs. All staff have job descriptions. Teaching staff are involved in a programme of lesson observation which is conducted by line managers and monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and the staff development co-ordinator. There is a published staff development policy which includes induction of new staff. Induction procedures are good. A member of the senior staff has a responsibility as staff development co-ordinator. Training records are maintained and reflect the high proportion of staff involvement in training and development activities. Some staff have not had appropriate development opportunities, for example in physical education.
89. The previous Ofsted inspection noted that non-specialist teachers were employed in religious education and English, and this was deemed to be having an adverse effect upon the quality of work. This is no longer the case. The report also said that the school would benefit from an audit of all staff, both teaching and non teaching. The school would benefit if this recommendation became part of an annual review of staff numbers and their deployment.

93. **Accommodation**

90. As reported at the last inspection, accommodation is a limitation in many areas of the curriculum. It is currently under greater pressure as the result of an extra form of entry in the current Year 7 and consequently does not allow the curriculum to be adequately taught in all areas of the school. Funding for cleaning, maintenance and building is very low and, though expenditure is carefully planned and controlled, more subjects are reporting inadequate accommodation. Included in these are all the areas mentioned in the last report and which still have shortcomings. Shortage of space is the main drawback. In English there are only four dedicated rooms for six teachers and the library is used as a more or less permanent classroom thereby severely restricting its use as a resource area. In science, laboratory space is insufficient with the result that many lessons are taught inappropriately in classrooms. In addition, time for laboratory maintenance is insufficient. Facilities for modern foreign languages, physical education and music are all too small. Dance continues to be taught in the entrance hall, which has an unsuitable surface and is subject to disturbance from people passing through. Music lacks adjacent practice rooms. Despite recent drainage work, the use of playing fields is limited to certain months and hard areas are in need of repair.
91. Health and safety concerns are noted, in design and technology, in the preparation room and in the type and location of fire-fighting equipment. There is also concern over the queuing arrangements for the dining hall because they involve pupils waiting on a flight of steps.
92. Many subject areas provide attractive and stimulating surroundings. They are clean, free of graffiti and vandalism and are improved by good displays of pupils' work. Staff and pupils work hard to overcome the constraints of the accommodation and are helped in this by the work of the fabrics committee. The small amount of funding is carefully managed and the annual building management plan, through careful costing, helps to keep the programme of refurbishment on track.
93. There is little use of offsite accommodation, but the school continues to maintain strong links with the community by letting space in the evenings, for a variety of activities. Although not ideal, access to all levels of the school building is possible for those with physical disabilities

97.     **Learning Resources**

98.     The provision of resources for learning was a key issue in the previous inspection. Although there has been some improvement the situation remains unsatisfactory, particularly in English, music, physical education, science, history and modern foreign languages, but no subject area has a level of resources judged to be good. The ratios of books to pupils and computers to pupils are low in relation to national levels of provision.
94.     In geography, modern foreign languages, history and English, pupils cannot take texts home because they are needed by other classes. In English, Key Stage 4 pupils are expected to buy their own exam text for the open-book examination, although the department tries to buy these in bulk to reduce costs. Additional texts are needed in physical education and religious education for Key Stage 4. In music the instrumental resources are inadequate to meet the needs of the National Curriculum despite the recent purchase of keyboards. In design and technology, a lack of money for maintenance has resulted in expensive equipment being rendered useless. The shortage of computers prevents the science, history and geography departments from giving an effective contribution to information and communication technology across the school. Difficulties of access to computers restricts older pupils from access to the careers programme “Kudos” until January of Year 11. It would more usefully be available to pupils throughout Key Stage 4.
95.     The library is not a good resource. There is no trained librarian and the room is used as a full-time classroom which restricts access to break and lunch times and after school and it cannot be used for individual or class research. Here again the lack of computers with CD ROM limits the library’s use as a resource centre for the school.
96.     There are appropriate specialist resources to support pupils withdrawn from lessons. The range of resources for special educational needs in departments is very variable, for example, it is good in modern foreign languages and unsatisfactory in history and geography.

101.    **The efficiency of the school**

97.     The school has good procedures for financial planning at a whole-school level in which governors play a full and active role. Planning is based on sustaining provision by securing a commitment to fixed costs and by introducing tightly-costed developments already identified as school priorities. Because of the low budget share, governors plan on an annual basis only. The low budget share demands detailed and careful planning and governors are committed to gaining the maximum value from all funding. They receive information and proposals from the headteacher and monitoring reports and information from the bursar.
98.     The headteacher and governors continue to seek successfully a range of additional funding through bidding procedures to such as the Standards Fund and welcome the Fair Funding Initiative, which has given them scope to begin a programme of improvements to the building. They anticipate having further scope for efficiencies in the proposed additional areas for delegation in March 2000. Provision of hardware for information and communication technology has been provided through a successful bid to the National Grid for Learning and a loan from the local authority.
99.     The school’s financial monitoring and control, managed by the bursar, working with the governors and management team, are excellent. This is based on attention to detail and meticulous record keeping which was highly praised by the local authority auditors in their last report. The bursar also monitors the Standards Fund allocation and the School Fund with the same efficiency.
100.    The school makes good use of its staffing resources, particularly in art, modern foreign languages, mathematics, physical education and science. Teaching staff are effectively deployed to deliver the curriculum but must work with large classes at Key Stage 3, particularly in English, science and modern

foreign languages and in graphics at Key Stage 4. Arrangements for the withdrawal of a whole class from design and technology for lessons in information and communication technology result in an inefficiency of staffing, as both teachers are still timetabled with a single group. The low budget allocation is particularly severe on the provision of support staff. There are shortages of: technicians, none being available in design and technology; of education support staff for pupils with special educational needs; and of administrative and clerical staff.

101. The school also makes good use of accommodation and learning resources, but is handicapped by the low funding available. Pupils are unable to take text books home in English, geography, history and modern foreign languages and there is a shortage of books in religious education. Machinery in design technology is out of use because of a lack of funds for maintenance and the investment in new computers has not been supported by an adequate allowance for virus protection. Allocation of teaching spaces leads to inefficient use of resources in modern foreign languages and lack of continuity in English. Classes split between teachers in Year 8 English lead to inefficient use of time for joint planning
102. Support for pupils with special educational needs is provided by the local authority and from within the school. Statemented pupils have an allowance of time from visiting support teachers and staff from the school have timetabled periods to support pupils in lessons, largely in core subjects. In mathematics and modern foreign languages, pupils with special needs are taught in small groups. The small amount of additional teaching support is well used in groups where needs are greatest. Resources are not consistently well used in departments due to the very variable provision. Funding for statemented pupils is used appropriately to meet to meet their needs.
103. In consideration of the very low budget, the efficient use of resources, the good quality of education offered by the school and the standards achieved by pupils, the school offers excellent value for money.

108. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

108. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

108. **English**

104. Overall, pupils currently arrive at the school with below average levels of literacy and make good progress to reach average levels of attainment by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 when compared to national standards.
105. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE Grades A\* -C in English is in line with the national average, with girls performing better than boys; it is higher than the proportion of pupils gaining such grades in similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades is higher than at the time of the previous inspection and has risen steadily over recent years. In the 1999 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests, results were in line with the national average but high in comparison with the standards attained by pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or above has fallen over the last three years, although the average points score showed a rising trend from 1996 to 1998. Girls achieve higher standards than boys at this stage compared with girls and boys nationally.
106. Pupils, including low attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress in English in both key stages because of the high quality of teaching in the subject and because they have positive attitudes and are keen to improve their work. They make good progress with reading because teachers provide plenty of opportunities, including paired reading in lessons and at lunchtime and reading sessions in tutor time. Most pupils can read with understanding, and high attainers can identify different layers of meaning in texts and respond sensitively both at a personal and critical level.
107. Pupils also make good progress with their writing skills. The standards of technical accuracy are good when compared with their levels of prior attainment. Most low attaining pupils are able to structure their writing into sentences and punctuate these correctly, while higher attaining pupils employ a range of structural and linguistic features to make their writing coherent, clear and interesting to the reader. As they move through Key Stage 3 pupils develop the ability to be objective about themselves as writers and are taught the subject-specific language which enables them to analyse the ways in which they and other authors achieve their effects. By the end of Key Stage 4 high attaining pupils have developed sophisticated writing styles which they can adapt to suit a range of purposes and audiences.
108. Almost all pupils are confident and fluent speakers when talking about themselves or narrating and describing events, and many pupils are also able to explore complex ideas, expressing themselves clearly and cogently. Pupils listen to the teachers and to each other attentively and respond in an appropriate manner both to the teachers' questions or in group discussions.
109. These sound levels of literacy are sufficient to enable the vast majority of pupils to have access to the full curriculum. There is a developing awareness in departments as well as English that pupils need to be taught the specific styles of writing needed for success in different subjects and some good work is being carried out in classrooms. Subject areas, such as modern foreign languages, science and religious education, ensure that pupils read for a variety of purposes, but pupils still need to be offered more opportunities to read a wider range of texts across the curriculum.
110. Pupils display positive attitudes towards their English lessons. Their behaviour is very good, they settle quickly and concentrate well on their work. Many pupils show enthusiasm for their work, are keen to answer questions and to contribute to discussions. There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers, and the social relationships between pupils are enhanced by the department's policy of seating girls and boys next to each other.



111. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages; no unsatisfactory teaching was observed and a significant amount of teaching was very good. Teachers' classroom management is very good and teachers are skilled at ensuring that lessons are interesting and proceed at a brisk pace with a variety of different tasks to take pupils through a staged series of learning activities. The best lessons have some very good features. Teachers share objectives for learning with pupils and then use these to demonstrate the progress that has been made; differentiated tasks and resources are used to ensure that work is matched to individual pupils' needs and good questioning techniques enable pupils to discover things for themselves. The curriculum meets the demands of the National Curriculum except that pupils are not given opportunities to develop and apply their information and communication technology skills in English.
112. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a positive ethos and good teamwork amongst the staff. However, development planning is a weakness because there is insufficient detail about the implementation of the appropriately identified priorities; for example, resourcing and training needs are not planned against time and cost factors.
113. The English department's work is made more difficult because of inadequate accommodation and resources. Insufficient rooms for the subject means that the library has to be used as a teaching room, thereby denying access to other classes and subject areas during the teaching day, and also means that some classes do not have a proper base for their lessons. This is most damaging to low attaining pupils, some of whom are taught in several different rooms for English. The inadequate supply of books leads to a situation where pupils are not able to take books home to use for homework and GCSE pupils have to purchase their own examination texts. However, despite these difficulties, the English department is an effective department and its work supports and promotes the pupils' good progress.
114. Since the last inspection, the quality of staffing and of teaching have improved. Teachers' subject expertise is now good, particularly at Key Stage 4, and this is reflected in the good teaching seen overall in both key stages.
115. Drama is taught as a separate subject within the expressive and performing arts department. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average. This is in part because the emphasis is on the personal and social development of pupils rather than on the teaching of the subject specific knowledge, understanding and skills. This means that pupils make poor progress throughout Years 7 to 9. Although many pupils have positive attitudes towards their drama lessons, a significant number of boys see the subject as an opportunity for letting off steam and their boisterous behaviour seriously impedes their own and other pupils' progress. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 because of the slow pace, failure to teach skill development and low expectations of what pupils can achieve. The pupils who choose to take drama as one of their GCSE options make good progress in Key Stage 4 and achieve average results. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory.
120. **Mathematics**
116. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in mathematics is high in relation to national standards and progress made by pupils is good. Attainment in mathematics is below that in science and above that in English in this key stage. At both key stages, attainment is above that for similar schools.
117. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C GCSE grades is broadly in line with the national average with girls outperforming boys by 5 percentage points in 1999. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-G grades in 1999 was above the national average, with almost all the girls passing the examination. In 1998, boys' results were comparable with that of girls in GCSE examinations which represented a significant improvement in the attainment of boys and an improvement since the previous inspection report. Attainment in GCSE has had a small, steady and significant improvement since 1996. The number of pupils being ungraded in mathematics in GCSE declined in 1998 and 1999. However, the low attendance record of some lower attaining pupils in the present Year 11 has had an adverse effect on their progress and their standards of attainment.

118. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 is average in relation to national standards. The attainment of these pupils on entry to the school was below national averages and progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 is good. The most recent intake to the school has a higher level of attainment on entry and this is reflected in higher standards of attainment in Year 7. Attainment in mathematics is comparable with that in English and science.
119. The results of the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 tests show a small decline since 1996 but there was an improvement in 1999. They exceed the results of pupils in similar schools. Girls achieve higher results than boys compared with girls and boys nationally. Evidence collected during inspection week from lesson observation and from scrutiny of pupils' work confirms the evidence from national tests and examinations.
120. The majority of pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress in number skills. Higher attaining pupils can express large numbers in standard form, many pupils can change fractions to decimals and percentages. Lower attaining pupils improve their skills in using four rules without using calculators. All pupils can represent information in table form, obtain information from tables and construct column graphs and pie charts. Higher attaining pupils construct scatter and frequency graphs to enable them to investigate more closely information presented to them. Pupils calculate the areas of triangles and rectangles with some pupils able to express relationships in the form of algebraic equations. Similarly, most pupils can produce symmetrical diagrams with higher attaining pupils using coordinates with both positive and negative numbers to describe their diagrams. Pupils carry out their own investigations into the relationships between the circumference, diameter and area of circles and are able to confirm standard relationships between them with accuracy and find out how to obtain the maximum area enclosed by a given perimeter. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4.
121. At Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils work accurately at the highest levels for GCSE. They can find the sides and angles of triangles of any shape, deal with more complicated angle properties associated with circles, and find solutions to problems in algebra by various methods including graphical solutions. Most pupils are able to use algebraic expressions to find the solutions to problems. Lower attaining pupils use expressions of areas and perimeters of rectangular shapes, average attaining pupils relate the sides of right angled triangles, and higher attaining pupils find the areas and volumes of various solid objects in this way. Information is often presented graphically. In one lesson information about modern social problems was presented in this way which promoted pupils' thinking about the issues as well giving them further opportunities to develop their use of frequency graphs. Work with fractions is used in calculations of probability. All pupils use number skills in applying fractions, decimals and percentages in a wider range of problems, calculate angles in triangles, circles and parallel lines and carry out individual investigations. Investigations require increasing independence of working by pupils throughout Key Stage 4 leading to work for GCSE. Lower attaining pupils successfully found the missing numbers from various sequences during inspection week. All these activities show good progress from Key Stage 3 and across Key Stage 4.
122. Attainment by pupils with special educational needs in number and literary skills enables them to take a full part in lessons. All make satisfactory progress with regard to their prior attainments with some pupils making good progress, particularly at Key Stage 4. Support for pupils with special educational needs is limited by financial constraints and there is an appropriate focus on providing support in Year 7 and extra teaching groups in Year 9. Limitations in support are compensated for by good standards of class teaching.
123. In both key stages, pupils' listening and speaking standards are good. Reading skills are satisfactory so that all pupils are involved in lessons, but opportunities for using writing skills are limited to one sentence answers.
124. Teaching in both key stages is good. Teachers have the appropriate knowledge and understanding of mathematics, they plan well in the great majority of lessons and in the setting of homework, and pupils'

work is marked regularly. Teachers are determined that pupils succeed, use good question and answer technique on an individual and class basis, and prepare and use booklets which enhance the quality of lessons. Unsatisfactory preparation in one lesson led to inattention by lower attaining pupils and marking linked with national standards at both key stages is not carried out at an early enough stage. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and respond with good attitudes and behaviour in the great majority of lessons. They work individually and in pairs and respect the answers given by other pupils. Books and equipment are given out and collected in a responsible way. Course work, which increases in challenge in both key stages, gives pupils good opportunities for independent working. Pupils become aware of the wide range of size of numbers and can relate patterns to living and non- living things. They are aware of the importance of geometrical patterns in Islam. Number systems different from our own give a wider cultural understanding of number. The learning environment is enhanced by good displays of pupils' work.

125. Mathematics is supported by schemes of work which take into account the different levels of attainment of pupils. Differences of pupils' attainment are noted at an early stage with the identification of higher attaining pupils in mixed attainment classes in Year 7. In other years of the school, pupils are taught in groups related to their attainment. Teachers are fully aware of the requirements of the different levels of GCSE mathematics and the limitation on the use of calculators and have modified the scheme of work to take both these into account. The scheme of work for Year 7 has been revised completely to meet the changes initiated by the National Numeracy Strategy. Mathematics meets the requirements of the National Curriculum apart from the use of information control technology. Although pupils were observed using computer programs to support their learning of symmetry with equipment recently supplied by the Parent Teacher Association, the enhancement of mathematics by computer work is unsatisfactory. This was also identified in the previous inspection report. Links with the local sixth form college are good with the college providing mathematics workshops for pupils in Year 10.

126. Leadership of mathematics is good; all teachers are involved and are committed to the promotion of high standards. Management is based on the regular assessment of pupils' attainment in end of topic tests so that their progress can be carefully monitored. This is an improvement since the previous inspection report. Limited resources are used efficiently and assessment of pupils' attainment is used well to inform on changes in the curriculum. Mathematics is a good department with the capacity for further improvement.

#### 131. **Science**

127. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with average attainment in relation to national standards. They make good progress through Key Stage 3 and by the end of it their attainment is high in relation to national standards. Compared to other similar schools, pupils' performance is well above average in the National Curriculum tests. When results are taken together from 1996 to 1998, attainment of both boys and girls was in line with national norms.

128. The proportion of students gaining A\* - C grades in GCSE double award science in 1999 was above national expectations. When compared to similar schools, the results were well above average. In 1998 the performance of girls was significantly better than boys but in 1999 there was no significant difference. Pupils' attainments in 1999 were in line with those in 1998. A small number of lower attaining pupils took single science examinations and results were well below national standards.

129. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in physical, biological and chemical science is high overall. Practical skills are well developed and all pupils can handle a range of laboratory equipment effectively. Pupils of higher and average attainment in Year 9, for example, planned and carried out experiments to measure speed in a range of different contexts. They all made their measurements several times in order to calculate mean values. Low attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs in Year 7 were able to use a colour chart to estimate the temperature of a range of different sources and relate their findings to an estimation of the temperature of stars.

130. By the end of Key Stage 4, most higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the main aspects

of science required at this level and attainment is high overall. This is aided by regular testing. Pupils with a wide range of abilities in Year 11 were seen to analyse their performances in recent mock examinations systematically, having particular regard to examination technique and subject knowledge. Most pupils have good reading skills and this supports their learning.

131. The progress made by pupils in both key stages is good. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress in lessons and also over time. For example, Year 7 pupils all made very good progress in a lesson about light as they built on their knowledge of planets and stars. Having seen that white light could be split up into the colours of the spectrum they were able to suggest that these colours could be recombined back into white light. They then saw this demonstrated. Progress was very good in this lesson because pupils had been well motivated through clear explanations and interesting additional information provided by the teacher. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 4 is good both in lessons and over time. By way of illustration, pupils in Year 10 made good progress in a lesson in which they investigated reflex actions. They built up their understanding by carrying out a range of short experiments to identify the stimulus and response. By the end of the lesson pupils were able to use appropriate terminology in explanations. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Progress of these pupils is good when they are provided with materials to help them record their results.
132. The attitude of students to their work is good. They show interest, work responsibly in small groups, particularly when carrying out practical experiments and investigations, and form good relationships. Behaviour is good in lessons and this aids their learning. Pupils co-operate well with teachers. Low attaining pupils and those with special education needs also respond well and work hard when the work meets their needs. As they become older, pupils become more involved and interested in their work and this is developed through good teaching.
133. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. In all the lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory whilst some very good and excellent teaching was also seen. The knowledge and expertise of the teachers are good and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in their teaching. Teachers' planning is good and they provide a good range of learning activities. This helps pupils to gain knowledge and understanding and make good progress. Teachers challenge pupils well and give them many theoretical and practical problems to solve. Teachers in some lessons do provide materials for low attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. However, there are some opportunities missed, particularly when pupils are in mixed attaining groups, to provide materials to help them with written work. For example, when given partially completed diagrams and result tables, these pupils can keep pace with others, make better progress and thus gain in self-confidence. Teachers often give different homework to high and lower attaining pupils. Teachers' discipline is good and they use skilful questioning techniques and give praise when necessary.
134. The development of practical skills is a particular strength of the department. In all stages there is good evidence that in regular practical assignments pupils carry out work involving the planning of fair tests where hypothesis, reporting, presentation and analysis of results are required. Teachers use ingenuity in the provision of circuses of experiments on particular topics. While providing a good range of learning experiences, efficient use is made of limited resources. Two good lessons described above used this technique.
135. There are good procedures in place for assessing and moderating pupils' work, and recording information. In Key Stage 3 the data is not regularly used to inform pupils of their National Curriculum levels but teachers do track the attainment and progress and challenge pupils individually. In Key Stage 4 pupils are given individual target grades. There is good use made of attainment certificates for lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 4. They provide immediate recognition of the tasks that these pupils are able to do and thus build their confidence to work for GCSE examinations. The provision of laboratory technicians is unsatisfactory. Technicians only have sufficient time to deliver equipment to laboratories. When the part-time technician is absent the remaining technician finds it difficult to provide this basic service. There are too few laboratories available for science teaching. Several double lessons have to take place out of laboratories and there is insufficient time for laboratories to be serviced.
136. The use of information and communication technology is a weakness and the department does not contribute effectively to the use of such technology across the school curriculum. Measurements using

computers cannot be made by pupils as there are too few computers and sensors. Although pupils are occasionally given opportunities to search for and use information on CD ROMs, they do not use information and communication technology for writing reports or processing experimental results. Pupils thus do not have opportunity to develop their information and communication technology skills. Despite careful planning, the department does not have sufficient finance to replace items of equipment that are becoming worn out.

137. The head of science provides very good leadership and management for the science department. The department has clear aims and there is a good range of relevant policy documents. There is good commitment to the achievement of high standards and good assessment procedures are used to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the department. The science department staff work well as a team and give good support to each other and the head of department. They also give their time to pupils, for example with the ecology group. Teachers also provide good opportunities for a wide range of pupils to care for the animals in the animal unit.
138. Teaching in the department is good even when groups are large and pupils, including those with higher attainment, are given good challenges. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

143. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

143. **Information and communication technology**

139. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in information and communication technology is low in relation to national standards. Only a small minority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 has had the opportunity to follow a course of examination in information and communication technology. In the 1999 GCSE examination 42% of the 21 pupils entered achieved A\*-C grades. The remaining pupils in Key Stage 4 have little opportunity to develop their information and communication technology skills as only very limited provision is provided and as a result the school fails to meet its statutory requirement.
140. A Year 11 group understands simple databases and is able to develop database structures at a very basic level. In Year 10 pupils are familiar with the technical terms of local area networks and wide area networks. In both cases pupils' knowledge and understanding are low in relation to national standards. Only a very small proportion of the current Year 10 pupils achieved above Level 5 in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests. This assessment also revealed that twice as many girls achieve Level 5 than boys, the majority of whom only achieved Level 4.
141. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is low in relation to national standards. However, recent changes in departmental management have resulted in new programmes of study being developed and the school's expectations are to bring standards in line with the national average by the year 2001. Currently Year 7 pupils demonstrate attainment in line with national standards through their development of a simple database. They can sort records in alphabetical order; they are beginning to sort patterns and can identify key fields within the design of a database for the school library. A Year 8 class, by the end of the lesson, could organise a desk top publishing layout. They were able to enter text into the framework and change both the size and style of that text. A Year 9 group were developing their understanding of LOGO control and while this was lower level work than might be expected, it was efficiently completed and pupils were able to demonstrate their full understanding of the program. In both Year 8 and Year 9 groups, the pupils' attainment was low in relation to national standards.
142. During the inspection, there was very little evidence of the use of information and communication technology by pupils to support their learning. In food technology pupils do use computers to word process and develop graphics for their portfolio work. There are examples of word-processed work in modern foreign languages and the use of a heart monitor in physical education to study the effects of exercise on the human body was effective in promoting learning. However, the use of information and communication technology in all subjects is a weakness and an urgent priority for development.
143. By the end of Key Stage 4 those pupils following a course of study towards GCSE make unsatisfactory progress over time. This is as a result of a lack of regular practical experience during Year 10, when too long is spent on blocks of theory. The department has now rectified this deficiency. During their lessons satisfactory progress is made as a result of clear learning targets being set and good teaching which helps pupils to meet those targets.
144. During Key Stage 3, pupils' progress is satisfactory. However, continuity is affected in Year 9 where information and communication technology is taught in short time blocks on a withdrawal basis from design and technology. Aspects of the Programmes of Study taught in Year 9 are normally taught at an earlier stage; however, pupils make good progress in writing simple programs. A Year 7 group made good progress in their understanding of databases, both from a simple design of a database to their application in the world of work.
145. Pupils clearly enjoy their information and communication technology lessons. Response is always good and pupils remain focused on their work. All pupils seen using information and communication technology do so with respect. They recognise the value of equipment and treat it accordingly. At lunchtime and after school the information and communication technology room is well used by pupils extending their skills or completing schoolwork.

146. Information and communication technology is taught through a core series of lessons at Key Stage 3 and through a GCSE option at Key Stage 4. Current teaching at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. A weakness in the teaching is the expectation that pupils can sustain long periods of theory without combining it with practical experience. Strategies for learning which develop the pupils' ability to understand the theory through practice should be considered. Class management in relation to behaviour is good and the support by teachers during practical use of computers is good.
147. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Teaching is good when the pupils are provided with targets which clearly state what they will know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. A good feature of teaching at Key Stage 3 is the use of homework, which is both of an appropriate standard and planned to support the learning taking place in the classroom.
148. Points raised at the last inspection still require consideration. The provision of information and communication technology in the curriculum was insufficient and uneven at the last inspection. This is still the case in both key stages. While the school's provision of computers has increased, it is still well below the national average. The previous report identified the need for staff training and, although the school has planned to use the New Opportunities Fund allocated to the school, little has taken place since the last inspection to improve teachers' skills.

153. **Religious education**

149. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There are strengths in pupils' attainment in their knowledge and understanding of different religious traditions and in their use of appropriate religious language and technical terms. Skills of reflection and response are not as well developed in written work. Pupils describe and illustrate the seven days of creation and compare the Biblical version of creation with scientific explanations. They interpret Bible references to obtain information about the life of Jesus. They explain the importance of religious ceremonies where young people make a personal commitment and take responsibility, including Bar Mitzvah in Judaism. They discuss key questions about the meaning and purpose of life. They explain the Ten Commandments and write their own rules for life on a desert island. They describe religious belief and practice in different religions including Sikhism and Judaism. They describe the friends of Jesus and write their own stories about friendship. They explain the symbolic importance of different foods in Judaism.
150. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is average in terms of the GCSE short course followed by all pupils, with personal reflection and response again a weaker area than knowledge and understanding. GCSE results are below national averages for both grades A\* - C and for grades A\* - G. This, however, does not tell the whole story because almost all the pupils are entered, compared with most schools where only pupils who opt for the subject are entered. It is creditable that the results were less than 5% below national averages in 1999, showing a significant improvement on the previous year.
151. In Key Stage 4, pupils write about Muhammad's life in their study of Islam; they describe his achievements and the kind of person he was, making reasoned comparisons between his likes and dislikes with their own. In their study of prejudice they are able to use role-play in groups to argue and discuss their own attitudes towards different groups of people. They interpret Bible references about Jesus' healing to identify the Christian view of prejudice. They identify reasons for racist attitudes in their study of the history of racism in the United States of America, using appropriate terminology including 'discrimination' and 'segregation'. They compare Muslim and Christian beliefs on the sanctity of life, and life after death. They give personal responses to moral issues including abortion, euthanasia and war. They describe different forms of worship within Christianity including the celebration of Holy Communion. They write in detail about key Christian beliefs including the resurrection.
152. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3 in acquiring both skills and knowledge despite the uneven curriculum time across the key stage, which disturbs continuity and progression. They make good

progress in developing skills in discussion to pose key questions about life and to suggest possible answers. They also make good progress in developing research skills to select information from Bible references and in consolidating their knowledge and understanding of religious belief and practice. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to work completion and behaviour targets in their individual education plans. Progress at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory over time in terms of pupils developing skills to produce detailed written responses; for example, in giving their opinions on social and moral issues. They make satisfactory progress in individual lessons, for example, in consolidating their knowledge and understanding of religious leaders and their achievements and considering moral issues from the perspectives of different faiths. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in achieving learning targets.

153. Pupils' responses are good at Key Stage 3, with some very good and some excellent responses. They display interest and enthusiasm during discussion and initiative in preparing for role-play activities. They willingly express their own opinions and listen carefully to the views of others. They work well together with partners and on individual tasks. The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils are generally satisfactory at Key Stage 4 but a significant minority of pupils have a negative attitude to the short GCSE course and this affects the standards that they achieve. Most pupils work well independently, although concentration is sometimes variable.
154. Teachers' knowledge is secure at both key stages. Teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and sometimes very good. The most effective teaching is characterised by a variety of lesson activities which provide progression and challenge. Time is well used in the majority of lessons, with appropriate allowances being made for the time allocation to activities in both single and double lessons. In the best examples of good teaching single lessons are well planned to take into account the time constraint and to ensure that pupils are progressively challenged. A further positive feature of good teaching is a high level of challenge in homework activities. The most effective teaching is also characterised by using resources to enable pupils to participate in activities to further their learning. In a small minority of lessons at Key Stage 3 there is a lack of challenge in class discussion. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and sometimes good. The most effective teaching is characterised by lesson activities that engage pupils fully, including class discussion. Teaching is less effective in stimulating interest and motivation when lesson introductions do not involve pupils in discussion and when the principal activity is to complete a worksheet.
155. Since the last inspection the curricular provision for religious education has improved. The school has given a strong commitment to the subject by entering all pupils for the short GCSE course; formerly the subject was taught through units of accreditation. Whilst many of the pupils have positive attitudes to the subject, a significant minority do not and this affects their progress.
156. There has been a recent change in management of the department. Two staff are now involved in this task, with an appropriate division of responsibilities. Planning is at a very early stage with priorities for development being identified. Schemes of work lack detail and curriculum planning has not fully addressed the need to develop teaching approaches at Key Stage 4 that motivate pupils by engaging them in interesting and challenging activities.
161. **Art**
157. At Key Stage 3 the attainment of the majority of pupils is average in relation to national standards. A significant minority of pupils achieves better than average results. Pupils are given the opportunity to experience a variety of creative experiences and the majority shows an interest in their work. The majority of pupils use a variety of drawing and painting materials including print making. Interesting three-dimensional work is being produced. Pupils are willing to discuss their work, and a significant proportion show pride in their achievements. In Year 7 pupils produce good work using collage techniques to develop intricate patterns based on letters of the alphabet. In Year 8 pupils draw accurately from observation and develop skills in the use of pencils to create tone and precision in line drawing. They also create cubes made of card and decorate them with a variety of detailed patterns using Op-Art techniques in the style of Bridget Riley and Victor Vasareli. Year 9 pupils use cultural influences from



Africa and North American Indians to develop papier mache masks and intricate symmetrical painted patterns.

158. At Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A\* to C from 1996 to 1998 has been consistently above average when compared with the national average. This trend has continued into 1999. Over the same period the proportion of pupils gaining A\* to G grades has been maintained at 100%. The average points score is above the school average and also above the majority of the other subjects on the curriculum. A small number of pupils who are not entered for GCSE art gain unit accreditation in art, which is promoted and monitored by the local authority. No significant variations are apparent in attainment by gender or ethnicity. A number of pupils in both Years 10 and 11 exhibit a clear understanding regarding their work and possess the capability to produce very good results in a variety of media and techniques.
159. In Key Stage 3 the progress made by the pupils is satisfactory. It is evident from the work produced over the three years of Key Stage 3 that pupils of all abilities are making gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Progress is evident from the confident manner in which most pupils handle the variety of materials made available to them. In Key Stage 4 progress is good, which can be measured from the work produced which shows average to good levels of knowledge and skills and understanding, improving from Year 10 to Year 11. The majority of pupils in both key stages shows interest and there is evidence that in all year groups there are a number of pupils who have the potential and the ability to make significant progress. The majority of the pupils react well to the challenges offered to them through a variety of creative experiences and good teaching techniques. The scheme of work is well planned, allowing for all abilities the opportunity to succeed. Special educational needs pupils are making suitable progress as a result of sensitive teaching. Some extension work is offered to pupils who are making rapid progress.
160. The attitude of the pupils at both key stages is varied but for the majority it is never less than satisfactory and more often good. Relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good, promoting mutual respect and a good working environment. The majority shows a good level of interest, enjoys the work and is capable of sustained concentration. A minority finds sustained concentration, problem solving, extrapolation and an understanding of aesthetics difficult. These problems are more common with low achieving boys. Relationships between pupils are good. Pupils are more than willing to share materials and ideas.
161. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 3, and very good in Key Stage 4. The best lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all pupils with opportunities to progress and to attain levels of achievement commensurate with their abilities and aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs are well served through sensitive teaching using a wide variety of creative opportunities. Classroom management is very good, the teachers having good relationships with the pupils. Lessons are conducted at a good pace which sustains the concentration of the majority of pupils. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists, cultures and civilisations in order to raise creative and visual appreciation and awareness. A variety of visually stimulating exhibits produced by pupils are on display in the art rooms. Homework is not used effectively to support the work that is done in class.
162. Assessment is effective and is used to support future development. Assessment includes a certain amount of pupil self-assessment and therefore when questioned the pupils were well aware of teachers' expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Work is marked regularly on completion of the various projects.
163. The department is well managed. The quality of the work of the pupils on display in the art department and around the school is good; it promotes interest in the subject and celebrates achievement. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum except in the use of information and communication technology to support learning.
164. The department is housed in two adjoining rooms. Resources are used effectively and are generally

adequate but there are shortages of some materials and equipment. Sketch books are not used by the pupils in Key Stage 3 and this limits opportunities for them to develop research skills. Homework is not set regularly and it is therefore not used effectively to prepare pupils for future lessons. There are limited opportunities for pupils to visit local art galleries, museums and areas of local interest.

165. The previous inspection report drew attention to insufficient resources being available to cover the full range of art activities and the lack of any technical support. This situation has not improved significantly. The lack of satisfactory provision for information and communication technology was identified and remains a problem. The ceramics area was an underused resource. The recent change in staffing in the department will allow for the gradual introduction of ceramics to all year groups. At present Year 10 pupils do visit a local college of further education for ceramics lessons.

170. **Design and technology**

166. By the end of Key Stage 4 the attainment of the pupils is average in relation to national standards. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in the 1999 GCSE examination is in line with the national average. There are variations across the subject disciplines with very high attainment within the areas of graphics and food technology. Attainment in textile technology is average within very small option groups. Attainment in resistant material technology is low. The results from the short course in graphics are well below average.

167. In all areas of the subject there has been improvement each year, and considerable progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in food technology and through the introduction of a full graphics GCSE course. The school has evaluated the poor results in the graphics short course and has taken positive steps to improve the way the course is taught.

168. A Year 10 group studying food technology show their understanding of the importance of design in attracting consumers to products. Pupils show a clear understanding about the working characteristics of the ingredients in order to produce a product of good quality. In a Year 11 graphics class the pupils were able to demonstrate high levels of capability through the use of a full range of graphical techniques. Their portfolios were also well presented. The skills of pupils taking resistant materials are variable; for example, workshop skills shown by one Year 11 resistant group were poor and this was reflected in examples of their work. However, a higher ability group within a mixed ability option block were able to demonstrate average capability in relation to the national standard.

169. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is average in relation to national standards. This is confirmed by the pupils' results in the assessment tests carried out at the end of Year 9. The department does not scrutinise the results closely enough in order to evaluate the performance of pupils in each of the disciplines.

170. A Year 7 class successfully analysed a range of bread products and was able to make judgements in relation to taste, texture and value. Whilst a Year 8 class had a limited understanding of simple mechanisms, they were able to produce a simple drawing of a mechanism and from that drawing produce a model of the system. A Year 9 textile class demonstrated low attainment. Within the group three girls understood the process and achieved standards which were average. The rest of the class was working at below average standards, and work in their folders indicated weaknesses in the planning for the lessons and of unsatisfactory progress over time as a result. An example of a standard assessment task carried out in Year 9 by a current Year 10 pupil in textiles demonstrated an understanding of a wide range of processes related to the Programmes of Study. The quality of this individual piece of work is high in relation to national standards.

171. The progress of pupils is satisfactory during Key Stage 3. A Year 7 class made good progress in the use of language to describe the food product they were disassembling. The groups consisting of girls and boys made good progress in being able to describe texture and taste. However, the group made up only of boys, whilst making satisfactory progress, concentrated too much on the tasting rather than recording an

- evaluation of the product. A Year 8 class made unsatisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of how a simple mechanism worked. However, with support from the teacher using a range of limited resources, the group made good progress in creating a model of a simple mechanism.
172. Progress during Key Stage 4 is good. There are variations; for example, in resistant materials progress is satisfactory, but overall the majority of pupils make good progress. Progress is poor for those pupils following the short course in graphics.
  173. Year 10 pupils in food technology make good progress. They recognise the importance of quality and the appropriate use of resources. They design for an intended purpose and show a clear knowledge and understanding of how materials can be combined and processed. Work in their folders shows their progression of ideas and skill understanding. Similarly the portfolios of a Year 11 group in graphics demonstrate very good progress over time. However, while progress was satisfactory in a Year 11 resistant materials group, the quality of investigation work was of a lesser quality and rigour, and the portfolios were not as well managed and presented.
  174. At both key stages the majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to the subject. They enjoy the practical activities and respond to the challenges of designing and the making. There is evidence of poor workshop practices in resistant materials as a result of insufficient care and provision being provided by the teachers. This is the opposite within food technology, where all pupils are carefully taught the importance of safe and hygienic practices. As a result these pupils take the activities and practices within a working area very seriously and wear personal protective equipment at all times when handling and working with food.
  175. Teaching across the department is satisfactory at both key stages. It is good in food and graphics. Where teaching is good, lessons are well organised and all pupils are clear about what they need to do to produce high quality work: for example, in a Year 10 class where pupils were asked individually to describe critical control points or in a Year 7 class when targets were set and references were carefully made to other aspects of design and technology disciplines. Teaching is unsatisfactory when poor planning fails to provide assessment to inform the next stage of learning and insufficient care is taken to provide support through a range of tasks to match the needs of individuals. A serious weakness is the lack of risk assessment for practical lessons. There is evidence of disparate planning within the department and the progress made in some areas would benefit the whole if a more corporate approach to teaching and learning were adopted.
  176. Standards in resistant materials are affected by poorly maintained equipment. The heat treatment and hot metal process area is unsafe. Poor housekeeping affects the safe use of machinery and the material preparation area. The lack of technical support is affecting standards.
  181. **Geography**
  177. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average in relation to national standards and at the end of Key Stage 4 it is high. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE has risen from 39% to over 77%. The proportion of girls gaining A\*-C grades rose rapidly after 1995 and has stayed at about 70% until 1999 when it reached 81%, well above the national average. Boys' grades have improved more slowly, but in 1998 and 1999 over 70% of them gained A\*-C grades. In 1998 boys' results were higher than those of the girls. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-G grades has been in line with, or better than the national average for the last five years, with all boys gaining a pass grade in each year. A\* grades are above or well above the national average. In 1999 16.6% of the girls gained A\* grades, compared with 4.5% nationally. Relative performance indicators show that in 1998 boys gained results that were over half a grade better than their average results across the subjects.
  178. Since 1997 the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 or above in the Key Stage 3 teacher assessments has steadily risen and was above the national average in 1999. Pupils have good mapping skills by the end of Year 7. They can use coordinates in 4 and 6 figure references and they can present data graphically in a

variety of ways. Pupils are able to measure line and angle in scale and compass work. Written work is satisfactory in terms of grammar and spelling and there are examples of extended writing in work on different types of farming and deforestation in Years 7 and 9.

179. At Key Stage 4 pupils understand more complex concepts, such as weather and eco systems. They are also able to make links between physical and human processes, as in climate and tourism. Most pupils use an appropriate vocabulary and are able to make judgements based on well reasoned arguments. The quality of enquiry work is high. Pupils develop very good examination skills as a result of the good quality of the teaching. This is a major factor in explaining the pupils' success at GCSE.
180. Insufficient provision and use of information and communication technology is a weakness in both key stages. The previous report noted that a start had been made in the use of information and communication technology but progress had been slow. There is some use of the internet for enquiry work and some word processing but more machines are needed, and there is insufficient access to the network suites.
181. Progress is good at both key stages, though the progress of pupils is adversely affected in Key Stage 3 by the lower than average curriculum time. The department manages this disadvantageous situation well to limit its impact on pupils' progress. The highest attaining pupils are able to work on their own and they use good writing skills to present their arguments and their conclusions. Year 9 enquiry work is of a high standard and pupils gain confidence in using a variety of sources such as library searches and the internet. The work is very good preparation for GCSE coursework. In Key Stage 4 pupils respond well to more challenging work and learn to make good judgements. They blend written and number skills well and develop the excellent examination skills that gain the high grades at GCSE. Average attaining pupils improve their extended and imaginative writing, seen in a study of Senegal. By the use of word boxes and glossaries they increase the fluency of their verbal responses and demonstrate a growing confidence in studying geographical themes. Lower attaining pupils gradually consolidate their subject knowledge and are able to explain clearly what they are studying and learning. They make satisfactory progress in line with their attainment. There is little obvious difference, in lessons, in the progress of boys and girls.
182. Pupils enjoy geography lessons and respond accordingly. Attitudes are never less than satisfactory and are usually good or very good. There are good relationships in the classroom and pupils show a mature attitude to their studies working well together and sharing knowledge.
183. Pupils in Year 8 have individual education plans but the targets are not reviewed regularly and there is insufficient provision and use of materials matched to the needs of these pupils. As a consequence, some pupils with special educational needs, without sufficient support, are failing to make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3.
184. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers are specialists with good local and general knowledge. They are well organised and have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve. They use a variety of techniques and put what resources they have to good use. They have a high expectation of pupils' behaviour and of commitment to work. Management of pupils is good and friendly and results in them staying on task. The department is doing a good job in enabling the majority of its pupils to make progress. They equip them with the knowledge and then give them the skills to apply it effectively.
185. Geography is a popular subject and it has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The department is conscientiously led and it works hard to improve.
190. **History**
186. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average in relation to national standards. Able pupils in Year 7

can explain the difference between primary and secondary sources and all can extract information from a primary source as evidence of an aspect of life in ancient Rome. Year 9 pupils can contrast 18<sup>th</sup> Century maps of Nottingham and Ashton to describe workers' housing. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is average in relation to national standards. Year 10 pupils show good understanding of Germany's desire for a speedy settlement with Russia in 1917 in order to release troops for the war on the western front.

187. GCSE results in 1999 were below national averages, both at grades A\*-C and overall and were 9% below the figures for 1998. Following the previous inspection, results improved initially but have declined for the last three years, during which time there have been no candidates achieving the highest grade. Also during that time the number of candidates entered for history has declined from 30% of the age group to 14%. The decline is greatest amongst girls.
188. In both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In Key Stage 3 pupils often make good progress in their lessons – in Year 7 gaining understanding of what it is like to be a Roman citizen, and in Year 8 gaining an appreciation of why Henry VIII needed, but could not get, a divorce. However, at 5% of the curriculum, the time allocation for history is below that found nationally and this slows progress. In Key Stage 4 high attaining pupils make good progress as a result of their better response to their teachers and their lessons. In Year 10 able pupils gain a good understanding of the demands of the Allies at the Treaty of Versailles and less able pupils gain understanding of why Russia sought peace after the 1917 Revolution. In Year 11 able pupils gain a good understanding of how economic factors combined to bring on the Depression while less able pupils gain a more limited understanding of how over-production led to falling prices. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages.
189. In Key Stage 3 pupils have good attitudes to their work. Pupils' response in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall but attitudes range from unsatisfactory to good. Where the response is unsatisfactory pupils are passive learners, inattentive to their teachers and lack concentration. Throughout Key Stage 3 and in half of Key Stage 4 lessons pupils were interested, lively and well behaved, concentrating well on the tasks set and maintaining their efforts to the end of the lesson.
190. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and manage and control pupils well. Relationships in the classroom are good. Most lessons are well planned with clear aims and a sequence of varied activities but some lesson plans are brief, lacking detail and with no clear aims. The pace of lessons is steady, if not dynamic, and teachers give good individual support while informally assessing the work of the pupils in class. Teachers have appropriate expectations of their pupils but oral sessions can sometimes be too long. The use of homework is inconsistent across the department but when set it is linked to current work.
191. The curriculum meets the demands of the National Curriculum and offers opportunities for all to succeed. There are no opportunities within the subject for pupils to enhance their skills in information and communication technology through the study of history. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but reports to parents are not subject specific and teachers' comments relate to effort and behaviour rather than attainment and progress.
192. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. There is a strong commitment to the aims and values of the school and overall there is a good ethos for learning. Developmental planning lacks rigour in that there are no costings or success criteria. Teamwork and mutual support are strong but informal and there is no systematic and thorough monitoring of the work of the department.
193. The shortage of resources places constraints on the organisation of the subject. Texts are at a basic minimum and there is very little additional material to give pupils a rich and diverse appreciation of history.

198.     **Modern foreign languages**

194. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is average in relation to national standards. GCSE results at A\*-C in French were above the national average in 1999, and in two of the last three years. A\*-C results in German have declined from well above to below average over the last three years. A\*-C results for the small cohort studying Russian were very high in 1997 but were below average in the two following years. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-G grades in French and German in the most recent year were below average and have only been above average once in the last three years; in German in 1998. A\*-G results in Russian were high in all three years. As at the last inspection, pupils understand spoken and written language well. There has been an improvement in standards of writing, particularly by the highest attainers. However, speaking standards continue to be unsatisfactory. Pupils tend to react in English and speak without fluency or accuracy in the language.
195. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly average in relation to national standards in all four languages; French, German, Spanish and Russian. Teacher assessed levels have improved between 1998 to 1999. As at Key Stage 4, pupils show understanding through listening and reading. The highest attaining and the youngest pupils have good speaking standards but many others lack confidence. Only a few pupils achieve a satisfactory level of spoken target language for genuine communication. Writing standards of the highest attaining pupils are good but others are often unsatisfactory. Pupils are developing skills through regular practice in independent reading.
196. Progress is satisfactory during Key Stage 4. Pupils bring understanding of previous work to lessons and acquire new knowledge and skills. Boys and girls make equal progress. In most lessons, pupils are supported by materials matched to their individual abilities and make appropriate progress. Pupils are developing good dictionary skills. Progress is good during Key Stage 3. Pupils demonstrate understanding and retention of previous work and extend knowledge and skills in all lessons observed. Boys and girls make equal progress as do all the ethnic groups, and when appropriate work is set, pupils of all abilities.
197. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Pupils concentrate well and co-operate in paired and group work and show commitment. They respond well in all four skills to tasks set but are not spontaneous in the use of the foreign language for genuine communication. Attitudes and behaviour are good at Key Stage 3. Pupils often demonstrate enthusiasm for language learning and work with energy. They work well together in pairs and groups, although they do not always succeed in sustaining the foreign language and need to use English to organise themselves and confirm understanding. However, teaching in Spanish, undertaken entirely in the language, generates more consistent use of the language from pupils.
198. Teaching is good at Key Stage 4. Lessons are based on thorough planning, which often includes provision of specific materials for pupils of differing abilities. All lessons begin by sharing objectives with pupils and, on many occasions, the objectives are checked at the end. Teachers make predominant use of the foreign language in teaching and classroom organisation but are apt to allow pupils to overuse English, particularly to confirm understanding. Lessons proceed at a good pace; they are challenging and teachers generally show high expectations of the pupils.
199. Teaching is also good at Key Stage 3. Teachers' planning is good and includes provision for pupils of a range of abilities. Teachers make consistent use of the foreign language and encourage pupils to speak French, German, Spanish or Russian. Teaching includes a variety of activities to encourage pupils to practise language, particularly speaking, but also other skills. Lessons are challenging and are conducted at a good pace.
200. At both key stages, teachers' own language proficiency provides an important role model for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs in smaller sets are encouraged to make good progress by good teaching based on high expectations and good relationships. However, no use of classroom support was observed in other larger classes of a broad range of ability.

201. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. Pupils at Key Stage 3 have to share text books, thus restricting the range of tasks which can be set for homework, which limits opportunities to make progress. Not all rooms have overhead projectors and, because of lack of blinds, some rooms are not suited to their use. Resources in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory, and insufficient use was observed, although there is a display of pupils' word-processed work. Accommodation is also unsatisfactory. There are too few rooms and the isolated position of one room puts pressure on the efficient use of already scarce resources. Teaching staff are experienced and qualified to deliver the curriculum having high quality skills in the range of languages offered.
202. Foreign language assistants in French and German have been employed since the last inspection and support the teaching staff and provide good language role models. The school has developed good exchange links with a German school and is looking forward to establishing a similar link in France. There is a planned visit to Berlin and it is hoped to organise a visit to Spain. However, cultural appreciation is not being sufficiently developed through the use of genuine materials in the classroom nor by sufficient use of tape-recorded native speakers.
203. There is a departmental assessment policy in place and statutory requirements are being met at Key Stage 3 as are the requirements of the examinations boards at Key Stage 4. Assessment has informed curriculum planning, particularly at Key Stage 4 but insufficient use is made of National Curriculum levels to clarify pupils' performance. Marking is carried out constructively and regularly, though there are some inconsistencies in the way that teachers apply the departmental policy.
204. Management and leadership of the department are good. They are based on sound planning and a team ethos. Monitoring of teaching quality and sharing good practice have begun. The department has a range of strengths in its members, which places it in a strong position to develop still further.[PEM1]
209. **Music**
205. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is average. The ten pupils who took GCSE in 1999 achieved results that were below the school average and well below the national average. The results, however, show a gradual improvement over the last three years. More boys sit the examinations than girls, but there is no difference in achievement. Pupils in Year 10 are able to define most of the musical elements and have a working knowledge of early dance forms. They have attempted some GCSE listening questions, but their use of musical vocabulary is limited and written work about heard extracts lacks precision. Their composing ability is very varied. Pupils in Year 11 are able to tackle the listening questions of the GCSE examination paper and have produced some compositions for their portfolio. Their use of their knowledge is underdeveloped as is their application to composition.
206. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average in relation to national standards. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 for 1999 indicate that pupils' attainment in music is well above the national expectations. This is not borne out by the inspection evidence. Pupils in Year 7 have an acceptable knowledge of rhythmic and pitch notation, have worked out the notes to "Twinkle, twinkle, little star", have written down the notation, and started to compose short melodies. Pupils in Year 8 are able to recognise the different properties of marches and waltzes. They can define "pentatonic", have performed a "black note march", and learnt to play "kum-ba-ya" and have added an upper or lower part. This activity has been assessed. However, they do not use musical vocabulary fluently and display uncertainty when asked about previous activities. Pupils in Year 9 have set the words of a spiritual to music, using an authentic style. They have also experienced music from around the world. Attainment of pupils with special educational needs is in line with their prior attainment.
207. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 7 learn the definition of "monotone", and begin to use their recently acquired skills working in pairs to compose a melody to fit the words of a poem they have written for homework. The more musically able pupils compose introductions and link passages. Pupils in Year 8 compose a melody for a song and develop it by adding

a second part above the song, or add chords. In Year 9 they listen to world music and use the techniques discovered to compose their own melodies. They learn about the background to spirituals and are able to compose their own to given words which they then perform to the remainder of the class. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. In one Year 9 class, a pupil with special educational needs set the words of a spiritual to music and proceeded to perform it to the remainder of the class.

208. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 10 learn to approach the requirements of the GCSE listening paper, acquiring strategies to enable them to answer the questions in a logical way under examination conditions. While some pupils retain the knowledge acquired in previous years, usually assisted by lessons on an instrument, others find it difficult and consequently have to re-learn facts, which also hinders composition. There is little confident use of musical language. Pupils in Year 11 consolidate their previous knowledge and develop their examination techniques.
209. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to teachers and work in Key Stage 3 are good. There are opportunities for composing or performing in most lessons and pupils look forward to this part of the lesson. They quickly develop the capacity to work well in pairs, with the majority sustaining concentration until the end of the activity. Lack of variety of activity sometimes causes pupils' concentration to wander, but in the majority of cases this does not diminish the progress of the remainder of the class. Behaviour is good, pupils are generally courteous to teachers and treat the instruments and furniture with respect. Pupils interact well with their partners, reaching negotiated conclusions to their tasks and, when asked, perform to their peers with concentration and attention to detail. Evaluations of other pupils' performances are sensitive and well thought out. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 are generally responsive and willing to achieve, despite some initial sluggishness when there is a change of activity.
210. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good, and this gives them confidence when explaining tasks. Some good use of questioning takes place to reinforce previous learning. Lesson planning is adequate. Resources are always prepared in advance, and time goals are set for pupils during practical work. During some lessons pupils were asked to read out poems they had written and set to music. In a small minority of lessons, insufficient activities were planned and that resulted in some pupils finding difficulty in sustaining concentration. Pupils are managed well and there are good relationships between pupils and teachers, with appropriate praise being given for good contributions. Teachers have communicated their expected standards of behaviour to good effect.
211. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. It is characterised by good subject knowledge that contributes to clear explanation of tasks. Teaching is enthusiastic and no effort is spared when trying to help the pupils achieve musical experiences and acquire knowledge. Good relationships exist with the pupils and praise is used to good effect. Work is regularly assessed at both key stages, and while the results are used to assist planning, the present scheme for target setting is not working. Homework is set in accordance with school policy, to reinforce, extend or complement work completed in school time. It is not set on a regular basis in Key Stage 3, but is ongoing for pupils in Key Stage 4, though marking of work is not consistent.
212. The present curriculum is that which was being used before the previous head of music retired in 1997. There is only an overview in the departmental handbook, which prevents any supply teacher from easily continuing where the previous lesson ended. Furthermore, the omission of a detailed scheme of work results in a lack of progression and continuity through the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Documents labeled "schemes of work" are only a collection of work sheets for the different year groups. The school is beginning to meet the National Curriculum requirement for providing learning opportunities which enable pupils to use information and communication technology.
213. The department is being managed by an acting head of music who has returned to the school following the departure of the previous head of department last summer. The departmental philosophy is that pupils should learn to understand, appreciate and, most importantly, enjoy music so that the skills they acquire may be carried forward into adult life. This is in keeping with the school aim that pupils will leave the school qualified in every sense, and well prepared for what follows in their adult and working



lives.

214. The classrooms are large enough for the needs of the department, although the lack of practising facilities near the second classroom hinders group work. The main classroom is well lit, and decorated with curriculum related displays and a small amount of pupils' work. The second classroom is also used as a common room and valuable teaching time is wasted restoring it to a suitable teaching environment.
215. Despite a recent purchase of some new keyboards, the instrumental resources in the department, keyboards and pitched and non-pitched percussion are inadequate to meet the needs of the National Curriculum, especially with the two teaching classrooms being separated. The information and communication technology requirement for GCSE is not being met.
216. Since the last inspection there have been in reality two changes of head of department in the short space of two years. Consequently, little has been achieved in developing the curriculum along the lines of providing more challenge for the more musically able pupils, particularly as a new music curriculum is about to be published. Monitoring of lessons is now taking place on a regular basis and assessment is being used to inform teaching. Use of staff, however, is unsatisfactory. One of the assistant teachers teaches drama and some physical education, while the other teaches mostly physical education, for which she is qualified. Use of existing accommodation is good, but the lack of rehearsal space for the second classroom is restricting pupils' progress.
221. **Physical education**
217. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 is average in relation to national standards, which is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. Attainment in dance continues to be very high. Pupils perform well in the very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school is successful in netball, athletics and cross-country running. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*- C grades in dance is consistently well above average and has been since the last inspection. In 1998 a higher proportion of pupils than found nationally gained A\* and A grades.
218. The most recent GCSE results in physical education have improved since the last inspection but they have fluctuated during the interim years. In 1999 the percentage of pupils gaining A\*- C grades increased compared to 1998, when it was well below average. However, the 1999 results are not as high as in 1997 when they were above average. The percentage of pupils gaining A\* - G grades is consistently above average. In most years every pupil entered gains a grade. In 1999 pupils' performance in GCSE physical education was similar to their performance in the core subjects. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. The low results in 1998 are explained by the adoption of a new examination board and disruption in the teaching caused by staff absence.
219. At the end of Key Stage 3 girls' performance in dance is above average. Girls compose complex duos and perform them with style and composure. They use a reasonable range of technical vocabulary to evaluate each other's performance. Performance in games is average. In hockey girls have reasonable control of the ball. They know the rules but their understanding of game strategies is weak. In badminton, a new game to Year 9 pupils, boys can maintain a rally in practice and can use a short and long service. Pupils know how to warm up and in some lessons they take responsibility for this part of the lesson.
220. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils perform at the expected level in most activities but their ability to officiate, evaluate or coach is weak. In trampoline lessons girls and boys perform a reasonable range of skills which they put into sequences. They can analyse each other's performance and suggest improvements in this activity. Boys' performance in football and basketball is average. Boys have consistently effective skills and use a suitable range of strategies. In football a small number are very competent. Girls' performance in basketball is weaker because they have had very little experience of the game. Overall, pupils' performance in badminton is below the standard expected. Pupils know the rules and can score for doubles but stroke play, footwork and strategic play are weak. A small number who

take GCSE or go to the badminton club are more competent players.

221. In GCSE physical education, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the theory continue to be below average. Many lower attaining pupils take the subject and they have difficulty in learning and retaining the knowledge for tests and examinations. Standards in GCSE practicals are higher. Performance in athletics, netball, football, basketball and badminton are the strongest activities.
222. In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in response to good teaching. The pupils respond well to the pressure that is put on them to perform well. Girls make good progress in dance and boys make good progress in gymnastics. Pupils learn the skills of games but not always enough about game strategies. There are few non-participating pupils. Pupils do not always improve their ability to analyse and evaluate performance or learn the language of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers know their needs and adjust activities accordingly.
223. In Key Stage 4 pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. In over half of lessons observed, progress was good in response to the high expectations of teachers. In those lessons pupils not only improved their performance and understanding of fitness, they also improved their ability to evaluate each other; for example, in Year 10 gymnastics girls commented on each other's performance. Progress was unsatisfactory in one lesson where the pupils learnt nothing new, the expectation being one of recreation rather than learning. Non-specialist teachers lack the support of sufficiently detailed schemes of work. This deficiency has not been picked up through departmental monitoring procedures. Where progress is just satisfactory pupils do not focus sufficiently on improving games strategies, coaching or officiating skills. Progress over time is just satisfactory because curriculum planning does not allow enough time to teach activities in depth.
224. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning GCSE theory. The range of worksheets is limited and not matched to all pupils' learning needs. Pupils do not have their own text book and this restricts homework and opportunities for learning. Progress for those pupils present in lessons and taking part in GCSE practicals is good in response to the high teaching quality and high expectations of improved performance against the examination criteria. However, over one quarter of the boys in Year 11 either attend irregularly or often do not bring kit and this affects the progress they make and the standards they achieve. Progress in GCSE dance is very good. Pupils respond well to high quality teaching that inspires and motivates.
225. Overall, the majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning and in Key Stage 3 they are very good. Most pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to improve. Pupils generally concentrate well on the tasks set for them. Girls taking GCSE dance are especially well focused on their work. Pupils generally listen attentively and carry out instructions. They are keen to answer the teacher's questions and evaluate performance. They are less confident when talking to each other about performance. Pupils organise themselves well into teams and practices. In some lessons pupils confidently lead parts of the warm up. A reasonable number of pupils opt to take either physical education or dance at GCSE but participation in GCSE physical education is irregular for some pupils. A good proportion of pupils, around 30%, take part in extra-curricular activities regularly and this helps their progress. Even more pupils take part in inter-form competitions. Pupils behave very well in all lessons. Pupils are respectful of one another and of adults. They are polite and courteous to visitors. Relationships are very good between pupils and teachers. They are based on mutual respect. Pupils work very well in pairs and groups on planning dance, gymnastic sequences or working on games practices. In lessons pupils appreciate each others' efforts and sometimes, as seen in a dance lesson, they applaud each others' work spontaneously.
226. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. The quality of teaching in dance is very good overall and sometimes excellent. In Key Stage 3 half the teaching is good or very good and in Key Stage 4 more than half is good or very good. Teachers generally have good specialist knowledge of the subject. However, non-specialist teaching does not receive enough support from the department and pupils' progress slows. Generally, teachers have high expectations of pupils. They expect pupils to improve their skills and levels of fitness. In the best lessons, they expect pupils to take on more responsibility by, for example, leading warm up activity or analysing and evaluating performance. Teachers' planning of

individual lessons is good. They identify clear targets for learning that they usually share with pupils. Teachers' methods and organisation are generally good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Teachers give clear demonstrations and explanations of skills, for example on the trampoline. They use questioning well to check what pupils have learnt and to improve understanding. For example, in dance, the teacher questions girls to help them to work out how to improve their dance. Dance lessons are very well structured. Pupils have the opportunity to view and learn from professional dance. They compose, rehearse, analyse and improve. However, the lack of schemes of work for many activities means that teachers do not plan to teach the broader requirements of National Curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 4. In all lessons teachers have high standards of discipline based on very good relationships. Teachers make sure that pupils maintain good levels of physical activity. However, some lessons start late because the routines at the start of the lesson take a long time. Assessment of pupils' work and homework are satisfactory. More detailed targets could be given in GCSE physical education to guide improvements.

227. Teaching that is satisfactory or sometimes good has features to improve. Teachers make limited use of whiteboards or other resources to help pupils learn the language of the subject. In some lessons teachers miss opportunities to question pupils and rely too heavily on their own talk. Teachers miss opportunities for pupils to evaluate each others' work. Non-participant pupils are not as involved in learning as they could be. In some games lessons there is not enough emphasis on improving games strategies.
228. The overall leadership and management are satisfactory. A committed team of staff works hard to create a positive ethos for learning and provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities. However, the good practice found in the department relies on individual teachers' efforts and professionalism and is not underpinned by shared or stated aims, values and policies. An important omission is a policy for health and safety and risk assessment. The school was informed of a number of health and safety concerns. There is no development plan to set out priorities or a vision of long-term development for the department. Schemes of work in many activities are out of date and do not provide a satisfactory basis for planning. This is particularly unhelpful to non-specialist teachers and has a detrimental effect on progress and standards. Pupils are not able to take part in all the department's activities; for example, girls are not able to participate in orienteering and boys do not follow a course in dance. Although the department carries out assessment regularly, it makes little use of either departmental or whole-school assessment information to inform planning.
229. The accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. The school benefits from a well appointed sports hall but the extensive outdoor fields remain out of use due to poor drainage for six months of the year and the hard areas are in need of maintenance. The dance is taught in the entrance hall, which is a main thoroughfare for the school, and consequently lessons suffer frequent disruptions. Only the very high quality of the teaching enables pupils to remain focused on their work. The area is carpeted, often dirty and unsuitable for parts of the dance curriculum.
234. **Other Courses**
234. **Business Studies**
230. Only one lesson was observed in this subject and therefore no overall judgement about teaching quality has been made. There was also a review of pupils' work and discussions with teaching staff.
231. By the end of Key Stage 4 the examination group following a course of study in Business Studies achieves average attainment in relation to national standards. In 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C GCSE grades was 31.4 % which was below the national average. However, results for 1998 and 1997 were above the national average in relation to all maintained secondary schools.
232. During the inspection pupils demonstrated their satisfactory understanding of the concept of sole traders and their access to finance. They were less clear in their understanding of public companies and limited liability. Work in their books shows an understanding of relationships between supply and demand.

233. Pupils make satisfactory progress due to the teacher's appropriately structured course, which provides clear guidance. During the lesson observed, their understanding of the differing types of companies was extended.

234. The pupils showed a variety of responses to the lesson. They waited quietly and the majority listened attentively to the teacher and volunteered answers. They took appropriate notes. However, a quarter of the class, almost exclusively boys, showed little interest; for example, they took a long time to get out their work folders and prepare for the task.

239. **National Vocational Qualifications**

235. Pupils from both Year 10 and Year 11 are either on placement or following a course of study in their chosen area. Discussions with pupils from both years provide clear indications of high expectation by the pupils with regard to the outcomes expected by them in relation to their studies.

236. A Year 10 boy on placement in an accounts department has very high expectations and sees the course as a positive route to employment. His portfolio provides a well-documented diary of his achievements to date, with examples of spreadsheet and invoice documents, created through the extended use of information and communication technology. A Year 10 girl studying hair dressing at Tameside College was unsure as to how the course will develop in relation to the National Vocational Level she was likely to achieve. However, in discussion with the two Year 11 pupils, both were very clear about their expected outcomes and what level they expect to achieve.

237. The pupils were critical of the monitoring by the host agency and the schools liaison officer accepted this. The Year 11 boy has only been monitored on one occasion since being on placement in October 1998. However all the pupils were very positive about the school providing extra support lessons for them to "catch up" on any work missed in relation to GCSE studies.

238. Before pupils are accepted on the course the school has selection criteria in order to ensure that those following the Programme of Study have the best chance of success. The school is very clear that the system is not an outlet for disaffected pupils. Quite the reverse is the case with those seeking acceptance; they have a series of interviews involving parents and tutors and careers advisers before being accepted. The school has two trained assessors and pupils have periodical interviews with representatives of the educational business partnership.

243. **Expressive Arts**

239. As an alternative to GCSE, at the end of Year 9 pupils may choose to follow the Expressive and Performing Arts Unit Accreditation course. This consists of one lesson each of art and music in Year 10 every week and one weekly lesson each of drama and art in Year 11. These units are accredited by the school's unit accreditation scheme, having been sanctioned by the assessment working party. Pupils have the opportunity to gain the appropriate certificate if they complete the unit satisfactorily. Pupils make a guided choice as part of their options.

240. The course lacks rigour and does not enjoy the commitment of the pupils. Tasks are of a low order and pupils make poor progress. This is an inadequate aspect of the curriculum.

245.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **245. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

241. The team consisted of 13 inspectors who spent a combined total of 52 days, over a 5 day period, in the school. During the inspection almost all teachers were observed in the classroom, the great majority on two or more occasions. Lessons were observed across the curriculum including some personal and social education sessions. Form groups were seen during registration with their tutors, as were a number of school assemblies. Extra-curricular activities were observed - for example, in physical education and music. Information about other extra-curricular events was gathered from other sources such as displays and interviews. Interviews were conducted with governors, the headteacher, other staff with senior and middle management responsibilities, subject co-ordinators, staff involved with the special educational needs department and support staff. Some representatives from partner organisations gave good support to the school by agreeing to be interviewed by inspectors. The work that students had completed was studied carefully. Students were interviewed informally throughout the week whilst there was a more formal interview for some students in each year group. Prior to the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching staff, governors and parents. 360 replies were received from the questionnaire sent to parents which is much higher than average. A number of parents made detailed written comments on the questionnaires, which were helpful to the inspection team. The school provided a good deal of documentary material which formed the basis of the pre-inspection analysis.

## 247. DATA AND INDICATORS

### 247. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	926	19	46	152

### 247. Teachers and classes

#### 247. Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	50
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	18.34

#### 247. Education support staff (Y7- Y11)

Total number of education support staff:	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	136

[ Secondary schools ]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	76.3
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Average teaching group size:	KS2	
	KS3	27
	KS4	21

### 247. Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	1,748,593
Total Expenditure	1,761,213
Expenditure per pupil	1,943.94
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,619
Balance carried forward to next year	3,999

## 248. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 926

Number of questionnaires returned: 360

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	23	62	12	2	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	34	59	5	1	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	18	50	26	5	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23	57	13	6	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24	58	11	6	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30	61	7	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	31	58	10	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26	59	6	8	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	57	13	3	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	23	58	16	2	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	41	52	6	1	0

Other issues raised by a number of parents are included in the main body of the report.