

INSPECTION REPORT

Werneth High School

Romiley

LEA area: Stockport

Unique Reference Number: 106136

Headteacher: Mr W B Montgomery

Reporting inspector: Mr J W Ashton

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708500

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

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Harrytown
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Telephone number: 0161 494 1222

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Cowdrey

Date of previous inspection: May 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J Ashton, Registered Inspector		Attainment and progress Teaching
Mr W Walker, Lay Inspector		Leadership and management Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Efficiency of the school Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr I Middlebrough	English /drama /expressive arts	
Mr C Collinson	Key Stage 4 Mathematics	Assessment
Mr C Hewson	Science	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs S Innes	Design and technology Information technology	
Mr C Campbell	Modern foreign languages	Curriculum
Mrs G Murray	History	
Mr J Puckrin	Geography	
Mr J Pickering	Art	
Mr A Watson	Music	
Mr A Henderson	Physical education / expressive arts	
Mrs P Rourke	Equal opportunities Religious education	
Mr P Stevens	Special educational needs	

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The Office for Standards in Education
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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in most subjects throughout their time in the school.
- Overall, GCSE results are consistently just above average compared with all schools nationally, well above average compared with similar schools.
- Pupils` achievement in the expressive arts is high.
- Pupils are well taught. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The school is well led and well managed.
- Financial control and financial planning are both very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- The school provides a welcoming ethos, and pupils are very well cared for.
- Relationships are very good.
- Procedures for improving attendance are very good.
- Extra curricular provision is very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Lessons are unusually long and pupils have difficulty sustaining their concentration to the end of some of them.
- II. Intervals between lessons in some subjects are too long.
- III. Not all pupils at Key Stage 4 have their full information technology entitlement, and the better computers are not deployed equitably across the school.
- IV. There is room for improvement in the monitoring of the progress of individual pupils, against their potential.

Werneth School has many more important strengths than it has weaknesses. There is a sprinkling of weaknesses in the report, other than those referred to above, which governors should include in their plans for improvement. The governors` action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has developed well in most of the key areas for development listed at the time of the previous inspection in May 1995.

- V. Effective steps are being taken to improve the academic achievement of boys.
- VI. Pupils are allowed to exercise greater initiative in their learning in some subjects, such as design and technology, but there is room for further work in other areas, including geography and music.
- VII. Development planning in subject departments is much improved.
- VIII. Religious education now receives more teaching time than it did, sufficient for the adequate study of Christianity and other faiths.

- IX. Increasingly effective measures are now being taken to reduce the proportion of authorised absences, although a few parents still take their children on holiday in term time.
- X. The teaching of information technology across the curriculum is improved but still not completely satisfactory for all pupils at Key Stage 4.
- XI. Pupils still do not receive a daily act of collective worship. They continue to have two well-organised assemblies each week, which are largely moral and social rather than spiritual occasions.
- XII. The school has improved sufficiently, is well placed to maintain its improvement and has a good capacity to improve further.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds in national tests and GCSE examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	Grade
Key Stage 3	C	B	well above average	A
			above average	B
			average	C
GCSE Examinations	C	A	below average	D
			well below average	E

At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998, National Curriculum tests show that the proportion of pupils reaching at least the expected level 5 is above the national average in English, and close to the national average in both mathematics and science. Relative to other schools in similar social circumstances, the results are above average for both English and science and close to average for mathematics. The performances of boys and girls are similar to each other at this age.

GCSE results in 1998 are close to, in fact just above average overall when compared with schools nationally but are well above average for schools with pupils with similar social characteristics. The strongest subjects at GCSE are art, science and the expressive arts subjects, dance and drama. Averaged over the three years 1996 to 1998, girls' achievements are better than those of boys, but the difference is not as wide as it is nationally. This is due to an improvement in the performance of boys since the previous inspection, although GCSE results in 1999 show a widening of the gap in favour of girls due largely to the improvement in their achievements. Results in other subjects are below the national average except in English, design and technology, and music where they match the national average.

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• **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Art, Design and technology, Expressive Arts.	
Years 10-11	Good	Art, English, Mathematics Expressive Arts and Music.	
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, resulting in a higher proportion of very good teaching. Forty six per cent of the 203 lessons seen were good and a further twenty per cent were very good, with the occasional outstanding lesson. Thirty one per cent of lessons were judged satisfactory and just over two per cent unsatisfactory. There were no poor lessons. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. Very good lessons were seen in almost every curriculum area, but especially in expressive arts, design and technology and art at Key Stage 3, and in expressive arts, English, mathematics, art and music at Key Stage 4. Two unsatisfactory lessons were also seen in art, and one in each of English, history and religious education.

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

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Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers.
Attendance	Improved since the last inspection. Now slightly above the national average. A
Ethos*	few parents are still keeping pupils off for holidays in term time. Good: Relationships and attitudes to work are very good. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and there is a whole school determination to constantly strive to improve pupils' attainment.
Leadership and management	Calm and consultative and clear sighted from the headteacher. Strong and experienced senior management team. Pastoral management a great strength of the school. Very involved governing body.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced, with particular strengths in expressive arts and personal and social education. Very good extra-curricular provision, especially sport, music and expressive arts.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are well supported and consequently make good progress throughout the school.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Strong moral provision and very strong social provision. Spiritual and cultural provision are satisfactory. More needs to be done to prepare pupils for life and work in a multicultural world.
Staffing, resources and	Well qualified staff. Resources are adequate to teach the curriculum.

accommodation	Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Good library. All weather pitch is unusable.
Value for money	Good value for money: low unit costs; high quality of financial planning; good quality of educational provision, especially the teaching; and examination and test results which are above average in comparison with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.

**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

- XIII. The school is happy and well disciplined
- XIV. Senior staff are approachable and supportive
- XV. Pupils are encouraged to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.
- XVI. The school keeps them well informed about their children's progress
- XVII. It enables the pupils to achieve well
- XVIII. The children enjoy coming to the school.

What some parents are not happy about

- XIX. Pupils unable to take a second foreign small an uptake this year.

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views of parents. They found the school a happy and well ordered one with pupils encouraged to become involved in much more than their daily lessons. Parents' responses to the questionnaire are largely favourable on each of the questions. Judging by the strength and number of the positive comments written on the back of the questionnaires, parents are happy with Werneth School. There were a few concerns, and these were mainly to do with pupils not being given sufficient warning of a set change or a test, or not being given sufficient homework. The new homework diaries were praised by parents. Disappointment at the low take up of the second language was eased to some extent by alternative arrangements after school or at a neighbouring school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors, headteacher, the senior management and staff should now improve:

1. Attainment in information technology across the curriculum at Key Stage 4 by:

- a) distributing some of the better computers more equitably across the school.
- b) ensuring that all pupils at Key Stage 4 receive their full National Curriculum information technology entitlement.

(Paragraphs 85 and 157 to 165)

2. The scheduling of lessons by:

- c) shortening the length of lessons
- d) minimising the intervals between lessons

(Paragraphs 20, 38, 76 and 92)

3. The monitoring of each pupils' *individual* progress against his/her potential by:

- e) encouraging and enabling departments to build up more comprehensive and on-going records of the various attainment measures on each individual pupil, in order to track his/her progress through the school more effectively.
- f) providing departments with the necessary hardware and software to carry out this task.

(Paragraphs 51, 52, 101, 110 and 117)

The governors should also consider the following weaknesses for inclusion in the school's development plan, which are referred to in the following paragraphs:

- Paragraph 13: the low level of recall of multiplication tables and mental arithmetic skills by a few Key Stage 4 pupils.
- Paragraph 26: parents taking their children on holiday in term time.
- Paragraph 39: weaknesses in marking in religious education.
- Paragraph 57: too few planned opportunities for pupils to learn about life in a multi-cultural society.
- Paragraph 78: statutory requirements for collective worship and the dissemination of information to parents about pupils with special educational needs
- Paragraphs 82-83: deficiencies in the accommodation.
- Paragraph 123: improving the expertise of non-specialist teachers in art.

b) **INTRODUCTION**

b) **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 Werneth is a mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school, educating just under 1400 pupils. It is situated in the district of Romiley some four miles from Stockport town centre. It draws from a mixed catchment of private and council housing, from some households that are advantaged and some that are disadvantaged. Previously the school's age range was 11 to 18 but it became 11 to 16 in 1989 as part of the local education authority's reorganisation, which set up sixth form colleges across the Borough. The school is popular and remains oversubscribed. The number of pupils is slightly greater than at the time of the previous inspection and is likely to increase to around 1450 by the year 2003, as larger year groups are taken in from Year 7 onwards.
- 2 The full range of ability is represented in the school, but slightly more pupils enter with below average attainment than with above average attainment. The school identifies 204 pupils as having special educational needs. This represents 15 per cent of the pupil population and is about average compared with schools nationally. The number of pupil with statements of special educational needs (25) represents 1.8 per cent of pupils and again is about average in terms of schools nationally.
- 3 Entitlement to free school meals, at close to 18 per cent, is broadly average for comprehensive schools. For the last three years attendance levels have been slightly above the national average for secondary schools and no one year group gives cause for concern. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection.
- 4 The school is predominantly white and only four pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. The number of permanent exclusions of pupils is very low in comparison with schools nationally and has remained static since the previous inspection. The number of fixed term exclusions has increased but is still about average.
- 5 The school views as its most important current priorities: raising achievement for all pupils; using information technology (IT) to support teaching and learning; and supporting and monitoring whole school and department self review. A particular focus since the previous inspection has been to improve the achievement of boys.
- 6 The school set itself the target of achieving 50 per cent of pupils gaining five or more grades A* to C in GCSE examinations for 1999, which it exceeded.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	131	134	265

6 National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	81	68	77
	Girls	109	86	78
	Total	190	154	155
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	71 (53)	58 (60)	58 (62)
	National	65 (56)	60 (60)	56 (60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	42 (24)	32 (47)	27 (33)
	National	35 (23)	36 (37)	27 (29)

6 Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	40	45	74
	Girls	57	58	91
	Total	97	103	165
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	54 (63)	50 (77)	64 (66)
	National	62 (59)	64 (63)	62 (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	24 (37)	30 (52)	33 (31)
	National	31 (28)	37 (37)	31 (29)

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4³

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	104	147	251

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	46	93	100
	Girls	70	137	140
	Total	116	230	240
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	46	92	96
	National	44.6	89.8	95.2

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	0	N/a
	National		N/a

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	7.7
	Absence	National comparative data	7.8
	Unauthorised	School	0.55
	Absence	National comparative data	0.9

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Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	43
	Permanent	2

6 **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	21
	Satisfactory or better	98
	Less than satisfactory	2

6 PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

6 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

6 Attainment and progress

- 1 At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades in the GCSE examinations in 1998 was just above the national average, as it had also been for each of the previous four years. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A* to G was just above the national average in four of the past five years. The average GCSE points score per pupil shows a rising trend, broadly parallel to and three points above the national trend. Girls' achievements are better than those of boys, averaged over the three years 1996 to 1998, but the difference is not as wide as it is nationally. This is due to an improvement in the performance of boys since the previous inspection, although GCSE results in 1999 show a widening of the gap in favour of girls due largely to the improvement in girls' achievements. In comparison with schools of similar social circumstances, the school's results are above average, using the measure of five or more GCSE grades A* to C, and well above average when using average GCSE points scores per pupil. Results in other subjects are below the national average except in English, design and technology, and music where they match the national average.
- 2 At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998, the National Curriculum tests show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 5 is above the national average in English, and close to average in both mathematics and science. Relative to other schools in similar social circumstances, the results are above average for both English and science and close to average for mathematics. The performances of boys and girls at this age are similar to each other.
- 3 Good, and often very good, teaching combines effectively with very responsive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils to ensure that they make at least satisfactory and often good progress throughout the school. Very good progress is made in the expressive arts but pupils' progress in information technology (IT) at Key Stage 4, other than for those pupils who specialise in the subject at Key Stage 4, is unsatisfactory, due to aspects of the IT National Curriculum not being fully covered with these pupils.
- 4 When all the indicators are viewed alongside inspection evidence, pupils enter Werneth School with a broadly average standard of attainment in English. Their standards of speaking, listening and reading are rather stronger than their standard in writing. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment in English is average overall. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is broadly average but rising. During Key Stage 3 pupils make satisfactory progress. During Key Stage 4 they are making good progress.
- 5 Standards of literacy are close to the national average. In some subjects such as English, expressive arts, history and religious education, pupils are accustomed to writing for specific audiences and purposes. Generally, there is scope to extend the writing repertoire further and to make increased use of, for example, study skills and drafting. Pupils are generally confident readers, due to departments increasing the range of reading materials and reading activities to further extend competence. Textbooks and printed resource materials are mostly of good quality and are usually matched appropriately to pupils' reading needs. Teachers are increasingly aware through the literacy initiative of the subject-specific reading demands that their subjects make of pupils.

- 6 Pupils' attainment in mathematics on entering the school is average and attainment in mathematics is close to the national average at the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the induction course in Year 7, then good progress through the rest of Key Stage 3 particularly in number and knowledge of algebra. At Key Stage 4 the satisfactory standards already achieved are maintained throughout the key stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress at this key stage, particularly in number, algebra and shape and space. Higher attaining pupils are able to interpret quadratic expressions, and extend their skills in graph plotting and solving equations. All pupils show improvement in the use of number, in algebraic manipulation and in the application of trigonometry. Low attaining pupils extend their knowledge and ability to use number and algebraic skills in solving simple problems. The full benefits of the recently introduced scheme of work and the developments in numeracy are not yet seen at Key Stage 4 and the progress in this Key Stage is satisfactory. GCSE results have fluctuated over recent years and there is no clear trend. In 1998, the proportion of pupils achieving at least GCSE grade C was below average at 39 per cent of pupils. It was above average in 1997. There are no consistent differences in the results of girls and boys.
- 7 The standards that pupils achieve in numeracy are average and in line with their achievement overall in mathematics. Pupils' skills in numeracy and calculation provide a satisfactory basis for most of their needs in other subjects, for example in the measurement and graphical work required in science and the use and interpretation of graphs in geography. The low level of recall of multiplication tables and mental arithmetic skills by a few Key Stage 4 pupils limits progress in lessons. The school has included in its development plan the improvement in standards of numeracy across the school and this development is still in its early stages.
- 8 Both boys and girls make satisfactory progress in science from Year 7 through to the end of Year 9, at which point pupils overall attain close to the national average. Higher attaining pupils make the better progress; average and lower attaining ones less so, dependent in many cases, upon pupils' behaviour and concentration. Pupils with special educational needs progress particularly well in learning basic ideas when they are supported by teachers from the learning support department. Girls make better progress than boys across Key Stage 4 and the progress of lower attaining pupils is often hindered by inattention and short concentration spans. Pupils with special needs continue to do well and nearly all gain at least a grade G in the GCSE examination. In double science in 1998, the proportion of grades A*-C was above the national average, an improvement upon the previous year. Boys performed better than girls, exactly as in the year before. Results overall improved again in 1999 although there are as yet no figures to make national comparisons. In 1999 the girls have overtaken the boys, especially in the proportion of the higher grades.
- 9 Results in the national tests at the end of primary school, plus the school's own testing, indicate that consistently around average proportions of pupils enter the school with attainments at and above the expected level 4 in each of the core subjects English, mathematics and science.
- 10 During Key Stage 3, pupils' progress overall, compared to their prior attainment, is rarely less than satisfactory either in lessons seen or from the scrutiny of pupils' work, reflecting the largely good teaching at this key stage. Progress is satisfactory in English, science, art, physical education and religious education and good in mathematics, design and technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages, music and drama. Pupils make very good progress at this key stage in dance and in information technology and personal and social education.
- 11 During Key Stage 4, overall progress remains satisfactory in science and physical education. It is also satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology and geography. Progress is good at this Key Stage in English, art, history, modern foreign languages, religious education, personal and social education and drama, and very good in music and dance. Progress, however, is less than

satisfactory in information technology for those pupils who do not have timetabled IT lessons at Key Stage 4. These pupils are not receiving their full IT entitlement at this key stage and fall short of the national expectation for this age group by the end of the key stage.

12 Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory and often good progress in respect of their prior attainment. This good progress is particularly evident at the end of Key Stage 4 where many pupils achieve well in GCSE examinations in relation to both their capabilities and the national averages. Pupils studying the alternative curriculum make good progress in terms of both social maturity and academic achievement.

18 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

13 The good behaviour, which was the subject of favourable comment in the previous inspection report, is still a feature of Werneth. The school continues to function well as an orderly community.

14 Pupils generally have a good and often very good attitude to their learning. Particularly in class they respond well to their teachers, settling quickly, applying themselves to their work and sustaining their concentration. They are involved in the learning process and persevere with tasks, trying hard to solve problems. Most have high levels of motivation and take pride in their finished work. Where concentration wanes and distractions occur this usually reflects the undue length of, or the lack of pace in lessons. In all subjects and throughout the school pupils are encouraged to collaborate with each other, generating ideas and taking some responsibility for their own learning. In science, for example, they become engaged in extended projects such as one to establish the cause of rust on wire; in mathematics small groups of pupils are given an opportunity to choose their own path to find a solution to a problem set for the whole class. During such exercises pupils demonstrate an ability to select and use appropriate resources. This is more marked as pupils move up through the school so that by Year 11 many show good levels of independence.

15 In class and about the school standards of behaviour are good. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. They know the school rules and respect them. Instances were observed of unsatisfactory behaviour by a few pupils in art and religious education lessons. These are the exception. The good standards that prevail contribute well to the learning process. In movement about the school the great majority of pupils walk calmly and quietly. Between lessons corridors are often very crowded and there is some pushing and rushing but pupils generally observe the rule of walking on the right and few problems are caused. Noteworthy features of behaviour are the civilised and mannerly environments found in the dining rooms and in the crowded but very popular common rooms.

16 The number of permanent exclusions of pupils is very low in comparison with schools nationally and has remained static since the previous inspection. The number of fixed term exclusions has increased but is still about average. The school follows the correct procedures when exclusions are implemented.

17 Relationships at all levels are of a high order and are a particular strength of the school. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work well as a team and set a very good example. They show patience and understanding in their dealings with pupils and are rewarded by respect and co-operation. Amongst the pupils, friendships range across the age and gender groupings and this contributes to the sense of community which characterises the school.

18 In class, pupils learn to express their viewpoint and to listen to and respect that of others. They are regularly reminded of the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions that are to be found in the wider community and show by their daily contact with staff and colleagues that they

have an understanding of this. In all year groups they demonstrate a strong commitment to help those less fortunate than themselves through their initiatives to raise funds for local, national and international charities. They are keen to take responsibility for aspects of school life through involvement with the year group councils, helping in the library, and, for older pupils, acting as mentors to younger pupils. All these opportunities make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development.

24 **Attendance**

- 19 Attendance levels have improved since the time of the previous inspection when there was concern about absences, particularly in Years 10 and 11. For the last three years attendance levels have been slightly above the national average for secondary schools and no one year group gives cause for concern. The improvement reflects the committed efforts, particularly of heads of year and other senior members of staff, ably supported by a very active Education Welfare Officer. All absence is accurately recorded and any high incidence or pattern of absence is quickly identified and thoroughly investigated. Unauthorised absence has been reduced to a low level, compared with similar schools nationally.
- 20 Overall rates of attendance are adversely affected by the practice of a few parents who keep their children off school for holidays during term time. This detracts from the learning opportunities of the pupils who miss schooling, and also from the educational provision for their colleagues since teaching time has to be diverted to compensate for those pupils who have missed lessons.
- 21 The great majority of pupils arrive in good time, enabling their teachers to make a prompt start to the day. Teachers carefully monitor the few pupils who arrive late and take appropriate disciplinary action in those cases where there is not a valid excuse. This has had a positive impact on the levels of punctuality, which, at the time of the previous inspection had been considered unacceptable.

27 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

27 **Teaching**

- 22 The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, resulting in a higher proportion of very good teaching.
- 23 Forty six per cent of the 200 lessons seen were good and a further twenty per cent were very good, with the occasional outstanding lesson. Thirty one per cent of lessons were judged satisfactory and just over two per cent unsatisfactory. There were no poor lessons.
- 24 The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. Very good lessons were seen in almost every curriculum area, but especially in art, design and technology and expressive arts at Key Stage 3, and in art, English, mathematics, music and expressive arts at Key Stage 4. Two unsatisfactory lessons were also seen in art, and on one occasion in each of English, history and religious education.
- 25 The elements which contribute to the very good and outstanding teaching, and the resulting very good pupil progress, include: teachers` very secure command of their subjects, very high expectations of what pupils can do, and excellent strategies for keeping every pupil thoroughly involved. All of these are linked to a firm insistence upon high standards plus a determination that pupils will succeed whichever ability group they are taught in. For example, a drama improvisation exercise with Year 11 pupils on the true story of Derek Bentley was conducted at a very fast pace, the warm up work cleverly linked in content to the main theme and pupils were constantly challenged to refine their responses until their work reached a high standard. A Year 9 dance class working on aspects of the industrial revolution benefited enormously from the teacher`s excellent subject knowledge and expertise, but especially from her very high

expectations of response and behaviour.

- 26 There has been sound progress since the last inspection in the development of a wider range of teaching and learning strategies and in ways of sharing best practice in teaching across the school. Departments have held weekend training sessions for teachers with this as the main focus of their training. For instance, Year 7 pupils in a design and technology group, including eight with special educational needs, made very good progress in learning new techniques for making fruit crumble hygienically and safely. This was due not only to the very good partnership teaching of two members of staff, expecting only the highest standards of achievement and behaviour, but also because they involved the pupils in evaluating their own work, thus consolidating the learning even more. There is room for improvement in some areas, however. For example, in the greater use of more imaginative methods for writing up experimental work in science, getting away from old fashioned and inflexible writing frames. In an otherwise satisfactory geography lesson in Year 8, pupils were not given sufficient freedom to organise their own research of a topic.
- 27 Most, but not all teachers, have effective strategies for maintaining the good behaviour of pupils. For example, by *expecting* them to behave well, by ensuring that pupils are quickly on task with interesting and varied activities, and by making good use of praise and rewards to encourage individual pupils and the class as a whole. However, in a few lessons pupils` progress is less satisfactory when misbehaviour is managed unsuccessfully. This was a feature of a small number of art lessons at Key Stage 4.
- 28 All teachers, except the occasional one teaching his or her second subject, have a secure command of their subject material. Art lessons are begun with particularly interesting and stimulating discussions on the pupils` work and the influence of artists such as Henri Rousseau and Piet Mondrian. The good quality of music tuition from the visiting music teachers is a significant factor in the continuing high standards of many pupils in the music department.
- 29 High expectations of pupils are a consistent feature of the better lessons. The degree of challenge was very apparent in a Year 11 English class when pupils were really pushed to refine their arguments through teacher-led discussion of real quality and vigour, gaining as a result sharp insights into the nature of symbolism in Golding`s “Lord of the Flies”.
- 30 The needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met through the careful adaptation of work made more straightforward by the setting arrangements and by some effective small group support. The teaching of these pupils is never less than satisfactory and is often good. In those lessons where teaching is good the teacher`s knowledge and understanding of pupils` individual needs is clearly evident in planning and is reflected in the strategies and activities used within the lessons. In these lessons care is taken to ensure that they are broken down into manageable chunks to aid concentration and to sustain pupil interest. The quality of in class-support, both teaching and non-teaching, is never less than good, often very good and on occasions outstanding.
- 31 The quality of teachers` planning is satisfactory and in some curriculum areas it is good. For example, in modern foreign languages, more thought has been given since the last inspection to planning enjoyable activities in order to stimulate enthusiasm more. There are now more opportunities for pupils to speak the foreign language in lessons, although in some sessions insufficient time is devoted to intensive oral practice. Carefully planned links with other curricular areas enables the expressive arts to be used to strengthen pupils` understanding of, for example, historical, moral, cultural and religious themes.

- 32 Most lessons are conducted at a good pace and pupils are responsive, often making progress in direct proportion to the teachers' expectations of their work rate. History teachers keep their pupils working productively for double lessons by dividing lessons into short stages with time limits for each task, and by effectively alternating discussion with written exercises. In design and technology, lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, and pupils are well aware of the time targets necessary to complete the work. They are also allowed sufficient time to evaluate the quality of what has been done and the main threads are always pulled together before the end of the lesson. In a number of other subject areas, modern foreign languages, for instance, pupils' interest is not always maintained in the long double periods. Pupils are seen to flag and sometimes to become restless to the point of disorder in some classes. Lessons are effectively structured in physical education but some are slow to get underway, as if there is no urgency because of the long time slots.
- 33 Much continuous assessment of pupils' achievements takes place in lessons throughout the school. Misconceptions are often put right as they arise. Much of the marking of pupils' work is regular and encouraging, with fewer inconsistencies in its frequency and quality between and within departments than were found at the last inspection. The major weakness in the teaching of religious education (RE) is in the marking of pupils' work. Teachers of RE correct very little work and sometimes reward incorrect or incomplete work.
- 34 Homework is often used effectively to consolidate or extend pupils' learning, or to research a topic. It is well used, for example, in English, geography, modern foreign languages, music and design and technology. In mathematics, homework is set in every lesson and collected in at every lesson because of the timetabling system. This is counter-productive for it leads to long delays before work is returned and to the need for more than one homework book for each pupil. Science teachers set challenging homework regularly but seldom use it as a launch for the next lesson.

40 **The curriculum**

- 35 Across both key stages the curriculum is well planned, on the whole, to meet the specific needs of pupils at this school. The unusual breadth commented on in the previous inspection is still a strength and contributes well to pupils' achievements. There is also considerable flexibility which is used whenever possible to accommodate the needs of individual pupils.
- 36 At Key Stage 3 the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and also includes personal social and religious education (PSRE), a pastoral programme and expressive arts. The time allocations for music and religious education are relatively low. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum meets statutory requirements in all but information technology where the specific provision for pupils who do not specialise in the subject is insufficient and is not compensated for by the cross-curricular provision. In addition to the core subjects of English, Mathematics and science, pupils study five more, chosen from modern foreign languages, humanities, technology, a creative/aesthetic subject and a mixed group which would, for example, allow a pupil to study a second humanity or a second modern foreign language. This year there were too few pupils choosing to study second modern language, which consequently could not reasonably be provided for in normal lesson time. These pupils now study a second language outside class time and two pupils are studying a third language at another school. A small group of pupils are not entered for the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in history, geography and English and instead take the certificate of achievement. At both key stages careers education, sex education and work on the misuse of drugs are all well delivered through the PSE programme.

- 37 The alternative curriculum devised and developed by the school, for a group of pupils, for whom parts of the National Curriculum are not entirely relevant during their final year, is of good quality and is well attended. The range of experience and opportunities provided in school, at college, within the community and at work have a positive impact on these pupils' attitude to learning and on the progress they make. The school is seriously considering offering this course to future pupils from Year 10 onwards.
- 38 Pupils with special educational needs receive their full curriculum entitlement and are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. All staff understand the school's staged approach to special educational needs. Provision for special educational needs permeates the school's organisational and curricular structure. There is a policy for 'able pupils' who are regularly given extra work to challenge them further and whose progress is carefully monitored by subject teachers and by the members of a large and active special educational needs committee.
- 39 Year 7 pupils are randomly divided into two equal ability 'populations'. From Year 8, these two groups are carefully setted by heads of department in all subjects except PSRE and dance and drama. Raising the achievement of boys is a priority and some setting is by gender. PSRE is a significant strength of the school. Topics are carefully chosen and constantly updated to match the emotional, intellectual and physical maturity of year groups and to deal with relevant issues such as bullying in Year 7, revision and time management in Year 11. A very thorough programme of careers education is also delivered through PSRE. Year 7 pupils learn about "the world of the student and the world of work". Year 11 pupils are prepared for job and course applications and taught useful interview techniques. All pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 have individual careers interviews. This work is well supported by pastoral tutors and the Careers Service. At the end of Key Stage 3 there is a specific PSRE module in Year 9 which deals with equal opportunities and this initiative is supported in the departments. Equal opportunity issues such as race, gender and stereotyping are clearly established in English work schemes across both key stages. At Key Stage 4, boys are just beginning to choose to study dance as an option but at Key Stage 3, the numbers of boys and girls are almost equally balanced.
- 40 The quality of curricular planning in the departments is good. Detailed schemes of work are a strength and provide for the effective build up of skills and knowledge. Strong links have been established with partner primary schools and with Further Education colleges at management and departmental level, especially in physical education. The literacy summer school of 1999 for primary pupils from Year 6, and the alternative curriculum courses at the colleges for Year 11, are indicators of success in this area. There are some very good cross-curricular links. In particular, the expressive arts initiative in Year 9 which links work in dance, drama, music and history using the industrial revolution as the theme. The English and history departments co-operate well in putting the Able Pupil policy into effect.
- 41 The curriculum is enhanced and broadened for pupils through a very good range of extra-curricular activities. For example, a substantial number of pupils benefit from the school's annual productions and the large number of extra-curricular choir and instrumental groups in music. The physical education department organises a wide range of competitive team games and offers residential experience in the form of skiing and netball tours. The English department runs a useful reading club, organises writing competitions and, in partnership with the history department, takes pupils to battlefield cemeteries in Belgium. There are regular theatre trips as part of their work on literature. Design and technology and information technology departments have well attended lunchtime and after school workshops. The special needs area organises a well-used homework facility.
- 42 Since the last inspection the school has introduced some new initiatives designed to improve

teaching and learning, such as the sharing of examples of good practice on in-service training courses. There is a climate of general acceptance that individual teachers as well as departments have much to learn from each other and good practice is being well shared.

Assessment

- 43 Since the previous inspection the policies for assessment, recording and reporting have been revised and continue to be developed. Assessment arrangements in the school are now better timed to link with the cycle of regular reporting and meetings for parents, a criticism in the last report.
- 44 Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through subject reports that have a common layout and headings. The arrangements for reporting are effective and informative, although some parents are critical of the relatively large amount of general detail given about courses of study, compared to the smaller amount of information specific to their particular children. At the end of Key Stage 3 a summary sheet of expected National Curriculum levels for each pupil accompanies their report. This provides statutory information about pupils' attainment, although in art, music and physical education reference to National Curriculum requirements and end of Key Stage descriptors is not sufficiently clear.
- 45 Clear guidelines for day-to-day assessment and marking are provided in the school policy and they are interpreted and modified slightly by individual subject departments. There are differences in departmental practice according to subject needs and these are drawn together by the whole school approach adopted in the reporting to parents. Marking of pupils' work is at least satisfactory and there is consistency in the way it is done except, for example, in religious education. Assessment of pupils' achievements is satisfactory overall, with examples of good practice in history and dance. However, further development is needed in physical education, to include an on-going pupil profile, which would record pupils' attainments as they move through the school. In English, day-to-day marking is carried out regularly and is usually constructive and helpful, but in mathematics insufficient information on pupils' attainment is held at departmental level to enable the effective tracking of pupils as they move through the school. Work is carefully assessed at the end of each design and technology unit and there are effective systems for recording the progress of pupils. However, there are not yet systems to monitor the progress of individuals against their potential.
- 46 Records available to departments include information on National Curriculum tests, and school and departmental testing. These records are used to support the teaching but there is ineffective use of the records at school and departmental level to monitor and track the performance of individual pupils, classes and year groups as they move through the school from year to year.
- 47 Statutory requirements are met for those pupils with special educational needs who have statements. The school has developed an effective format for identifying termly targets for other pupils with special educational needs. This provides much helpful information and guidance to staff. Present arrangements, however do, not ensure that progress towards the achievement of these targets is monitored effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 48 The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development, despite the limited formal provision in assemblies and form tutor periods. Pupils are generally reflective and attentive in the twice-weekly assemblies, but there is no arrangement for an act of collective worship on the other three days. In the assembly plans seen, material on multi-faith themes and on aspects of worship and belief from other cultures are under-represented. In lessons, pupils' spiritual development is enriched in religious education when Year 9 pupils are asked to reflect on precious things and on the qualities that make them stand out as 'beyond price'. In expressive arts pupils gain insight into feelings and learn something of the spiritual uniqueness of each human being. Their involvement in dance and drama helps pupils to understand such things as the pain of slavery and oppression. In English, pupils experience the spiritual power of poetry and of creating their own poetry and narrative. In music, pupils experienced awe and wonder when listening to the "Dance Macabre" and in geography when confronted by the power of nature in earthquakes and volcanoes.
- 49 The school's provision for pupils' moral development is good. The Code of Conduct focuses clearly on rights and responsibilities. It was drawn up after consultation with pupils. Pupils and parents attest to the good quality of behaviour in school and to the safe and secure framework in which pupils lead their daily lives. Good behaviour management in school is linked strongly to the good teacher-pupil and home-school relationships that exist and to the mutual respect engendered by them. In music, pupils show respect for each other's compositions and take good care of expensive musical equipment. Moral issues are addressed thoroughly in personal and social education (PSE). Pupils know right from wrong. In religious education there is strong provision for moral education at both key stages. Religious beliefs and practice are explicitly linked to moral choices. Moral issues are also addressed regularly in assemblies. In Year 7 religious education there is a valuable link between God's creation of the world, as presented in Genesis, and the kind of abuse that man visits upon it. In science, pupils are brought to a consideration of the moral issues underlying genetic engineering and cloning. In geography, they are helped to develop respect for the environment, both locally and on a global scale; they learn about the long-term effects of pollution and the destruction of the rain forests. In English, pupils explore many moral issues through literature and in the expressive arts through confrontation with stark moral choices when considering the Black Death in the "Medieval Times" theme.
- 50 The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good. The pastoral system is particularly well organised by heads of year and heads of upper and lower school and offers pupils full support. Parents feel that pupils receive help and guidance of good quality. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with form tutors and are encouraged to think of the school in terms of a partnership between themselves and staff. They are encouraged to enter school before the start of each day and remain after school closes. They have access to very good common room facilities and are eager to come to school early to take advantage of them. Teachers know their pupils well and provide good pastoral and academic support. The fact that form tutors keep their groups as they move through the school helps to strengthen the sense of social cohesion. The school addresses a range of key social issues very well in PSE. Each year group has a nominated charity and supports it fully. Charities supported include: Teenage Cancer Research, Cystic Fibrosis Trust, Stepping Hill Neo-Natal Unit, and Christie's Millennium Appeal. The Werneth School Band and the Werneth Singers provide concerts to support charities. There are strong links with partner primary schools, further education establishments and with local employers. The fact that the school has acquired the status as an "Investor in People" is evidence of its commitment to all members of the school community. Pupils work together amicably in lessons and in a friendly and enquiring spirit. They are at ease with adults and visitors. For example, pupils work in an appreciative way alongside the chef from a local restaurant who visits school

regularly to support practical lessons in food technology.

51 There are many ways in which the school supports pupils' cultural development although there is no formal mechanism for reviewing their effectiveness on a school wide basis. The expressive arts department makes a major contribution and opens up pupils' cultural horizons both within formal curricular provision and in extra-curricular drama, music and dance. The way in which it forges cross-curricular links to extend pupils' understanding of areas of human experience is very valuable. For example, aspects of the Industrial Revolution – such as the tyranny of machines – are explored in dance and drama. The poignancy and injustice of slavery is brought alive in African dance and Soul music. Conflict and racism are explored cleverly in drama through a theme on American Indians and white settlers. The expressive arts department has a fine regional reputation for staging many productions of high quality. This work is also valuable in that it involves large numbers of pupils from across the full age and ability range. It is also significant that pupils and parents regard expressive arts provision very highly. The Millennium Project, preparations for which were nearing completion at the time of the inspection, is a splendid undertaking which engages with a whole range of cultural issues: war, street life, poverty, equality, the environment, war and peace, respect, care for others. There are also cultural links with local theatres and the Werneth Band has played at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. In art, pupils visit local galleries and in art lessons they consider various European and non-European artists and movements. In modern foreign languages, pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to the cultures and civilisations of those language speakers. To this end there are foreign language visits to Flanders and Berlin and opportunities to take part in other forms of foreign travel such as ski-trips. Although there are some good examples of engagement with multi-cultural development, particularly in religious education where pupils learn about major world faiths, the school does not make the most of the opportunities for pupils to learn about the richness and diversity of cultures other than those of Western Europe. It recognises that it needs to provide further planned opportunities for pupils to learn about life in the wider multi-cultural society in which they will live when they leave the district.

57 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

52 Werneth fulfils the commitment in its school code to care about learning and people. The very good practice found at the time of the last inspection is still much in evidence. There is an understanding and sympathetic environment and the very good relationships that pervade the school enhance the quality of support and guidance which is given. Good systems are in place to monitor the academic progress of pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs. In the latter case the learning support service provides valuable assistance with an input that makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress.

53 Form tutors stay with their class throughout their years at Werneth and the daily interaction with pupils enables them to offer very well informed support and guidance. This helps to build pupils' confidence and assists them to cope effectively with everyday life. A well-structured programme of careers education and guidance, beginning as early as Year 7, ensures that all pupils develop an increasing awareness of the world of work. As they reach Key Stage 4 they are given opportunities to reflect on their future and receive well focused advice from the careers service to prepare them for the next stage in their development.

54 Exemplary efforts are made by the school to improve overall levels of pupils' attendance and particularly of those few pupils whose attendance is very irregular. Recording of achievement and reporting procedures to parents are meticulous. Pastoral managers work very closely with the education welfare officer to monitor all absences and encourage all pupils to take advantage of the wide range of educational opportunities offered by the school.

- 55 The headteacher and staff have been successful in establishing a climate of good behaviour. The whole school policy has been revised since the last inspection with an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of everyone in the school community. Pupils are very familiar with the tenets of this policy and are well aware of the action to take should they have concerns about bullying. The effectiveness of procedures owes much to the dedication and industry of the heads of lower and upper school who are always accessible and available to support both staff and pupils.
- 56 The school complies fully with statutory requirements and follows appropriate guidance in its procedures for child protection. The well-structured programme for personal and social education helps to raise awareness of the dangers of abuse amongst pupils. Staff with designated responsibilities are familiar with regulations and requirements.
- 57 Governors have a very responsible attitude towards health and safety matters. They have appointed a sub group that works closely with the site manager, himself a governor, to assess and monitor any areas of concern. The annual risk assessment is of high quality. It is submitted to the full governing body and is regularly updated. Health and safety issues in curriculum areas are incorporated into the appropriate subject policies and are effectively monitored by heads of department. The governors are well aware of areas that require attention in the school premises and have prioritised them for action. No further health and safety risks were identified during the inspection.

63 **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 58 Parents have expressed strong support for the school. They find the staff very approachable and the great majority of parents consider themselves well informed about the curriculum and about the progress of their children. Information provided for parents is good, including the prospectus, the regular newsletters, curricular information and the twice-yearly reports on pupils. Parents are always well involved in discussions about the subject choices of their children and consultation evenings provide opportunities to discuss progress and any problems. Homework diaries provide an increasingly well used means of communicating with teachers in a routine and informal way.
- 59 The only significant weakness is in the dissemination of information about pupils with special educational needs. The information provided for all parents through the governors' report to parents, relating to arrangements and provision for special educational needs, and the arrangements to inform parents, where appropriate, of their child's special educational needs and to keep them fully informed of their progress do not meet statutory requirements
- 60 There is an active and successful parent teacher association which raises valuable funds to supplement the school's learning resources. Much appreciated parental support is also forthcoming to assist with the many expressive arts productions which are such a central feature of school life. The quality and consistency of this support makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. The intellectual and personal development of pupils benefits from their involvement in these public performances and from their activities in competitive sport. Links with the community have been extended since the previous inspection, to include weekly attachments for some pupils to local businesses especially as part of the alternative curriculum offered to pupils whose needs are best met by spending some time in a work environment. All pupils are involved in fundraising for charity and all gain from the input of visiting speakers, particularly those who conduct assemblies and lead collective acts of worship on behalf of the school. Through these various links with the community pupils gain a greater understanding of society and some awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

66 Leadership and management

- 61 Leadership, management and most aspects of the school's day to day organisation are all good.
- 62 The school's aims are well thought out, clearly expressed in very straightforward language, and essentially attainable. Considerable progress is being made to meet them all.
- 63 The headteacher, in post for just over two years, leads the school calmly, with quiet determination and skill and with a gentle but effective touch on the rudder. He builds well upon the management structures inherited from his predecessor, whilst making them more consultative. Pupils, parents, staff and governors all have confidence in his leadership.
- 64 The senior management group of deputy heads and senior teachers is very experienced and pulls together well. The combined strength of this group is a powerful factor in the school's very positive ethos and continuing success.
- 65 Membership of the governing body has changed a great deal since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, it remains well briefed and effective in its oversight of the work of the school, continually striving to improve itself through, amongst other things, weekend in-service training sessions and attendance at departmental and task group meetings.
- 66 Pastoral management is a great strength of the school. Worthy of special note is the excellent supervision of the lower and upper school common rooms before school, and at break and lunch times, a significant factor in the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils feel secure and have a variety of activities to interest them and keep them in school.
- 67 School development planning is a well-integrated and whole school process. The present plan is sensible and has a realistic time scale. Its three overarching aims of: raising achievement for all; using information technology (IT) to support teaching and learning; and supporting and monitoring school and department self review, are carefully chosen and well reflected in separate departmental plans throughout the school.
- 68 Subject leadership is effective, with particular strength in the co-ordination of expressive arts. Imaginative initiatives such as 'lessons are for learning' have brought about a climate where sharing expertise and ideas with each other is becoming routine, to the benefit of everyone in school. However, there is room for improvement in the monitoring of teaching in geography, for instance, to ensure that less confident teachers benefit sufficiently from the advice and support of more experienced colleagues.
- 69 Through the hard work of the special educational needs co-ordinator and the support of her colleagues much has been achieved in terms of improving and further developing the quality of special educational provision across the school. There are no arrangements in place to enable her to monitor the quality of provision across the curriculum or to provide appropriate support and guidance to subject leaders and staff within subject areas.

- 70 Day-to-day systems and the school's general organisation are good, due to the effective work of non-teaching as well as teaching staff. An exception is in the timetable scheduling. Grouping most lessons together in long double periods on a fortnightly rota solves problems of congestion and cuts movement to a minimum. It creates periods of time which are well suited to the work in some subject areas, such as design and technology. However, it creates in other subject areas, such as modern foreign languages, lessons that are too long for some pupils, and leads to intervals between consecutive lessons in some subjects of well over a week. This hinders effective continuity in learning.
- 71 The school's commitment to equal opportunities successfully embraces the aspirations of all pupils. They have access to a broad and relevant curriculum with particular strengths in expressive arts. The school continues to monitor overall the separate achievements of girls and boys and until this last year could claim some success in improving the relative performances of boys.
- 72 The school meets almost all of its statutory requirements. Exceptions include the provision of a daily act of collective worship, some of the cross-curricular aspects of IT and aspects of the dissemination of special educational needs information to parents.
- 78 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
- 73 The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers to cover well the subjects it teaches. There is generally a good match between teachers' initial qualifications and the subjects taught. The deployment of teachers is fair and most teach the full range of the age and ability of pupils. Whilst both the proportion of time spent by teachers in the classrooms and the overall size of classes are average, the latter varies widely. In those classes that have well over thirty pupils, activities are sometimes severely restricted.
- 74 The school devotes a larger than average proportion of its funding to non-teaching staff, emphasising the priority it gives to supporting pupils and teachers in as many ways as it can. Consequently, there is good technical support in science, art, technology, information technology, and the school's excellent print room is well staffed with two experienced and very capable print technicians who provide a very good service throughout the school. The well qualified and full time librarian, appointed in the term preceding the inspection is beginning to have a significant effect on a library, which is full of potential and improving rapidly. Efficient and helpful office staff help enormously in the smooth running of the day-to-day life of the school.
- 75 Staff development is well managed by an imaginative structure of groups of teachers, who determine priorities for the whole school, closely linked to the school development plan. The appraisal of teachers is carried out effectively on a two-year cycle. It yields targets that form the basis of individual staff development and which contribute towards the Investors in People Award. New and newly qualified teachers are competently introduced to the procedures of the school and are well supported during their period of induction.

- 76 Since the last inspection the numbers of pupils in each year group have increased, with the result that some aspects of the accommodation are now barely sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum and class sizes have had to increase. The school makes good use of the available accommodation, but while some rooms are suitable for large classes others are cramped, which inhibits the teaching. There is insufficient laboratory accommodation. At present nearly 30 science periods per cycle have to be taught in classrooms. Attempts have been made to arrange rooms for specific subjects as close together as possible to aid communication and efficiency. In areas such as English, mathematics, science and humanities this has not been possible and much teaching still occurs in mobile classrooms which have not been replaced and are now in need of repair. The quality of display in classrooms and corridors is high and the two common rooms are well situated to play a valuable part in pupils' learning and recreation.
- 77 The main building is generally in a reasonable state of repair for its age. The inside is very well cared for, a testament to the hard work of the site management and cleaning staff. The carpeting of large areas of the school and considerable improvements in corridor and movement areas are evidence of a clear and effective long-term improvement plan. The external fabric presents a more mixed picture. Improvements to the roof are noticeable but it still leaks quite badly in the art area, which detracts from the best efforts of pupils and staff to enhance the appearance of this working space. The all-weather pitch is damaged beyond repair and can no longer be used; this severely limits activities in physical education. The quality of the accommodation for information technology has improved in recent years, and room 55 provides a much more suitable setting for the support of pupils with special educational needs. The food studies area remains dated and barely adequate for its purpose. Overall the large site is very well managed by staff and governors. It is kept tidy and free from litter and the governors have identified a wide range of repairs and renewals as part of their regular site audit. Although wheelchair access to some parts of the ground floor is now possible, that to the upper floor is not.
- 78 All departments have sufficient equipment and materials to teach the National Curriculum and other courses. However, many items are old and will soon need replacing. Spending on learning resources is close to the national average in recent years but there are shortages of textbooks in religious education, history, physical education and science. Although resources in history have improved, there is limited access to computer equipment in music. Resources for special educational needs are of a high quality and are well used.
- 79 The central provision of computers in the IT rooms is good, with satisfactory access to modern machines. However the access to this provision has until recently been severely limited for some subjects such as religious education, geography, modern foreign languages, science and history. In many departments there is a shortage of up to date machines which, with the shortage of suitable software, restricts the use of IT across the curriculum.
- 80 The well-organised library is in a good central location to play an important part in school life. Generally it is well stocked for most subjects although some books are old and need replacing. The stock of books is supplemented by the central library service. It has ten computers, all with access to the Internet, with plans for a further five, and a small collection of CD-ROMs to help with individual research.

86 **The efficiency of the school**

- 81 Financial planning is very good. The budget is based on a clear written statement of the school's aims and objectives. The medium-term education plan outlines the intended use of resources over the next three years, identifying, with reasons, the areas that are to be given priority for spending. The governing body has established timetables and procedures to ensure that all relevant factors are considered at the appropriate time. The Finance Task Group, ably chaired by a deputy head teacher, prepares detailed estimates of expenditure and income in advance of the financial year to allow for consideration of spending priorities and approval by the governing body. There is a clear, identifiable link between the school's annual budget and its school development plan.
- 82 The governing body is represented on the Finance Task Group and is fully informed about priorities and procedures. School development planning is well focused on the improvement of educational outcomes, and expenditure is clearly related to this.
- 83 Priorities for the current year are carefully costed. The small budget surplus of less than one per cent leaves the school vulnerable to unanticipated problems but reflects the detail in which the budget is prepared and the tightness of the budget over recent years. Unit costs remain low.
- 84 The school makes good use of grants for specific purposes to further its educational objectives. Most funding for teaching pupils with special educational needs is kept centrally but the school allocates almost six per cent of its delegated budget to supplement the allocation for staffing and learning resources in this area.
- 85 Staff deployment is generally efficient. The allocation of teaching resources to the departments is subject to continuing review. A small number of lessons are taught by non specialists but this was rarely seen to have a detrimental effect on the quality of education. The pupil teacher ratio is about average but some class sizes are very small; one Year 11 class observed had just three pupils for a double period. There is a weakness in the use of teaching time during the tutor periods at the start of the day. On three days each week, when classes are not involved in assemblies or the pastoral programme, there are 25 minute periods when, after registration, teachers engage in unspecified administrative tasks and pupils tend to talk amongst themselves. During the inspection week there was no evidence of a routine for pupils to carry on with work during this time and no teaching or learning was seen to take place.
- 86 The scheduling of lessons mainly into double periods on a fortnightly cycle solves a number of problems: largely of congestion due to narrow corridors and of movement around the site. The unintended consequences of long intervals between lessons in particular subjects and the difficulties of sustaining some pupils' full attention for up to 100 minutes at a time are causing the school to re-think the overall effectiveness of its present scheduling policy.
- 87 Accommodation is used effectively. Senior management is aware of shortcomings, for example that several departments are split between different parts of the school, and regularly reviews the facilities to see where improvements can be made. Teachers have access to adequate learning resources and use them efficiently to support their teaching.
- 88 Financial procedures and controls are very good. The computerised management information system is fully understood by staff and used well. The school's finance policy makes provision for sound internal financial controls to ensure the reliability and accuracy of its financial transactions. The most recent audit was carried out in March 1999 and confirmed the good practice of the school. The few recommendations were of a minor nature and have all been implemented.

Administrative routines are carried out in an unobtrusive but efficient way, giving clear support to teachers and allowing them to focus fully on their work.

- 89 Taking into account the low unit costs; the high quality of financial planning; the good overall quality of educational provision, especially the teaching; and examination and test results which are above average in comparison with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the school is judged to give good value for money.

95 **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

95 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

95 **English**

- 90 In the 1998 National Curriculum tests in English held at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' performance exceeded the national average at level 5 and above and at level 6 and above. Between 1996-98 average levels in the tests have been close to the national average both for boys and girls. These results represented an improvement over the previous year and were also good in that, when compared to those obtained in similar schools, the performance at level 5 and above was above average, while the performance at level 6 and above was well above average.
- 91 At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was close to the national average. Although girls at Werneth scored more highly than boys, in line with national differences between the results of boys and girls, the boys' results were slightly above the national average for boys. In GCSE English Literature, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was close to the national average. Again, girls outperformed boys and the boys' results were slightly higher than boys' results nationally. GCSE results in English Language in 1999 were appreciably higher than in 1998. This represents a considerable achievement. In particular, the girls' performance has improved markedly. GCSE results in English Literature are broadly in line with the 1998 results. Interpretation of all 1999 GCSE results should, however, be viewed with caution owing to the lack of national comparators at the time of the inspection.
- 92 Pupils' standard of English on entry to the school is broadly average, although scrutiny of their work suggests that standards are rather higher in speaking and listening and reading than in writing. Despite some fluctuations in National Curriculum test results in recent years, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are average with pupils making satisfactory progress during the key stage. At Key Stage 3, pupils are deriving considerable benefit from a strong literacy initiative. In Year 7, pupils receive regular literacy lessons as part of their English entitlement. This provision is further supplemented by designated time for reading at the beginning of each lesson and by reading clubs. This well co-ordinated initiative is providing pupils with a real boost to the acquisition of literacy skills and represents a strength in provision. At Key Stage 4, pupils' work and their performance in lessons indicate that standards are broadly average at the end of the key stage. However, pupils are making good progress at Key Stage 4. This is borne out in the improved 1999 GCSE English Language results. In particular, higher attainers are achieving particularly well and reach standards which are good for their abilities. For example, Shakespeare is taught in a lively and interactive style with teachers using video-recordings and media techniques to bring texts alive for pupils. The quality of pupils' written responses to provision of this kind is good. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are making satisfactory progress.
- 93 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Behaviour is also good in the majority of lessons with levels of concentration well sustained. In a few instances, pupils in lower attaining groups become restless and lack application, usually toward the end of the very long lessons which are a common feature in the school timetable. Nonetheless, teachers make very careful provision for the double periods and provide a variety of carefully sequenced activities to help maintain levels of interest. Group and paired work is well organised and carefully directed with pupils encouraged from an early age to take the initiative and work co-operatively with their peers. Classroom relationships are good and teachers have good knowledge of their pupils.

- 94 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is strongest at Key Stage 4 where teachers are most confident with the content of courses delivered to pupils. Teaching is good in the majority of lessons; it is very good in a quarter and satisfactory in a further quarter of lessons. Most of the very good teaching seen was at Key Stage 4. Teachers generally explain things well to pupils and provide them with regular feedback on how to improve their work. In most lessons the pace of learning matches pupils' needs. In the strongest lessons the degree of challenge was most marked. In a Year 11 class the teacher's strong subject knowledge enabled her to help pupils gain sharp insights into the nature of symbolism in Golding's "Lord of the Flies". Pupils were really pushed to refine their arguments through teacher-led discussion of real quality and vigour. In another lesson at Key Stage 4, the teacher provided a succession of intensive individual tutorials in which pupils were given encouragement and explicit help on how to improve their work. Teachers are keen to celebrate pupils' achievements, not least through the excellent displays of pupils' work which are a feature of all English classrooms and which serve to dignify pupils' best efforts. The department is currently evaluating its teaching to single sex groups at Key Stage 4 as part of its commitment to lifting boys' attainment. Homework is set regularly and the quality of homework assignments is good. In a small number of lessons, especially in Year 7, teachers spent rather too much time on procedural detail, overdirected pupils' learning and missed key opportunities to strengthen pupils' understanding. In particular, over-emphasis on skills acquisition in some Key Stage 3 lessons caused pupils' interest to wane. The use of drafting is unevenly applied in both key stages. Day-to-day marking is carried out regularly and is usually constructive and helpful.
- 95 Schemes of work in Key Stage 3 reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and are centred on "success and enjoyment". However, in their current form they allow teachers too much latitude in interpreting the way in which content is to be delivered. Consequently, there is too much variation between classes in the weighting attached to elements within the schemes. For example, the different approaches to the teaching of key language skills is quite marked and in some classes reduces the rate of progress in the development of writing. Continuity and progression in learning at Key Stage 3 is less good than it could be due to a lack of uniformity in the delivery of schematic content; and a shortage of common assignments. Teachers are presently unable to monitor the effectiveness both of curricular provision and pupils' learning as successfully as they should, both within and across year groups. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are taught regularly and the emphasis on early acquisition of literacy skills is helping to increase rates of progress, particularly in reading in Year 7. Satisfactory provision is made within schemes of work for pupils with special educational needs. Curricular provision at Key Stage 4 is balanced and well taught. Since the previous inspection, information technology (IT) provision has improved, although there is scope to develop it further. There is a good variety of extra-curricular provision in English. Pupils have visited the battlefield cemeteries in Belgium as part of their work on war in literature, and enjoy regular theatre trips to Stratford and other venues. Pupils' poetry has been published in the "Stockport Schools" anthology and prominent writers make regular visits to the school. English makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of achievement meet statutory requirements. However, the department does not make sufficient use of the full range of available attainment measures to monitor the progress of individual pupils, particularly those on the GCSE grade C/D borderline. Nor does it assess the relative differences in the baseline attainment, and subsequent performance, of year groups of pupils as they move through the school.
- 96 The department is staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. It makes good use of the resources available to it and classrooms where English is taught are partly grouped together and very well maintained. Planning is efficient and key targets for improvement are clearly established. Teachers work together energetically and with good spirit. The department benefits from clear and decisive leadership.

Mathematics

- 97 In the 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, 58 per cent of pupils gained the expected level 5 and above compared to the national average of 60 per cent. These results are close to the national average and in line with those gained in similar schools.
- 98 In GCSE examinations in 1998, the proportion of pupils achieving at least grade C was below average at 39 per cent of pupils. Results have fluctuated over recent years and there is no clear trend. There are no consistent differences in the results of girls and boys. The proportion achieving A* to G grades in the last two years was above average at 98 per cent.
- 99 Pupils' attainment on entering the school is average and they make satisfactory progress in the Induction Course in Year 7. Pupils extend their understanding of mathematical ideas and the use of mathematical skills throughout Key Stage 3 and there is good progress, particularly in number and in developing pupils' knowledge of algebra. There is improvement in calculation and the use of number in problems, for example in the recognition of number patterns; and there is regular practice of number skills in activities and games, such as a 'Factors Game' and mental arithmetic 'Bingo'. Towards the end of the key stage the higher attaining pupils show skills in algebraic manipulation, the solution of equations and the use of formulae; and all pupils show competence at an appropriate level in these topics. Pupils of all levels of achievement are able to apply mathematics ideas to problems. Low attaining pupils are well provided for in mathematics and their courses include a full range of mathematical topics, for example in the use of simple fractions and percentages.
- 100 At Key Stage 4 the average standards already achieved are maintained throughout the key stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress in number, algebra and shape and space. Higher attaining pupils are able to interpret quadratic expressions, and extend their skills in graph plotting and solving equations. All pupils show improvement in the use of number, in algebraic manipulation and in the application of trigonometry. Low attaining pupils extend their knowledge and ability to use number and algebraic skills in solving simple problems. The full benefits of the scheme of work and the developments in numeracy are not yet seen at Key Stage 4 and the progress in this key stage is satisfactory. The low level of recall of multiplication tables and mental arithmetic skills by a few Key Stage 4 pupils limits progress in lessons.
- 101 Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for in the mathematical content of courses in both key stages and standards of progress are satisfactory. Individual education programmes for pupils are available although there is little targeting of mathematical needs.
- 102 Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning and they are interested and well motivated in mathematics lessons. Behaviour is good and this promotes effective learning. Pupils given opportunities to work independently, as in the investigatory topics, do so responsibly and sensibly.
- 103 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. There are examples of very good teaching and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching has variety, which includes the practice of number work and investigatory activities in which pupils look for patterns and generalisations, and all pupils are involved in activities of this kind. Very limited computing facilities are available but very effective use is made of hand-held computers. There are examples of good teaching with classes of all levels of attainment. For example, in group-working involving a range of revision activities with a mixed ability class, the development of vocabulary and ideas of correlation with a class of higher attaining pupils and the use of block graphs to illustrate statistical data with a low attaining class. In these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils. Overall the management of the classes is good. Less effective teaching occurs in a few classes. For example, in some Year 7 sets where the needs of the full range of pupils are not fully

met and in the longer lessons where pupils' interest is not always fully maintained.

- 104 Requirements of the National Curriculum and statutory assessment arrangements in mathematics are satisfied. All pupils at Key Stage 4 have access to the GCSE courses. Schemes of work of good quality provide a sound framework for building on previous work and the guidance given to teachers is supportive and helpful. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced in teaching GCSE courses. Arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress are in place and are effective in some respects. For example, day-to-day assessment is linked to the schemes of work and is used to influence and guide the teaching and the marking of pupils' work satisfies school and departmental requirements. However, at present insufficient information on pupils' attainment is held at departmental level to enable the effective tracking of pupils as they move through the school.
- 105 The leadership of the department is sound, providing a direction to the department in response to recent national developments in the teaching of numeracy, the development of the scheme of work and steps towards the monitoring of teaching. The day-to-day organisation and management are good. Appropriate priorities are identified in the departmental development plan although there is a lack of detail under some headings. The programme of professional development includes lesson observation, the identification of training needs and numeracy. The accommodation is satisfactory and well looked after with displays of pupils' work and lists of keywords required in the mathematics teaching. The resources in use are of good quality and effectively support the work of the department.

111 Science

- 106 In the 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, 58 per cent of pupils gained the expected level 5 and above compared to the national average of 56 per cent. These results are close to the national average and above average compared to schools with pupils of similar social characteristics. There was little difference between the relative performances of girls and boys. The assessment of the teachers closely matched these results. Over the last three years, attainment has improved significantly. In class, attainment is close to the national average with pupils having a sound grasp of basic scientific ideas.
- 107 In the GCSE examination results for double science in 1998, the proportion of grades A*-C was above the national average, an improvement upon the previous year. Boys performed better than girls exactly as in the year before. Results are improved again in 1999 although there are as yet no figures to make national comparisons. In 1999 the girls have overtaken the boys especially in the proportion of the higher grades. In class, attainment is slightly above average with pupils refining their understanding of scientific concepts.
- 108 Over Key Stage 3, both boys and girls make satisfactory progress. High attaining pupils make good progress; average and low attaining ones less so. In many cases, the rate of progress is dependent on pupils' behaviour and concentration. Pupils acquire a wide range of concepts such as energy, chemical change and biological processes as well as skill in handling scientific apparatus. Pupils with special needs progress particularly well in learning basic ideas when they are supported by teachers from the learning support department, with which there is close co-operation. Although girls progress better than boys across Key Stage 4, both maintain steady progress in learning about the flow of electricity and the structure of atoms, how light can be split into colours, and the importance of photosynthesis to the existence of life. The progress of lower attaining pupils is often hindered by inattention and short concentration spans. Pupils with special needs continue to do well and nearly all gain at least a grade G in the GCSE examination. For a number of pupils, comprehension of concepts is impeded by poor number skills.

- 109 Generally pupils show interest in the subject. They are enthusiastic about practical work, particularly investigations, and are keen to answer questions when asked. However concentration is often short, particularly when pupils are seated for long periods of time, and this gives rise to irrelevant talking. Pupils relate well to the teachers and co-operate closely with each other when undertaking experiments. At Key Stage 4, some pupils sustain their concentration while others appear disengaged from their studies. In general they are courteous, friendly and helpful but, for a minority, learning is peripheral and this leads to some antagonism with less skilful teachers.
- 110 In lessons seen the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory and it was good in half of the lessons. It was mainly satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and mainly good at Key Stage 4. All lessons are satisfactorily planned and in the best the objectives are clearly stated and shared with the pupils. Relationships with pupils are friendly and supportive and all are expected to do as well as they can. Pupils are usually well managed, although in a few instances repeated admonishing of pupils hinders the flow of lessons. Teachers use well a wide range of resources, including the overhead projector in conjunction with worksheets, to encourage pupil participation. Teachers question the pupils about what they know, but often this demands only straightforward answers and does not probe for deeper understanding. Teachers set suitable homework regularly but seldom use it as a launch for the next lesson. They mark it conscientiously, following the department's policy on grading and giving encouraging remarks. A few science teachers still use unimaginative methods in the organisation of how pupils write up experimental work, constraining them too tightly within old fashioned and inflexible writing frames.
- 111 Schemes of work, although presented in different formats for each of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes, reflect the National Curriculum satisfactorily and conform to statutory requirements. The schemes contain plans for building on earlier work at Key Stage 3 but make little reference to work covered earlier at Key Stage 2 and do not state specific objectives for individual lessons. The assessment of pupils' performance is thorough; although the results are used mainly for grouping pupils into ability sets rather than for tracking individual performance. The department is well managed, with clear policies and direction. It fosters good relationships and aims towards the highest standards for the pupils. Teaching is monitored and this encourages collaboration amongst the staff. The teachers are well-qualified and are competently supported by reliable technicians who are not sufficiently integrated into the running of the department, by attendance at meetings and by the provision of work schemes in the preparation rooms. Resources are well used, although the use of computers is restricted by limited access. There is a shortage of textbooks, which limits study at home. The accommodation is insufficient, so that nearly thirty lessons have to be taught outside laboratories. The laboratories are showing their age quite badly and one in particular is too small to allow practical work with large groups of pupils.

117 **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

117 **Art**

- 112 Attainment in art at the end of Key Stage 3 meets national expectations. Some pupils do not receive specialist art teaching until Year 8 when the timetabling of three teachers across two classes gives every pupil access to specialist skills. Progress soon quickens and is satisfactory across the key stage as a whole. Year 9 pupils have a clear understanding of the basic elements of art and can carry an idea forward in a number of directions. They design teapots to be constructed in clay, based on the shape of everyday objects such as shoes and pieces of fruit. They demonstrate good understanding of the process necessary to screen-print images onto their tee-shirts. Most pupils have quite refined skills in objective drawing but there is still a sizeable

minority where pupils rely unduly on copying.

- 113 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national average and matches the standards set in the school in recent years. The GCSE results in 1998 were particularly good with just over 70 per cent of the pupils entered gaining passes between A* and C, which compares favourably with the national figure of 59.4 per cent. The work currently being produced indicates that standards remain high. Pupils' skills of drawing, painting and composition are well developed. Their ability to incorporate information from the work of artists and photographers into their own work by analysis rather than by copying is well established. Girls' attainment is significantly higher than that of the boys at both key stages. Progress at Key Stage 4 is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout both key stages. The reluctance of some pupils to complete homework on time is a hindrance to progress at both key stages, especially those older pupils who have chosen to study the subject.
- 114 In most of the lessons observed the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils was satisfactory or better, with the best response at Key Stage 4, where it is particularly good. Some very interesting, original work, inspired by the different skins of animals and reptiles is being done by Year 10 pupils following their recent visit to Chester Zoo. They are making excellent use of their drawings, photographs and postcards to produce highly coloured, dramatically designed packaging. A strength of the department is in the quality of pupil - teacher relationships. The pupils recognise their teachers' enjoyment of the subject and in turn respect their views and opinions. They show similar respect for their classmates, the fabric of the department and its resources. Pupils show enjoyment, application and involvement and are pleased to work in small groups or independently. Apparent also is the positive way pupils take advantage of the range of processes and techniques they meet in the department. They are comfortable working with torn paper, collage, clay, pastel, wire and a range of related materials, as well as the traditional painting and drawing.
- 115 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is generally good. The small number of unsatisfactory lessons results from a combination of teachers who are either new to the profession or are new to the subject, linked to some disappointingly poor behaviour from a number of boys in Year 8. At Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching is good and often very good. Lessons are begun with particularly interesting and stimulating discussions about the pupils' work and the influence of artists such as Henri Rousseau and Piet Mondrian. The specialist teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject is very good. Their expectations are communicated clearly to their pupils, especially at Key Stage 4. At both key stages teachers' methods of planning and organisation are satisfactory or better, as is the quality of their day-to-day assessment. They make good use of time and resources. Homework, which usually complements and reinforces classwork, is set and collected regularly. Teachers lead by example and expect high standards of behaviour. The way teachers use assessment to inform their teaching is another strength of the department, but it falls short of the formalised marking policy that could give pupils a better understanding of national standards.
- 116 The balanced and particularly comprehensive curriculum challenges pupils of all ages and abilities intellectually, physically and personally whilst preparing them for the next stage of their education. There is equality of access to learn and make progress except in the use of information technology. This weakness was identified in the previous inspection and little has been done to remedy it. The department's system of recording attainment on record cards is effective. The work of the department gives pupils a chance to appreciate their surroundings and the diversity and richness of other European and non-European cultures. The curriculum helps breed tolerance for other people, their feelings and beliefs.

117 Sensitive leadership provides clear direction for the subject. The monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is good. Development planning has improved since the previous inspection but there is a lack of consideration of the implications of time, resources and cost. The teaching staff matches the needs of the curriculum, except in the case of non-specialist teachers and efforts to improve their knowledge should be seen as a priority. The accommodation, with its exciting displays of pupils' paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures, poses problems when in wet weather the leaking roof causes the floor to be dangerously slippery while water running down the wall damages displays of pupils' work. Even allowing for this there is a very good ethos for learning. The department is a welcoming, stimulating place.

123 **Design and technology**

118 At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attain standards which are above national expectations. They have a very good understanding of the design process and use it well to produce items of a high standard. For example, in food technology, they plan and make a range of food products such as Italian, Chinese and English dishes suitable for a specialist restaurant. Pupils reach good standards in textiles when they design and make original fabric containers to hold items ranging from sports equipment to pencils. They select appropriate fabrics for both their properties and appearance. In resistant materials, pupils have opportunities to work with a wider range of materials such as wood, plastic and metals which they use to design and make well crafted products, sometimes including electronic circuits. They demonstrate good standards of graphic skills in all aspects of the subject, which they use effectively to communicate design ideas. From the start, pupils evaluate their products against the criteria set for the project, identifying successful features and suggesting possible means of improving the product.

119 At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment matches national expectations. In the 1998 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C matched the national average. The provisional results for 1999 are similar, as they have been over the previous three years. There has been an improvement in the attainment of boys since the previous report. Pupils undertake extended coursework projects for examinations and present their work clearly and logically. They use a good range of hand and machine tools safely and confidently, selecting the most appropriate ones for the job. Practical skills are of a high order and designs often show flair and imagination. For example, in textiles lessons when they make co-ordinated ranges of soft furnishing for bedrooms. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of consumer needs and they design products to meet these needs. They have less understanding of the materials they use and of the scientific concepts underpinning the work. When teachers' guidance is available during lessons and for coursework they produce satisfactory standards. In other circumstances, when teachers are not available to guide them, pupils perform less well.

120 Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3. They quickly learn to use the wider range of equipment available to them and work safely and competently. For example, in Year 7, pupils follow an induction course during their first few weeks when they work in all areas of the department. During this period they establish a good working knowledge of subject related vocabulary which is developed over the key stage. In Year 8, pupils increase their range of skills and techniques through learning to follow the design process. They have opportunities to develop creativity when they design unique products, such as when they design and make model communicators for a film set. Through focussed practical tasks, for instance, techniques for joining and finishing materials, and through using the right tools for the job, pupils develop good standards of craftsmanship. They make good progress with drawing skills, both for formal and three-dimensional drawing and with sketching to communicate ideas.

- 121 Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 9, significantly because of the very good teaching across the year group. They learn to combine the skills and processes they have used in earlier years to design and make products. The evaluation of commercial products is particularly helpful and pupils make good progress with consumer education, learning to identify what makes a good product and how and why it is suitable for the purpose intended. They learn to make good use of this when they design and make their own products.
- 122 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. They consolidate and extend skills and knowledge by designing and making good quality products from wood and metal. They make good progress with construction skills and finishing techniques for different materials, including food and fabric. They make good progress with designing items for particular consumers such as food products for vegetarians and different age groups and toys for children. They learn to focus more on research skills and produce extended projects for coursework. They develop fluency in drawing and use this effectively in graphic products lessons to design three-dimensional models of , for example, camper vans. They make good progress in the skill of presenting work well but less progress understanding concepts and answering questions based on them.
- 123 Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others because teachers and their classmates support them well and they are provided with appropriately challenging work.
- 124 Pupils have very positive attitudes and show high levels of interest and motivation in lessons. They are trustworthy and behave responsibly in practical lessons. Their very good behaviour and interest in the subject is significantly evident and important in food technology lessons. The acoustics of the rooms here make it very difficult for the teacher to be heard and there is a need for pupils to pay particularly close attention for reasons of learning and safety. Pupils concentrate well and work hard to the end of lessons. They take pride in their work and are confident to ask for help when they don't understand.
- 125 Teaching was mainly very good in lessons seen at Key Stage 3. It was mainly good at Key Stage 4. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively to prepare interesting and motivating lessons that are appropriately challenging for all pupils. They conduct lessons at a brisk pace with a good awareness of time targets necessary to complete the work but allowing sufficient time to evaluate the quality of what has been done and the extent of learning at the end of each lesson. The reinforcement of common strands in all areas of the subject, such as the use of the design process and graphic skills, has a positive effect on the progress pupils make. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and there is mutual respect between pupils and teachers. Teachers plan lessons well to include relevance as well as elements of fun and creativity as, for example, when they design and make items for film sets or toys for children. Homework is a significant feature and is well planned with structured learning exercises to reinforce and extend learning in class.
- 126 A good range of courses is provided for pupils in both key stages and pupils have opportunities to enhance their work by using information technology. Since the previous inspection, pupils now use a wider range of resistant materials and they follow courses in control technology, which are well planned and appropriately resourced. Work is carefully assessed at the end of each unit and there are effective systems for recording the progress of pupils. However, there are not yet systems to monitor the progress of individuals against their potential. Assessment information is effectively used to place pupils in appropriate ability sets and to move them up or down if necessary. Pupils are informed of their National Curriculum levels and guidance is provided on what they need to do to improve them at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, pupils are assessed against public examination criteria in Year 11 but in Year 10 their attainment levels are not made

sufficiently clear.

127 Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements in accommodation and the facilities to teach graphic products, electronics and control are now very good. There has been some improvement in the food technology area but not enough to make it an acceptable teaching and learning environment, the open plan rooms being subject to significant noise from other practical classes and corridors. Despite these circumstances, and due to the positive attitudes of teachers and pupils, pupils make good progress in lessons. The department is well managed and there is clear direction for the subject. A very good team spirit has been established in which teachers share good practice and plan curriculum developments together. Good progress has been made in addressing the points made in the previous inspection relating to improved curricular provision and using an increased range of materials. The department is well placed to continue to make good improvement in the future.

133 **Expressive arts**

128 The expressive arts department comprises dance, drama and to a lesser extent music. The aim is to provide “all pupils with a stimulating and developmental arts education through the curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities”. Careful planning through a series of topic webs and inter-related schemes brings together very successfully the component art forms. Further links with other curricular areas, such as history, enables the expressive arts to be used to strengthen pupils’ understanding of, for example, historical, moral, cultural and religious themes. Similarly, pupils bring materials from various subject departments to act as a stimulus in expressive arts lessons. This mutually enriching practice opens up the curriculum in valuable ways. Pupils, who might not, for example, appreciate the full implications of slavery by studying documentary evidence alone, are helped to empathise more strongly through drama and the powerful soul music and the movement of African dance. In this sense, the department is harnessing the arts to provide pupils with sharper insights into a range of human experience and to help unify key areas within the school curriculum. In the ‘Medieval Times’ theme, dance, drama, music and history are drawn together as pupils focus on the Black Death, Renaissance music, courtly dances, pageants and the Church. It is clear from work already done that the expressive arts are making a very strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school. The Millennium Project, preparations for which were nearing completion at the time of the inspection, is involving over 120 pupils and covers a broad range of issues including war and peace, street life, poverty, discovery, the environment, respect, equality, courage and caring.

129 By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in drama meets the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is above the national expectation, many pupils achieving highly for their abilities. Dance is also a significant strength in the school. Attainment is high by the end of Key Stage 3 and continues in examination work at Key Stage 4. The proportion of pupils in dance achieving GCSE A* to C grades in 1998 was above average. Since the previous inspection, analysis of three year trends show that there has been an improvement in attainment. In 1998, the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades GCSE in drama was a little above the national average, with both boys and girls achieving well. The 1999 GCSE results improved on the previous year. In the school’s analysis of comparisons with other subjects drama has a significantly high score which suggests that most pupils are achieving well for their abilities.

130 In lessons and at both key stages, pupils are making good progress overall in expressive arts. Skills acquisition in drama is good and well sequenced, both within and across year groups. Progress in dance is very good at each key stage, particularly in choreography and evaluation. The rate of progress is notably high with clear continuous gains in knowledge and understanding, particularly at Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both

areas throughout the key stages. A particular strength is the systematic way in which the Key Stage 3 homework booklets integrate dance and drama activities. This is an aid to progress and makes connections between the art forms very clear to pupils.

- 131 Pupils' attitudes to learning are never less than good and are sometimes excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, keen to contribute fully and to express their ideas and emotions in discussion. Behaviour is good at both key stages, although the small incidence of restlessness in some Key Stage 3 lessons could be reduced by moving pupils more quickly into warm-up activities and reserving administrative and procedural tasks – such as the giving of homework – for the end of the session. In the Year 11 drama class, pupils are highly attentive. They make sensitive, informed responses when discussing and planning drama and their concentration is well sustained. Groupwork is co-operative and mutually supportive in nature.
- 132 Teaching quality at both key stages is very good in dance, and is the foundation for the high standards of achievement. Organisation and planning is first rate, and a range of teaching styles are employed, all of which are sensitive to pupils' needs, but stimulate and demand high standards of response. Relationships with and within the groups are very good indeed. Teaching in drama is never less than good at both key stages. It is good in more than half of all lessons seen; it is very good in a fifth, and excellent in a further fifth. Teacher directed and teacher-in-role work are of good quality and provide the pupils with high quality exemplar material. Explanations are clear and teachers' delivery is confident. Very strong subject knowledge enables teachers to be responsive to pupils' learning needs. The teaching energises the pupils and moves them swiftly and effortlessly through a sequence of skills; it captivates them and secures their full attention. Warm-up activities are carefully chosen to link with central lesson themes, thus rehearsing skills and techniques that pupils will need to solve problems when creating and performing drama. Teacher intervention is well managed and pupils' evaluation of their work is thorough. When pupils in a Year 11 class were planning for improvisation on documentary drama, the teacher pushed them very hard to refine their actions and responses. The lesson proceeded at a rapid pace; pupils thoroughly enjoyed their work and were kept at full stretch.
- 133 Curricular content in expressive arts is very good. It is broad and balanced. Themes are chosen to enable dance and drama teachers to teach both subjects confidently and broaden their expertise. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning criteria within the schemes are very explicit, with objectives for each lesson carefully recorded. This provision ensures that pupils receive continuity in learning and move sequentially through a programme of skill acquisition in readiness for Key Stage 4. Arrangements for assessment are good. Provision for GCSE is strong. The contribution made within the expressive arts to extra-curricular provision is most marked. In particular, there is a well-established tradition of high quality productions which enjoy regional recognition.
- 134 Planning is very detailed and enables pupils to approach themes from many different directions. The Key Stage 3 schemes enable pupils to engage with challenging themes such as 'Conflict', and 'Communication'. In the 'Industrial Revolution' theme pupils learn through cross-curricular links about factories and inventions such as the Spinning Jenny. Key ideas within the themes – such as life in factories, factory machines – are explored vigorously through drama, music and dance. This aspect of the department's work is excellent. The issues raised in the previous inspection report have been addressed. In particular, the sense of vision for what is to be learned is now a strength.

135 Provision for the expressive arts benefits from strong and dynamic leadership for dance and drama. The style of working within the department is open and participative. Teachers work and plan with rigour and with real insight into what is required to unify the expressive arts successfully. The ethos within the subject is very positive. There is a strong commitment in the department to securing high achievement for all pupils. Resources for learning are of good quality and are used efficiently. Full use is made of the dedicated teaching spaces. Clear management systems and arrangements for curricular review and assessment are good. The amount of time for the expressive arts is satisfactory, although the length of time between lessons can sometimes cause problems of continuity in learning for younger pupils. The good take-up rate of expressive arts at Key Stage 4 reflects the high esteem in which pupils hold them.

141 **Geography**

136 In the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments in 1998, 76 per cent of pupils reached the expected level 5 and above and inspection evidence confirms that standards are slightly above national expectations. At the end of both key stages, girls attained more highly than boys did and the gap has widened in 1999.

137 Attainment in the GCSE examination at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average. In 1998 35 per cent of pupils achieved grades A* to C compared with 49 per cent nationally. Standards look to have improved in 1999 with 47.2 per cent achieving grades A* to C although there are no national comparison figures available yet. Inspection evidence indicates that improvement has been sustained and standards are close to the national average in the present year.

138 Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3. They rapidly acquire an understanding of the nature of the subject and in Year 7 they gain knowledge of planet earth, of the seasons and of day and night. Essential geographical skills such as mapping are developed well and pupils are able to use a variety of maps from atlas to large-scale plans with confidence both for plotting data and acquiring information. Pupils are skilled at analysing photographs including air and satellite pictures. They use instruments to collect weather data and study micro-climates around the school. Whilst subject skills are secure, opportunities to use these outside the classroom are very limited due to few opportunities for even small scale field work. Technical vocabulary is used with confidence and pupils have a good understanding of concepts. For example, Year 8 pupils know of gross domestic product, adult literacy and infant mortality. The key to higher attainment is that they understand the inter relationship between these three ideas and talk about it with confidence. Pupils use prior geographical knowledge to solve problems. Those who opt to continue the subject start Key Stage 4 with a good foundation and make satisfactory progress throughout Years 10 and 11. By the end of the key stage they are able to use knowledge and understanding and the full range of skills, to produce coursework reports of quality. Numeracy and literacy skills are used confidently to enhance the subject, but information technology skills are insufficiently used. At both stages pupils with special educational needs make good progress and this is an improvement since the last inspection. All of this is due to better identification of need, high teacher expectations, good matching of methods to ability and strong encouragement and support. Setting groups by ability has also helped focus teaching more effectively.

139 Pupils have good attitudes to learning at both key stages. Behaviour is excellent in the majority of classes and most pupils enjoy the lessons. A number of Year 10 pupils chose the subject because it was interesting, relevant and topical. When given the opportunity they work well together in groups, listening carefully to opinions. Pupils are confident, join in discussions with enthusiasm and are not afraid to raise issues. They are, however, rarely given the opportunity to

take full responsibility for organising their own learning.

140 The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is always at least satisfactory in every lesson seen and almost one lesson in four is very good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. All staff share an enthusiasm for geography which is transmitted to pupils. The three key members of the department have very strong subject knowledge, which enables them to engage freely in discussion, drawing on rich background information to make lessons interesting and relevant. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and work are high and this is reflected in consistently high quality presentation of maps and diagrams. Planning is good and pupils know what they will learn, as when a Year 7 class ticked off a topic as completed on their term plan. All teachers emphasise technical vocabulary and pupils use it routinely. The best lessons move at a brisk pace and there is a strong sense of purpose. Methods are well chosen for maximum impact and often humour makes lessons memorable, as when a teacher whisked a globe round a Year 7 class to teach about the seasons. A group of very low attaining Year 9 pupils developed a genuine sense of place from studying individual pictures of Italy. By using adjectives to describe their feelings and sharing the results they fulfilled the high expectation and encouragement of the teacher. All teachers use questioning techniques effectively to assess learning, develop thinking and encourage participation in lessons. Homework plays an important role in the subject and tasks are an integral part of the scheme. In the less successful lessons, teachers did not match work to the ability of pupils. For example, in a lesson graphing data, time was wasted for many pupils by the teacher explaining the method when it was already known. This may have been more effective as a group activity for the less confident. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, pupils were not given sufficient freedom to organise their own research of a topic or there was a lack of pace and pupils became bored.

141 The subject is well managed and there is a clear view of how the department should progress. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. An external certificate of achievement has been introduced at Key Stage 4 which meets the needs of less able pupils better than the GCSE. The scheme of work has been revised and now offers more substantial guidance to staff. There has been whole staff in-service training to raise expertise. There continues to be insufficient monitoring of teaching, however, to ensure that the least confident staff benefit from the skills of the more experienced colleagues. Information Technology continues to be insufficiently developed, inhibited by shortages of hardware and software. All work in the department is of a practical nature and pupils have secure research skills. They do not, however, have sufficient opportunity to exercise these skills in the field either around school or in the close neighbourhood and this continues to be an issue from the previous inspection.

147 **History**

142 By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attain standards in line with national expectations. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the topics covered. They acquire historical skills such as the ability to detect bias and how to use primary evidence. For example, pupils studying the lead up to the Agrarian Revolution use source material to list the wasteful methods involved in strip farming.

143 By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils attain standards in line with national expectations and some attainment is above national expectations. In 1998, the proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-C was below the national average. The national figures for 1999 are not available but it would appear that as a result of sustained good teaching and a re-assessment of coursework procedures, the school results have improved. Boys' GCSE results in 1999 almost equalled those of girls. A small group of pupils, who were not entered for the GCSE, gained a Certificate of Achievement. Pupils understand historical issues and present reasoned arguments. Higher attaining pupils writing about the conflicts between Hindus and Muslims show keen historical insight and use the writings of Ghandi effectively as source material. The attainment of boys is

improved since the last report as a result of the varied teaching methods adopted by the department specifically to raise boys' standards.

- 144 Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 3, lower attaining pupils make progress by being encouraged to express their knowledge in the ways that suit them best. For example, one Year 8 group described Tudor Rogues and Vagabonds by means of illustrations with explanatory captions rather than written paragraphs. A higher attaining group studying the same period built on their knowledge of Tudor social classes to distinguish between the genuinely poor and professional beggars. Pupils learn to work independently and to deal with controversy. For example, they understand that the reasons Henry VIII gave for the dissolution of the monasteries were far from his real motives. The term-long homework projects completed in Year 8 and Year 9 give pupils scope to develop their imaginative, research and IT skills.
- 145 Progress across Key Stage 4 is good overall. Pupils learn how to assess an historical problem and are prepared to think independently in order to suggest how it might be dealt with. Coursework, in particular, shows the further development of literacy, investigative and presentational skills. Year 11 pupils progressing steadily towards high GCSE grades make clear their considerable knowledge of Roosevelt's New Deal and an increasingly mature understanding of the issues involved. Year 10 pupils follow the diplomatic complexities leading to World War I, and enjoy working out the relationships between the Great Powers.
- 146 Across both key stages, pupils' attitudes to history are positive. The majority of pupils shows interest in the subject and sustain concentration. Pupils enjoy learning, and in most classes there is a pleasant hardworking atmosphere. Most pupils join in vigorous question and answer sessions. Some are prepared to answer but not to ask their own questions. At Key Stage 3, initiative and independence of thought is shown more in written work, particularly the homework projects completed in Years 8 and 9. In the more relaxed atmosphere of Year 11 classes the extra maturity of pupils gives them social and academic confidence. Pupils are eager to participate, interact well with their teachers and enjoy the intellectual stimulation of controversy connected with, for example, the differing views of professional historians about the Weimar government.
- 147 The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages, and one in seven lesson is very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. The teachers are specialists, enthusiastic and confident in their knowledge of the subject. Management of classes is skilful and well adapted to the needs of individual groups. Planning is effective. Academic expectations are high but realistic. Some teachers set a brisk pace. Pupils are not left behind but sometimes do not have time to think out the answers to questions. Written exercises and homework are carefully explained so that pupils always know what they are expected to do. The links between homework and classwork are clear. Teachers are expert at making connections which catch pupils' interest. For example, Henry VIII's method of punishing traitors and heretics was linked to the execution of "Braveheart". Teachers have the expertise to keep pupils working productively for double lessons. They divide lessons into short stages with time limits for each task, and alternate discussion with written exercises. Sometimes groups are moved physically, for example, to do research in the library. A Year 7 class studying the measurement of time were given dated cards and arranged themselves chronologically around the classroom. Marking is thorough, regular and encouraging.
- 148 The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Assessment procedures are carefully used and the curriculum revised accordingly, for example, to take account of the 1998 results. The department is committed to "providing appropriate teaching and learning experiences for pupils of all abilities". Although classes are grouped by ability, a few mixed ability groups result from option choices. In one group, two levels of textbook, alternative worksheets for low attainers and extension worksheets for high attainers were available and being used in one lesson. The department uses its full IT entitlement and encourages pupils to word-process or desktop publish projects. For example, one class uses the internet to gain access to information on seventeenth century England.

149 The department is well organised and well managed. Its work is monitored effectively by the head of department and a member of the senior management group. Resources are used efficiently. Textbooks and audio-visual material are up-to-date and interesting. Source materials are good, including those collected for archaeological investigative work on the Incas. History rooms are well kept. Wall displays are eye-catching and relevant.

150 The department has made good progress since the last inspection. It is progressive, forward looking and receptive to change. As the development plan makes clear, teachers are committed to improving pupils' performance and to ensuring their enjoyment of the subject. The introduction of more academic controversy, such as the consideration of disputes between professional historians on particular issues is the next challenge.

156 **Information technology**

151 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, where information technology (IT) is taught as a separate subject, is above the national expectation. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop IT skills and knowledge in all aspects of the subject and at the end of the key stage they have a good understanding of the work done and good levels of practical skills. Computers are used competently and programmes and information accessed confidently. Pupils have above average keyboarding skills and reach high standards with word processing and desktop publishing skills. The purpose of and use of spreadsheets to investigate business models is well understood. Pupils set up databases and recognise the efficiency of using computers for this purpose. They write simple procedures to control external devices linked to computers as, for example, when they design and make animated advertising signs.

152 At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is below national expectations for most pupils. Pupils who opt to study IT as a separate course, however, reach satisfactory levels of attainment in most aspects of the subject. The proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A* to C matched the national average in 1998. The provisional results of the 1999 examination show a small drop in this proportion. Over the past four years, examination results have remained close to the national average. Opportunities for other pupils to reach similar levels are restricted by insufficient provision across the curriculum. There are too few opportunities for all pupils to reach appropriate standards for their age in control technology. In GCSE courses for IT, presentation skills are of a high order and pupils draw on their knowledge of computer applications and programs to solve problems. For example, involving the design of IT solutions for the management of a small business.

153 Pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 3. The range of courses, the structured nature of lessons and good teaching skills all contribute significantly to this progress, as do the positive attitudes of pupils.

154 Most pupils have some experience of simple word processing when they enter the school and they quickly build on this to learn to use desktop publishing techniques, effectively combining text and graphics. They learn to use spreadsheets and to present their models as graphs and charts. Pupils make very good progress with learning about control technology in society through modelling exercises. They learn to control lights and motors and design and build working models which use both. They make good progress with learning to write their own procedures for controlling the models. Pupils make very good progress with learning to present their work appropriately, clearly and attractively and use this to support the presentation of their work in other subjects. They take opportunities to spend additional time during lunchtimes and after

school using the facilities of the IT rooms and the library which further increase their rate of progress.

- 155 Throughout Key Stage 4, pupils make unsatisfactory progress, except the minority who have discrete IT lessons. They make satisfactory progress in business related activities in office practice lessons. In GCSE courses for IT, pupils effectively build on skills and knowledge gained in earlier years to develop more advanced skills for handling and presenting information. They make good progress with learning to design IT systems to solve problems and to model business situations. They become confident in using computers effectively to support their work in other subjects. Pupils who do not opt to study the subjects separately make unsatisfactory progress because provision for them is inadequate.
- 156 Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress at both key stages because they are well supported in lessons and make effective use of IT in the special needs department.
- 157 Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning IT skills. They concentrate well for long periods of time and use the long lessons productively. They are keen to explore the potential of computers and experiment with different styles of presentation. They are very well behaved and trustworthy when using equipment.
- 158 The quality of teaching in lessons with an IT focus is good at both key stages, with some very good teaching. Specialist teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate it very clearly to pupils within interesting contexts. Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged. After the initial focussed teaching session at the start of lessons, pupils are allowed to proceed at their own speed, which increases their progress because they are keen to learn. The quality of non-specialist teaching in other subjects of the curriculum varies but most teachers have basic competency to use computers. They are well supported by an in-service training program and the availability of specialist staff.
- 159 The curriculum meets statutory requirement at Key Stage 3 but not at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 there is insufficient provision for pupils to study the full range of programmes of study for the National Curriculum. Also, the absence of monitoring the individual experience and progress of pupils has an adverse effect on their progress by limiting the precision of planning for building skills and knowledge at Key Stage 4. The subject is well co-ordinated and planned at Key Stage 3. However, clear vision for the establishment of cross-curricular provision at Key Stage 4 has not been established by the school. There is a very good spirit of co-operation in the department and teachers are developing the confidence to use new technologies effectively. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the quality and quantity of resources and in the curricular provision at Key Stage 3. There has been insufficient progress in the development of cross-curricular provision and this remains an area needing significant improvement. The school is well placed to make good improvements in the future.

165 **Modern foreign languages**

- 160 By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainments in French and German are close to national expectations. Pupils have well-developed listening skills and display more confidence and willingness to speak the foreign languages since there has been more consistent use of them in lessons since the last inspection. Pupils' pronunciation of German is generally better than that of French. Most pupils use familiar words and phrases in basic communication but many lack the confidence to speak at any length from memory. They show understanding of short texts by noting key points and extracting information. They copy and combine familiar words and phrases accurately and higher attaining pupils produce short pieces of descriptive writing which are accurate and well-presented.

- 161 Overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is close to the national expectation, although the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C was below the national average in 1998, especially in French. The results were lower than the previous year's results, when the proportion of A* to C grades was above average in both subjects. Since the last inspection, girls have consistently achieved significantly higher standards than boys have and the department is introducing strategies to improve boys' performance. At Key Stage 4, all pupils take a full GCSE course rather than a short Certificate of Achievement Course. Almost all pupils consistently obtain at least a GCSE grade G in either French or German. Pupils' listening skills are generally good because they hear the foreign language spoken frequently in lessons, both by their teachers and by native speakers on cassette recordings. Pupils show understanding of short narratives and extracts of spoken language drawn from a variety of topics. Many pupils show intelligible pronunciation as they take part in short exchanges in the foreign language on basic topics. Some pupils, however, lack the confidence and willingness to attempt to speak spontaneously from memory. Pupils show understanding of a range of materials from a variety of contexts, although their range of reading is generally limited to GCSE course texts. Many pupils accurately produce pieces of writing of various lengths on a range of topics, adapting previously learnt language for their own purposes.
- 162 Overall, high, average and low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons at both key stages. This is because they show interest in learning a foreign language and they respond well to the support they receive from their teachers. At Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress in acquiring and consolidating knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures and in broadening their knowledge of the way of life of the people in the country whose language they are studying. They make good progress in developing their language skills, especially the skill of listening. Progress is less marked in reading because the range of reading is limited. At Key Stage 4, pupils generally make good progress because teachers have high expectations and set them challenging tasks. Pupils continue to develop good listening skills, and higher attaining pupils develop the confidence to speak from memory. Girls generally make better progress than boys, especially in French.
- 163 Pupils generally display positive attitudes to learning a foreign language. They participate willingly, and often enthusiastically in a variety of language activities, listening attentively and working well together. They display good levels of concentration and work productively at individual tasks without the need for close supervision. Most pupils are well behaved and co-operative, although in the latter part of some lessons, a minority of pupils lose concentration and become restless and talkative.
- 164 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Every lesson seen was at least satisfactory. The occasional lesson was very good. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the language(s) they teach. A strength of many lessons is the consistency and confidence with which teachers use the foreign language in the management of the lesson. This practice has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and set challenging tasks. Most lessons are well planned, well prepared and have clear objectives. Since the last inspection, more thought has been given to planning enjoyable activities that stimulate enthusiasm. There are now more opportunities for pupils to speak the foreign language in lessons, but in some lessons insufficient time is devoted to intensive oral practice with the aim of speaking from memory with good pronunciation. Teachers make good use of resources. Teachers manage pupils well and they expend much effort in making their classrooms cheerful and effective environments for learning European languages.

165 The languages curriculum has good breadth and balance and pupils have access to the study of a foreign language from Year 7 through to GCSE level courses in Key Stage 4. Higher attaining pupils are able to study a second modern language in Years 8 and 9. The department offers both French and German as second modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4, but there has been insufficient take-up to make courses viable in the current Years 10 and 11. Higher attaining linguists need to be encouraged to opt for a second language at Key Stage 4. Timetable allocation is adequate but long double periods are most unsatisfactory for language learning. The department has effective procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainments and progress. The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is generally good and the department is managed and administered effectively by an experienced linguist, who provides sound leadership for a hard-working team.

171 **Music**

166 Overall, standards of attainment are above average. By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of the substantial majority of the pupils meets the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are above the national average. The great majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at Key Stage and sometimes very good progress at Key Stage 4 in relation to their prior attainment. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the elements of music and a limited understanding of basic theory. Higher attaining pupils have a satisfactory understanding of note values and the position of notes on the staff. Lower attaining pupils are dependent on reading letter names written beneath the staff for keyboard performances. Those with special educational needs are able to play on keyboards to a satisfactory standard. Pupils make good progress in improvising a keyboard rhythm and composing a simple line of melody on five given notes. They listen well and are able to identify chord changes in the song 'Come Together'.

167 The proportion of pupils attaining grades A* to C in the 1998 GCSE examination is close to the national average. Across the key stages during the past three terms, from 72 entries there were 43 pass, 17 merit, and 9 distinction grades for instrumental playing in the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music, and Trinity College examinations. By the end of Year 11 a substantial majority of the pupils has well-developed instrumental skills and can effectively identify the sound of a range of instruments in the orchestra. They are familiar with binary and ternary form and have a clear understanding of triads and chord progressions. They effectively appraise their own and each other's performances. Higher attaining pupils have highly developed performance skills and a sound theoretical knowledge. Lower attaining pupils have good performance skills and a sound understanding of basic theory. Pupils make very good progress in their understanding of Latin American and Caribbean instruments and music. They should be given greater responsibility for their own learning. Researching information on the computers and extended writing to record their findings, makes an important contribution to the development of literacy skills.

168 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they enjoy music. The substantial majority is well behaved and senior pupils are committed to obtaining good examination results. Occasionally, a small but significant group of pupils in Year 9 disrupt lessons and hold back progress. However, the large majority of pupils collaborate effectively and pupil to teacher relationships are mature and productive. Pupils handle the expensive instruments they use with care and show respect for their own and each other's performances and contributions. The take up rate at Key Stage 4 is good and option arrangements do not limit the opportunity for pupils to choose music.

169 The quality of teaching, including instrumental tuition, is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. The two teaching staff and seven visiting teachers are accomplished instrumentalists with secure subject knowledge. The best lessons have good pace and a range of teaching styles. Lessons are well planned in the context of long, medium and short-term plans, with clear teaching objectives and expected learning outcomes. Work is well matched to the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' work is thoroughly assessed although the resulting information is not well used to inform curriculum planning and to set targets for the pupils. The quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development but opportunities for spiritual development are being missed in lessons and assemblies.

170 Insufficient time is allocated to the subject at Key Stage 3 for the effective delivery of the National Curriculum. 129 pupils benefit from instrumental tuition. A large number of pupils benefit from the nine extra-curricular choir and instrumental groups. Such shows as Romiley Fair and Bugsey Malone complement the work in the classroom. Instruments and resources are satisfactory but the music section in the library is unsatisfactory. The music rooms are spacious but lack of soundproofing makes teaching difficult in adjacent rooms. There are insufficient practice rooms for the large number of instrumentalists and the two practice rooms are cluttered. Computer provision needs improving. The department is well managed on the whole although there are some areas for development. Since the last report, overall standards and GCSE results have improved. The scheme of work does not explicitly match the National Curriculum as well as it should. The pupils play the keyboards wearing headphones and this reduces the opportunities to play in ensembles. At Key Stage 3 pupils' appraising of their own and each other's performances could be improved.

176 **Physical education**

171 By the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment are marginally above the national expectation. In work seen during the inspection attainment matches the national expectation for both boys and girls. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment reflects average standards overall. Since the previous inspection standards have been consolidated at Key Stage 3, and have slipped back slightly at Key Stage 4. GCSE results in physical education have steadily declined, so that by 1998 41 per cent of candidates achieved A* to C grades, falling below the national average. Results for boys have been generally consistent during this period, averaging at around 40 per cent, whilst results for girls have dropped markedly from well above the national average to below that benchmark in 1998. Pupils following the GCSE course are demonstrating below average standards in theory work, and average standards in practical aspects, with a far less notable difference between boys and girls than previous examination results suggest. The declining results for girls coincide with a period of staff absence and the consequent lack of continuity partially accounts for the lower performance.

172 Progress in physical education is predominantly satisfactory at both key stages, including for those pupils with special educational needs who make appropriate progress towards the targets set for them. At Key Stage 3 both boys and girls are making satisfactory progress, and this continues to be the case for most at Key Stage 4 in both the core programme and the GCSE work. On occasion the rate of progress for some boys in Year 11 is unsatisfactory due to their lack of commitment and application.

- 173 In general, pupils are co-operative and behave well in physical education. Attitudes are positive, and levels of interest and enthusiasm are high, particularly at Key Stage 3. Participation rates are good here, and contribute to continuity and progress in learning. This continues to be the case for the majority at Key Stage 4, although levels of non-participation are a cause for concern in some boys' groups. In examination work at Key Stage 4 most boys and girls apply themselves well to their studies, although some boys are not strongly committed to the theoretical aspects of GCSE work in physical education.
- 174 The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages with no unsatisfactory lessons and a good proportion of good and very good lessons, particularly at Key Stage 4. Subject knowledge and understanding is very secure. Lessons are effectively structured, although some are slow to get underway. Teaching styles are varied, but mainly directive, particularly in some boys' groups, and allow insufficient opportunity for some pupils to take responsibility for their learning. Other than in gymnastics, too few lessons include pupils' involvement in planning and evaluating their activities, and opportunities for problem solving in games activities are under-developed. Whilst task match is generally sound, there is need to ensure greater planned variation of tasks and resources to ensure a closer match to the needs of the more gifted and of the lowest attaining pupils, and to accelerate their progress further. The more successful teaching combines good subject knowledge with high expectations of response, plus positive feedback and evaluation to encourage learning. Where this was the case, for example in Year 8 netball, Year 10 GCSE hockey, Year 11 trampolining, and Year 11 GCSE badminton, pupils were strongly on task; concentrated well, were engaged by their work, and, importantly, made good progress. Generally relationships are good, and when underway, lessons are purposeful and busy.
- 175 Curricular planning is good, and requirements for the National Curriculum are properly fulfilled, with the fourth programme of study, dance, very well delivered within the expressive arts course. Provision at Key Stage 4 is sound, and provides some opportunities for pupils' choice and specialisation. Assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection, but lack an on-going pupil profile which would record pupils' attainment as they move through the school, and include opportunities for pupils' self-assessment. Annual reports are satisfactory, although they lack close links to the statutory end of Key Stage 3 descriptors which could improve them, together with more specific guidance to support improvement and progress.
- 176 Subject leadership is good; day-to-day administration has improved, since the previous inspection with routines and policies now consistently applied. Subject development planning is secure, and the record of associated staff development is strong. Facilities for physical education are satisfactory, although outdoor provision is adversely affected by the poor all weather pitch and inadequate playing field drainage. Resources are adequate, but funding for physical education is below average. As a result, there are insufficient GCSE textbooks, gymnastic equipment is outdated and, together with some areas of games equipment, requires improvement.
- 177 The curriculum is strongly enhanced by a good range of competitive and recreational extra-curricular opportunities for boys and girls that are popular, well supported, and enable some to achieve high standards.

- 178 In lessons, the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 matches the national expectation and at the end of Key Stage 4 it is a little below the national expectation. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A* to C has been below the national average although the proportion gaining GCSE grades A* to G has been at or above the national average. In the last two years the attainment of boys at grades A* to C has been better than that of girls and has been at or above the national average.
- 179 The progress of almost all pupils throughout both key stages is at least satisfactory and for many it is good. At Key Stage 3, pupils gain insight into religious experience and belief through reflection upon their own experiences. Year 7 pupils quickly understand the concept of rites of passage and the importance of Christian Baptism and Jewish Bar Mitzvah through recollection of significant events in their own lives, such as their early birthday parties. Pupils develop an approach to learning about religious belief and practice in which they ask questions and evaluate evidence honestly. Year 8 pupils are able to engage in lively debate with their teacher on the historical evidence for the existence of Christ and to consider for themselves whether everyone should celebrate Christmas. Understanding the need for respect and tolerance for the beliefs and experiences of others is quickly acquired. Pupils in Year 9 are able to talk about their own precious objects, which they brought into school, to help them understand the nature of the sacred. Pupils following the non-GCSE course at Key Stage 4 deepen their knowledge of Judaism and begin to explore such fundamental questions as to how the universe came to exist. All GCSE pupils can express and argue a position on moral issues, such as whether anyone who murders should be killed, and they have a deepening awareness of racism and sexism. Higher attainers write plays based upon a Parable to illustrate the contrast between Old and New Testament concepts of forgiveness. Most pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make progress in line with their peers although the poor behaviour of a small minority of such pupils prevents their satisfactory progress.
- 180 Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. They show a lively interest in their work, stay on task well and have good concentration. They have no hesitation in asking for help but are not over-reliant on the teacher. Their work is carefully presented. Pupils, in general, behave well, their relationships with each other and their teachers are usually good and they work together in groups successfully. They listen respectfully to the views of others and acknowledge their right to have different opinions, even those of the single group of pupils whose disruptive behaviour made much learning impossible.
- 181 Overall, teaching is good. At Key Stage 3 half the teaching is good and better and only one lesson was unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 4 there is no unsatisfactory teaching and three quarters is good. All teachers enthuse their pupils. They lead discussion with confidence and authority and generally establish an ethos of mutual respect. Lessons are well planned with a variety of activities so that interest and pace are maintained, though few lessons are enhanced by the use of stimulus material. Teachers successfully relate their teaching to questions which pupils have about spiritual and moral matters in their own lives. Personal, national and international issues are skilfully woven into the study of religion. Most discipline is good and the management of pupils is supportive and encouraging. The major weakness in teaching is in the marking of pupils' work. Very little work is corrected by teachers who sometimes also reward incorrect or incomplete work. Pupils are rarely given any guidance as to how they could improve their work and the comments made on pupils' work are very brief and often over-enthusiastic in relation to the quality of work produced.

- 182 There have been some significant improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. The time allocation at both key stages has increased and overall is in line with national standards; the syllabus is in line with the Stockport Agreed Syllabus; there is now time for the adequate study of Christianity and other faiths. However pupils still do not make visits to other faith communities which would deepen and enhance understanding. End of unit assessments are made but at Key Stage 3 these are not well used to inform curriculum planning or to inform pupils of their progress.
- 183 The well-qualified specialist staff are a strength of the department which is satisfactorily led by a subject co-ordinator. There is a comprehensive departmental handbook but not all of its policies are yet implemented. In particular there is very little use of IT. The scheme of work is insufficiently detailed. The specialist classrooms are enhanced by good displays of pupils' work and other subject related material. Resources are adequate and are used effectively.

189 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

189 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

184 The inspection team consisted of 14 inspectors, including a lay inspector. It inspected the school for 55 inspector days. The team inspected 203 lessons or aspects of lessons covering all age groups and totalling about 178 hours. Additionally, registrations and assemblies were also inspected and some of the extracurricular activities were observed. All teachers in the school were seen teaching and some on a number of occasions. Inspectors looked at the written work of a sample of pupils and that of others during lessons. Formal meetings were held with groups of pupils and many informal discussions took place in and outside lessons.

185 Planned discussions were held, on 43 occasions, with staff, governors and parents. Much helpful documentation provided by the school was analysed. The Registered Inspector held a meeting for parents, which was attended by 18 of them.

191 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

191 **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 – Y11	1389	25	204	230

191 **Teachers and classes**

191 **Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	82.57
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	16.8

191 **Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)**

Total number of education support staff:	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	237
Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	77
Average teaching group size:	KS3 23
	KS4 20

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	2,906,420
Total Expenditure	2,923,100
Expenditure per pupil	2,135
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,865
Balance carried forward to next year	52,185

Number of questionnaires sent out: 1300
 Number of questionnaires returned: 604

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	22	64	9	3	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	32	60	3	2	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	52	15	6	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23	62	7	4	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	30	51	9	6	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	31	58	4	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32	52	9	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	24	61	6	5	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	23	56	13	3	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	19	57	15	4	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	34	49	8	4	2

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.

191 Other issues raised by parents

Parents' responses to the questionnaire are largely favourable on each of the questions. Judging by the strength and number of the positive comments written on the back of the questionnaires, parents are happy with Werneth School. There were a few concerns, and these were mainly to do with pupils not being given sufficient warning of a set change or a test, or not being given sufficient homework. The new homework diaries were praised by parents. Disappointment at the low take up of the second language was eased to some extent by alternative arrangements after school or at a neighbouring school.