

INSPECTION REPORT

MOOR END TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107760

Headteacher: Mr S Morris

Reporting inspector: Mr A A Henderson
2941

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 4th May 2001

Inspection number: 188165

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dryclough Road Crosland Moor Huddersfield Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Mrs M Walton
Date of previous inspection:	29 th April 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Moor End Technology College is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 – 16, which successfully gained specialist technology college status in 1999. There are 705 pupils on roll, with slightly more boys than girls, and numbers have fallen since the previous inspection in 1996 due in part to a decline in primary school numbers which has now stabilised. The school is multi-ethnic, with many groups represented, the largest of which are those with Pakistani backgrounds and white pupils. Pupils are mainly drawn from two feeder primary schools. Two-thirds of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and a significant proportion receive additional language support. Pupils coming into the school include a broad range of ability, but overall attainment on entry is well below average. The school has resourced provision for 15 pupils with visual impairment. Beyond this specialist provision, 35 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs (well above average), and 5 per cent have formal statements (also well above average). The school serves an area which includes considerable social and economic disadvantage, and 44 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Moor End Technology College is an effective school which provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Standards are below average generally, but given their starting points, pupils' achievement is good. GCSE results are improving steadily at a similar rate to the national trend. The quality of both teaching and learning it promotes are good. The school is well led and managed, and the headteacher and governors have set in place a clear agenda for improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Standards in information and communication technology are well above average.
- Both GCSE results, and results in the national tests taken by pupils aged 14, are well above the average for similar schools.
- Provision for pupils' support, guidance and personal development, including careers education, is very good. The school successfully cares for its pupils, checking their attendance and progress very well.
- Provision for pupils with visual impairment, for those for whom English is an additional language, and for pupils having special educational needs are major strengths which ensure that, for those pupils, progress is very good.
- The school links well with parents, and successfully integrates pupils who are from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and have varying capabilities and needs.

What could be improved

- Insufficient time is provided for religious education throughout the school.
- The timetable does not meet the needs of music, history and geography in Years 7 - 9.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in individual subjects needs sharpening to improve standards further.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils, mainly boys, is unsatisfactory, and hinders progress in the classes concerned.
- Accommodation requires considerable improvement. [NB. a phased development programme is due to begin in June 2001.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in 1996, improvement has been good. GCSE results have steadily improved, but remain below the national average. Attendance has been improved to a level which is in line with the national average. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are mainly good, as before, whilst teaching and progress have improved. In other respects, progress in tackling the key issues identified in the previous report has been satisfactory. Strategic planning for the school has been strengthened and is now closely linked to the budget, which is now under control. Improvements have been made to the curriculum for 14 to 16 year old pupils, and provision for the humanities has been improved, although in both areas further improvement is required. Elsewhere, very good progress has been made in improving the school's situation – notably the private finance initiative which will bring needed development of the school's accommodation, and the successful bid for technology college status in 1999, which is already resulting in higher standards. The recent introduction of regular pupil progress reviews, and the Quality Mark gained for basic skills provision are further initiatives which are supporting the improvement noted across the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on GCSE examination results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Overall results in National Curriculum tests taken by pupils aged 14 in 2000 were below average compared with all schools, but were well above average when compared with similar schools (that is, schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). Performance in English was well above average, for mathematics was below average, and well below average in science. Results for mathematics and science were similar in 1999, whilst for English they were much lower because marking by the examination board was unreliable. However, over the past three years, overall results show improvement at a slower rate than the national trend. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7, 8 and 9 (Key Stage 3) are below average overall, but given their well below average starting points and the high proportion for whom English is an additional language, pupils' achievement is very good, both in their subjects and their language development. Standards are above average in information and communication technology, and are average in art, history, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. They are below average in the remaining subjects.

In 2000 the average points score for GCSE was below average for all schools, but well above the average for similar schools, and the school achieved its target. The proportion of pupils gaining either 5+ passes at the higher A*-C grades or 5+ passes across the full range of grades A*-G, although below the national average, were above the similar school averages. In contrast to the national trend, boys' results matched those of girls in the school. GCSE results have shown steady improvement over the past three years in line with the national rate. Results in subjects vary considerably. In 2000, information and communication technology results were above the national average, and for art were in line. They were also above average in English literature, although from a smaller selected entry than is usually found. In all other subjects, results were below or well below average. Compared with their other subjects, both boys and girls did better in art, English, Urdu and information and communication technology. The least successful compared with other subjects were geography, modern foreign languages, and physics, whilst girls did less well in history, and boys in physical education. Given their low levels of attainment on entry to the school, the overall GCSE results of these pupils are considerably higher than expected, and represent good achievement. Their success is supported by the school's positive approach to examination entry, and to the very good provision for language and special needs support across the school which enables pupils of all abilities to access the examination courses. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4) during the inspection reflect the examination results, and are generally below average. There is clear variation between subjects: standards in information and communication technology are well above average, and above average in physical education. They are average in history, music, art and religious education. Standards are below average elsewhere, except in geography where they are well below average. Overall, these standards represent good achievement in relation to pupils' earlier attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good – the large majority enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. A minority, mainly boys, have unsatisfactory attitudes and can be disruptive.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. There is a high level of harmony, and pupils generally get on well with each other, and with adults in the school.
Attendance	Attendance has improved, and is in line with the national average. A significant minority of pupils arrive late to school. Unauthorised absence has been above average, but the school is working hard to successfully reduce this figure.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils' learning is good in response to teaching which is good or better in 68 per cent of lessons seen. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons. No subject was judged to be unsatisfactory and this consistency of teaching is a significant strength of the school. Teaching is especially effective in information and communication technology and English, and good teaching predominates in mathematics, science, design and technology, art, religious education, physical education and music. A small number of unsatisfactory lessons were seen where work did not provide sufficient challenge, sometimes linked with ineffective strategies to ensure pupils' attention and good behaviour. These were in English, science, design and technology and history in Key Stage 3, and in GCSE physical education in Key Stage 4. Pupils' learning needs are generally well met, and for many are well supported by the very good provision for those with special educational needs, and for those for whom English is an additional language. Support for pupils with visual impairment is also very good, and their learning is strongly enhanced by their widespread use of new technology. The main strengths in teaching include teachers' good subject knowledge, their detailed planning, their high expectations and their positive management of pupils' behaviour in the classroom. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are secure and are improving pupils' basic skills, although the whole-school approaches are not yet consistently applied in some subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curriculum provision is satisfactory, but there are imbalances in time given to religious education across the school, and to history, geography and music in Key Stage 3. Careers education is a strength.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum and make good progress, with most successfully completing GCSE courses. Management arrangements and the level of support are very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	A high proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, and a considerable number are at the early stages of language acquisition. The positive level of support is ensuring that they are making very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall satisfactory, with good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care and procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Their academic progress is very well monitored and there is good support for pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team, has established a clear agenda for improvement. The pastoral system is well managed and subject leadership is effective. The monitoring of teaching and learning needs greater emphasis to help raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are conscientious and committed to the well-being of the school. They play a positive part in strategic planning and are aware of areas which need improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's development plan is clearly focused on raising standards. Test and examination results are regularly reviewed, and subject performance monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Levels of staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate, but the school's fabric requires refurbishment. Support staff are well deployed and specific grant is properly used. Financial planning is good and principles of best value applied well. Good use is made of additional funding from the Technology College Trust.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that teaching is good and pupils are making good progress. • They believe that pupils are expected to work hard and do their best. • Most find the school approachable and feel that the school is well led and managed. • Most are happy with the standards of pupils' behaviour and feel that their children like school. 	<p>A small number of parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework set causes concern. • The school does not work closely enough with parents and does not provide enough information about children's progress. • The school is not providing an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Parental opinions about homework are divided on whether there is too much or too little – inspection findings suggest that homework is used constructively to supplement classwork, and pupils generally manage arrangements well. Inspectors judge that the school works hard to establish working relationships with parents, and that parents are well informed about pupils' progress through the school's reporting and communications arrangements. Inspectors do, however, share concerns about the range of activities outside lessons, and feel that the school should further promote opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences through activities beyond the classroom and outside the normal curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils join the school at the end of Year 6 their overall standards of attainment are well below average. Results in national tests taken at age 11 in 2000 show that pupils' attainment in each of the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, is well below average. A wide range of ability is included in this entry profile, although very few pupils are well above average when they join the school. This is confirmed by the results of the standardised tests used by the school in Year 7, which show that pupils are well below average on entry, and that this has been the case since the previous inspection. English is an additional language for almost two-thirds of pupils joining the school, and more than a third are on the school's register of special educational need.

2. In 2000 the overall results in National Curriculum tests taken at the age of 14 were below average when compared with all schools. Pupils' performance, including for those with special educational needs, in English was well above average, in mathematics was below average, whilst in science it was well below average. Results for both mathematics and science were similar to those for previous years. Those for English were notably better, having been well below average in 1999. This anomalous situation follows an appeal by the school against the 1999 results resulting in substantial upgrading, and an unusually high proportion of pupils gaining higher levels in 2000 (a standard not entirely confirmed by inspection evidence). Overall, there has been improvement over the past three years, although at a rate which is slower than the national trend. When compared with the results of similar schools, (that is, schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals), for mathematics, the school results were well above average, and for science they were average. In English, the results were very high compared with similar schools, and the overall school performance in 2000 was well above average.

3. Results in GCSE examinations have been below the national average over the past three years, but show steady improvement at a rate which matches the national trend. The school's average GCSE points score in 2000 was below the national average, but was well above average compared with similar schools. Both the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at the higher A*-C grades, and the proportion achieving five or more passes across the full range of grades A*-G were below the national averages, but above average for similar schools. In contrast to the national trend, in 2000 boys' results matched those of girls in GCSE. Their average points score was below, but close to the average for boys nationally, whilst girls' performance has fallen away since the previous inspection, and in 2000 was well below the national average for girls. Overall, the school marginally exceeded its targets for GCSE in 2000, and has set itself further demanding targets for 2001.

4. GCSE results in subjects for 2000 were below or well below the national average for grades A*-C, with the notable exceptions of information and communication technology where results were above, and art which was in line with the national average. Results in English literature were also well above the national average, but from a selected entry group. Elsewhere the proportion of pupils entered is at or above the national figure in all subjects except art, French, history and physical education. This positive entry policy is a strength which ensures access to examination success for almost all pupils, including the large proportion with special educational needs. Both boys and girls do better in art, English, Urdu and information and communication technology than in their other examination subjects. Their least successful subjects were geography, French, German and physics, whilst girls did less well in history, and boys in physical education.

5. In work seen during the inspection, standards reflect the examination results. In Year 9 attainment is above average in information and communication technology, and is average in modern foreign languages, history, art, physical education and religious education. It is below average in all other subjects. In Year 11 the standards of work seen are below average overall, although there is considerable variation between subjects. Attainment is well above average in information and communication technology, and above average in physical education. Generally average standards are found in history, art and religious education. They are below average in the work seen in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and modern foreign languages, whilst in geography standards are well below average. Standards in music are above average for the small group of girls in

Year 10 who are taking the GCSE course.

6. Pupils' progress and achievement are good as they move through the school, as a result of consistently good teaching and the predominantly positive pupil attitudes. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils' achievement is never less than satisfactory across the curriculum and is good in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. Given their well below average starting points, and the problems many experience with English as an additional language, this consistent level of progress is very good. Achievement at this stage is very good in English and information and communication technology in response to very good teaching and high expectation which is underpinned by very strong support for those pupils for whom English is an additional language, and for those with special educational needs. In music, many pupils in Years 8 and 9 underachieve because resources are inadequate, and too little time is allocated to the subject. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' overall achievement is good. At this stage, progress and achievement is excellent in information and communication technology as the result of continued high quality teaching and highly motivated pupils. In general, pupils' achievements are good in the majority of subjects because good teaching ensures more pupils than usual gain GCSE grades A*-G in at least five subjects – a level of achievement which, for many, owes much to the high quality of language and special educational needs support. There is underachievement by pupils in religious education at this stage despite strong teaching, because the time allocation for the subject is too low.

7. Pupils with special educational needs attain the standards expected of them, with some doing even better. All pupils entering the school with very low literacy levels achieve at least one GCSE pass with some gaining more. This represents a very positive outcome for pupils with special educational needs. In their withdrawal groups and mainstream lessons, with appropriate support, most pupils make good progress overall.

Standards in key skills

8. Generally, pupils' literacy skills are below average, but are better than at the time of the previous inspection, particularly in reading and writing. This is because the school has worked hard in analysing pupils' literacy levels, and has established good, whole-school strategies to improve literacy across all subjects. Positive initiatives including the teaching of specialist key words in subjects, paired reading schemes and structured writing aids which are supporting progress well. Comprehensive data is provided for subjects to ensure their awareness of pupils' language issues, and regular analysis of progress takes place. Whilst some subjects are effectively developing the main areas of weakness, pupils' speaking skills, through open-ended class discussion, for example, in English, art, religious education and mathematics, there is need to extend these opportunities more widely across the curriculum.

9. Standards of numerical proficiency across the curriculum are satisfactory and have improved since the previous inspection. The improvement is due to the effective whole-school approach to promoting numeracy, and to the regular development of mental arithmetic in mathematics lessons. Further opportunities for improving pupils' numeracy skills are regularly provided in some other subjects; measurement and data handling skills are effectively used in geography and history, whilst pupils' numerical skills contribute to their learning and progress in science, particularly in physics.

10. Pupils' skills in the use and understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average. The opportunities provided following the award of technology college status in 1999 have given major impetus to the use of ICT in a number of areas of the curriculum, notably design and technology, modern foreign languages and history. Not all subjects are at the same stage of development, nor do some have sufficient access to computers at present. Areas for improved use include science, mathematics, art, religious education and music. The acquisition of key skills of literacy and numeracy by pupils with special educational needs is well supported by the use of ICT through specific structured learning programmes. The pupils with visual impairment receive very good support through ICT and use their very strong skills confidently to complete their work and access the on-line curriculum which is available to all pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good overall. The large majority of pupils in all year groups are keen to come to school. They enjoy school life, value and support their friends, and respond well to challenging work. For example, in a history lesson on economic growth in the United States of America, pupils from Year 10 showed attitudes which were mature for their age, and they made very good progress on a task which challenged and developed their analytical skills. They showed good study skills, willingness to learn, and to benefit from the use of Smart Board and Power Point technology. Younger pupils worked well in a Year 8 personal and social education lesson which explored the nature of different present day communities. They offered thoughtful ideas in class discussion and contributed their own knowledge to their written work. In this class, pupils for whom English is an additional language showed good attitudes. Their participation, application, enthusiasm and good relationships contributed well to the progress made. Pupils who have visual impairment take a full and enthusiastic part in class work and develop good relationships with their peers.

12. Most pupils are keen and enthusiastic about school. They are developing a sense of ownership of the school, are inspired by the opportunities to develop their skills in ICT and look forward to the new facilities to be provided in the building programme. Year 7 pupils showed great enthusiasm for their food technology activities when they started work during lunchtime so that they could finish it by the end of the lesson. Pupils who attend the after school Smart Shop for study support show very good attitudes to their school work and a keen interest in the extra activities provided. This year the large majority of participants are from Years 7 and 8.

13. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work, particularly in response to specialist teaching in withdrawal lessons, and to additional support in their normal lessons. The provision of appropriate lesson materials and teacher expertise helps create a secure learning environment in which they work with a high level of motivation, commitment and determination to succeed.

14. A small, but significant, minority of pupils, mostly boys in the older classes, have unsatisfactory attitudes to their work and consequently impede their own and others' progress. The school does not tolerate disruptive behaviour in or out of class and such behaviour is dealt with firmly so that the overall progress of lessons continues well. Bullying and aggressive behaviour are not tolerated. Since September the school has temporarily excluded 51 boys and 24 girls as part of the school's system of sanctions in tackling disruptive behaviour. Following a significant number of temporary exclusions, four pupils have been permanently excluded because of aggressive behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is closely monitored after return from exclusion, and the school has good procedures to support them so that they can continue to make progress. The large majority of pupils behave well in class and during break times. In their free time pupils' behaviour is good-natured if occasionally boisterous. The youngest pupils say that they have trust in the pastoral care staff to respond to any of their concerns. All pupils know what behaviour is expected of them and they understand that any disruptive behaviour is unacceptable; overall behaviour is satisfactory.

15. Pupils and parents report occasional incidents of oppressive behaviour such as racism and bullying. These incidents are dealt with quickly and firmly. Pupils know that all such incidents should be reported. As at the previous inspection, the high level of racial harmony is a very positive feature of the school and is welcomed by parents. Pupils learn to respect each other and to respect beliefs and values that may be different from their own. A large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire say that behaviour is good and none raised any additional concerns about behaviour, bullying or racism.

16. Relationships in school are good. Pupils work well together and most respond well to their teachers in class. Year 8 pupils act as guides and helpers to Year 7 pupils who are new to the school. Pupils who join at other times than the start of the school year are well supported by specially designated friends and helpers. Bilingual teachers and support workers work very well and develop very good relationships with pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils who have special needs and those having visual impairment take a full part in their classes and in the life of the school.

17. Overall, pupils' responsibility for the school community is satisfactory. The majority of pupils have respect for property and the school's resources, although the grounds show a considerable amount of litter and there is evidence of broken windows in school. The school has good procedures for prefects to

help with the control of movement at break times and senior prefects take the lead in helping with outside events. Year 8 pupils take turns to monitor the school entrance. Representatives from each year group take part in the school council meetings to discuss a wide range of matters raised by staff and pupils. During council meetings the older pupils participate freely in discussion with teachers and the younger pupils are encouraged to contribute their views. As they progress through school pupils develop skills of personal study supported by their increasing competence in information and communication technology and the many good strategies developed in their personal social and health education (PSHE) course. Pupils' planners are very well designed to enable them to keep a record of achievements, including school teams, positions of responsibility, skills and awards and out of school visits.

18. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Last year's attendance figures were just higher than the national level, which given the social context of the school, represents considerable achievement and success. Unauthorised absence was higher than the national figure but the attendance officer and the educational social worker work very well with form tutors and pastoral care staff in efforts to reduce the level. A significant number of pupils arrive late in the morning, missing an important part of the school day. Sample checks of class and school registers identify occasional internal truancy, and this requires more frequent monitoring. Many pupils receive certificates for full attendance each term but a minority of pupils, particularly in Year 9, have low levels of attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching and the learning that it promotes is good. Across the school teaching is good or better in 68 per cent of lessons, with most of the remainder satisfactory. Almost one lesson in four is very good or better, evenly distributed across the key stages, predominantly in English, ICT, religious education and mathematics. Since the previous inspection, there has been improvement in the quality of teaching. Positive standards have been consolidated, and the overall proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been substantially reduced to four per cent. As a result, the generally good teaching combines with pupils' secure learning skills to ensure that their progress is good, and is an important feature in the steady improvement in examination results since the previous inspection. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are secure, and support the development of pupils' basic skills effectively, but the agreed whole-school approaches are not consistently applied by all subjects.

20. Teaching is very good in ICT, and is notably effective in English. Good teaching predominates in mathematics, science, design and technology, art, religious education, physical education and music. It is also good in Urdu, in French and German in Key Stage 3, and in history in Key Stage 4. Elsewhere, teaching is satisfactory, and examples of good teaching feature in all subjects. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching arose where work did not sufficiently challenge or extend pupils' learning, sometimes linked to ineffective strategies to ensure pupils' full attention and good behaviour. It was limited to single lessons in English, science, design and technology, and history in Key Stage 3, and in GCSE physical education in Key Stage 4.

21. Specialist teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects are strong. The positive presentation of their subjects impacts effectively on pupils' rates of progress and attainment, particularly where expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are high. This is notably the case in English, religious education and ICT where pupils are required to tackle demanding texts and activities.

22. Teachers set clear objectives for their lessons, and generally explain to pupils what they are expected to learn. In the better lessons, for example in English, mathematics, art, religious education and ICT, good lesson summaries check on pupils' progress and understanding. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies that are appropriate for the work taking place, and for the pupils concerned. Collaborative work features strongly in English, physical education, music and in some lessons in ICT and design and technology. The teaching in ICT is a very strong feature, as is the developing use in other subjects, notably in history. The widespread use of new technology by pupils with visual impairment is a key factor in their good learning and progress.

23. Most lessons are purposeful, often with effective teacher questioning which tests pupils' knowledge and understanding, and leads skilfully on to new work. This approach was particularly successful in religious education lessons in Year 8 about death and in Year 11 on evil and suffering, and in an English lesson in which Year 8 pupils developed their understanding of emotive language and persuasive writing.

24. Teachers' planning is good and tasks are generally matched well to the needs and capabilities of the majority of pupils. The progress of both the lower attaining pupils and those for whom English is an additional language is very well supported by the good use of in-class learning support across a wide range of subjects. This is also the case for those pupils with visual impairment who are well integrated into the school's curriculum. As a result, these groups of pupils are learning very well.

25. Assessment and marking are generally good, and are strengths in English, physical education and in the work of the pupils for whom English is not their first language. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of their progress and learning in most subjects, although there is room for improvement in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in design and technology. In geography, both the assessment procedures and the use of assessment information in curriculum planning are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. The use of homework has been revised in the light of concerns arising from the previous inspection, and current arrangements are satisfactory.

26. The management of pupils in the classroom is a strength of the teaching. Relationships are good, and many teachers set good examples, relating well to their classes and providing positive levels of support and encouragement. Discipline is mainly good, although some teachers have to work hard in a minority of lessons to maintain full control. Time is sometimes lost on checking the behaviour and concentration of a relatively small proportion of boys, mainly but not exclusively Asian, who disrupt the progress of the majority of pupils, for example in geography and modern foreign languages. Teachers are well supported in dealing with this problem by the 'on-call' arrangement which provides assistance from senior staff when required.

27. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught by the specialist teachers. They have very good knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs, and tailor their learning materials and teaching styles to meet them. The consistent approach to learning and the use of praise and encouragement have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and on their personal development. The variety of short time-span tasks and the use of sequenced questions ensure a good level of motivation and challenge, and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. The learning support assistants work very closely with the class teacher. They are fully informed of the needs of the pupils, and this enables them to meet the lesson objectives. They do much to promote positive attitudes, which have a positive impact on learning outcomes.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. They are good in English, art and science, and very good for pupils with special educational needs and those with visual impairment. The provision for literacy and numeracy is good also. In music at Key Stage 3, and religious education at both key stages, the quality and range of learning opportunities are unsatisfactory.

29. The curriculum for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 has satisfactory breadth and meets all statutory requirements. Pupils are taught for the nationally recommended time of 25 hours each week. Enrichment is provided by the course in personal, social and health education and by the teaching of ICT as a separate subject, in line with the school's policy as a technology college. However, opportunities for pupils to practise these skills are not developed consistently in all subjects, and pupils' use of ICT is often dependent on resources within the home. Reflecting the need of most pupils to develop language skills, more time than usual is allocated to English. Extra time in Year 7 is given to literacy skills, building on the work begun in junior schools, and is effectively helping to improve standards. However, the balance of the curriculum is adversely affected by weaknesses in the provision of time for certain subjects. There is insufficient time to teach the National Curriculum in music in sufficient breadth or depth in Years 8 and 9, and the time to teach the agreed syllabus in religious education is too low. Time for history and geography is around one-third lower than is normally found. Overall the balance of the curriculum at this stage is unsatisfactory, although the school has clearly chosen to give priority to English and the development of literacy skills.

30. Since the previous inspection the curriculum for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 has been revised in response to the successful bid for specialist Technology College status, and to include a wider

range of more appropriate courses. In addition to the recommended maximum of 25 hours an extension of one hour a week to accommodate the GNVQ course in information and communication technology has been put in place. All pupils are entered for English language GCSE, although only around half take English literature. Almost all pupils take GCSE in mathematics, with a certificate of achievement course provided for a small number of lower attaining pupils. Opportunities are available to take either dual award science or three separate sciences at GCSE. The amount of time for this arrangement is high but the school has evidence that the significant percentage of pupils who continue with the subjects at A-level benefit. All pupils take a modern foreign language, and pupils with a background in a related language are able to take Urdu at GCSE. The curriculum has been developed by a number of initiatives which have increased opportunities for the majority of pupils. Intermediate GNVQ in information and communication technology, now taught in Year 10, will provide pupils with the equivalent of 4 GCSE passes. However, the allocation to the course of two hours of timetabled time, augmented by the extension of the school week by one hour, is low. GNVQ manufacturing and engineering, taken in part as compulsory curriculum and in part as an option, provides the equivalent of two GCSE grades. Religious education is available as an option, but, as in Key Stage 3, the time given to the non-examination course is too low. Elsewhere, the low allocation of time for teaching history and geography in Key Stage 3 create disadvantages for those pupils who might wish to choose these subjects as options at GCSE. As a result the curriculum at this stage, although improved since the previous inspection, also has weaknesses. For around ten pupils of lower ability who find difficulty with the demands of the full curriculum and are at risk of becoming disaffected, "School Plus", part of the school's inclusion policy, effectively provides a reduced curriculum which is enhanced by study support sessions, out-of-school visits and one-day work placements. A further group of similar size of pupils, identified as likely to under-achieve as a result of an inappropriate work-load, are permitted to drop one of their options in favour of self-supported study in English, mathematics and science. Both are proving to be successful strategies in supporting these groups, and ensuring their motivation and progress.

31. The whole-school curriculum is accessible to all pupils including those with English as an additional language, and those on the special educational needs register. The special educational needs coordinator and support staff know the pupils very well and give them confidence to succeed in their academic work. The individual education plans drawn up from standardised test results are very effective in ensuring that all pupils' needs are clearly identified at an early stage. They form the basis for the evaluation of pupils' progress and personal development.

32. The provision for both literacy and numeracy development is good, and is given high profile in the school. The successful quality of provision has been recognised with the award of the Basic Skill Quality Mark in 1999, and is having positive impact in developing pupils' skills in both aspects. This provision, particularly in improving pupils' language skills, is the foundation for the steady improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

33. Opportunities for enrichment beyond the normal curriculum are satisfactory, but are limited, particularly in the performing arts, due in part to the requirement for many pupils to attend after school sessions at their local mosques. No regular music or drama activities are run, although from time to time one-off events take place. Only around twelve pupils learn to play instruments. The school's successful "Smart Shop" initiative, run on four evenings per week, provides support for homework and extended experience in ICT. In partnership with the local health authority short courses in aspects of health such as relaxation and first aid are run, and visiting groups from the local professional theatre and the local newspaper run short-term workshops. Participation in activities outside school is not extensive and the take-up of a range of sporting activities, particularly by girls, is low. From time to time musical events take place, but there are no on-going ensembles. Each year group visits the theatre or cinema and a trip to France is planned for the next academic session.

34. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Since the previous inspection the course has been revised and is taught by a dedicated group of staff. The programme includes careers, health and sex education, together with drugs awareness, and is planned to meet pupils' different needs as they progress through each year group. However, the time allocated to the course in Years 7, 8 and 9 is low. In addition to a twice-daily session of ten minutes for registration, 'thought for the day' and time for reflection there is a form period of half-an-hour each week, principally used for administration and tutorial guidance.

35. Provision for the teaching of careers education and guidance is very good. Liaison with the local careers service is well established and pupils have careers guidance from Year 7 onwards and in Years 10 and 11 pupils' interests and aptitudes are recorded on a questionnaire and the resulting analysis is used to help them make informed choices about the next stages of their education. Work experience is carefully organised for all pupils. Good attention is paid to opportunities to integrate different cultural approaches, but where pupils have particular language difficulties efforts are made to ensure that within their work placement communication will not be a problem.

36. The school has strengthened its partnership with the community since the previous inspection, and has good links with employers and training providers. These contribute very well to pupils' experience of work. Pupils have taken part in work related learning, for example, by helping in a primary school, disaffected pupils benefit from the School Plus scheme, and members of the Saturday club have extended vocational opportunities to prepare them for the world of work. A group of twelve pupils took part in a highly successful programme of Asian song and dance, which they presented at the end of the summer holidays at a local community centre.

37. Many pupils attend places of worship regularly as a commitment to their own religion and culture. Pupils who study GCSE religious education visit a range of places of worship representing different religions. The science summer school was supported by many local companies who donated products.

38. Overall, community links are satisfactory and provide pupils with valuable experiences. The school is actively exploring ways of further strengthening links and enriching pupils' knowledge and personal development.

39. Very effective links with the main feeder primary schools provide a well managed transfer for pupils, and close liaison with parents is ensured. Similarly, pupils in their final year at school are given careful guidance in their choice of further education or sixth form college. The advice given is based on up to date knowledge of what courses are available and very good procedures throughout their time in school to enable pupils to make appropriate decisions. Good links with the local Pupil Referral Unit help the school to provide as much support as possible for pupils who may be at risk of exclusion from main school. The school has a long standing partnership with the local universities to provide initial teacher training and many members of staff are qualified to mentor the students during their time in school.

40. Provision for pupils to develop spiritual insight into values and beliefs is satisfactory overall. There is a programme of 'thought for the day' and twice-daily pupils observe two minutes of silence which provides opportunities for quiet reflection. However there is a lack of consistency in the teachers' approach towards focusing pupils' thoughts on the use of this time for reflection. The quality of the experience for individual pupils is consequently variable. A suitable space is provided for Muslim pupils for lunchtime prayers, and very good liaison exists between the school and leaders of local mosques. Within subject areas spiritual awareness varies considerably. In English the effects of poetry by William Blake on the reader, and the use of emotive language to stir racism and prejudice, are discussed. In religious education pupils are taught respect for other religions. In art different cultural contexts and influences are properly related to pupils' individual thoughts and beliefs. Because of lack of time for music there are few opportunities for pupils to be made aware of its communicative effects.

41. Provision for moral education is good. Pupils are encouraged to be concerned for disadvantaged groups in society through charity fund-raising events, and older pupils are invited to offer support by becoming "friends" to new or younger pupils. Very good levels of consideration are shown to the visually impaired pupils in the school. In English pupils are encouraged to avoid making simplistic judgements about human predicaments such as teenage pregnancy, discuss important issues of homelessness, bullying and local racist incidents, write protest letters about child labour in some under-developed countries and consider violence portrayed in computer games. In art pupils consider moral dilemmas. In a Year 10 class in religious education debating the subject of euthanasia, pupils were challenged to face issues and explain personal viewpoints, and through role play pupils in Year 7 examined right and wrong in the debates between Muhammad and those who opposed him at the start of his ministry. Physical education makes a strong contribution by the emphasis on fair play and observing rules of right and wrong in competition. In music pupils learn to be considerate in their use of equipment, to control noise levels when working in groups and to support one another's efforts to perform. Pupils feel safe in school. The school reacts strongly and firmly to incidents of bullying.

42. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory, although despite a number of different outlets, the numbers of pupils involved are sometimes low. Facilities are provided for pupils to complete homework, to develop ICT skills or to promote hobbies and other interests on four nights each week. Transport is provided to ensure a safe journey home, and times are carefully arranged to take account of families' religious observances. From time to time visiting groups provide workshop sessions. Particularly successful was a short series of visits by a group from the local professional theatre involving 20 pupils from all year groups in confidence building exercises. The St John's Ambulance brigade provides short courses in first aid. There is a lively and active School Council. At lunchtime few activities take place, partly because there is insufficient time. However, the library is well used. Participation in sports clubs is not extensive, particularly for girls, and there are no regular musical or dramatic groups.

43. Provision for pupils to learn about their own and other cultural influences is satisfactory. Visits to the theatre and the cinema take place regularly, and visitors from the local community contribute to music, art and English. A trip to France is planned for the coming academic year. In religious education there is a particularly strong emphasis on accepting the beliefs and practices of others. However, a planned programme of visits to places of worship or other sites of cultural heritage has yet to be established. In the library there is a very good display of texts from a wide range of different cultures. Although a concert was given at the end of the autumn term and a talent show is planned for the summer term the contribution from the performing arts in general to pupils' cultural development is low but an option to take drama at GCSE is planned for the autumn term. In a wider context the school makes good access for parents whose language is not English by ensuring information is translated and employing a bi-lingual member of staff who is available for effective liaison.

44. Overall, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' experiences are rather fragmented because there is no whole school policy for this aspect. As a result, provision is not well coordinated or monitored.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school makes good provision for the welfare of its pupils. Good arrangements for child protection are in place and all staff are aware of the procedures. A particular strength is the care taken to provide educational and personal support for every pupil in school, including a welcome for pupils who are new to the school and bilingual support for pupils who have a low level of English language. Seven pupils who are new to the country have arrived this year and the school has taken care to provide translators of the families' own language to support their integration and progress. The school has good plans to increase the opportunity for pastoral care throughout the school by reducing the size of tutor groups. The head of lower school and the special educational needs co-ordinator have very good liaison with primary feeder schools so that all pupils' needs are known early and they are placed in tutor groups with their friends. Pupils' special educational needs are identified and continuously assessed and monitored to provide them with access to the curriculum and to enable them to learn effectively. The school provides very well for pupils' adjustment to community life with special programmes which build self-confidence, team work and develop life skills.

46. The school health and safety policy and procedures are broadly satisfactory but some items of concern have been identified and reported to the school. The policy requires each department to take responsibility for health and safety, to train pupils in safe practice and undertake risk assessments. A whole school risk assessment for fire safety and other hazards was made in the Autumn term and each identified item has been prioritised and attended to. The school is particularly aware of the need for the safety of visually impaired pupils. Day to day hazards identified by the staff are reported quickly and dealt with immediately. A particular concern is the public access to the school grounds, allowing dogs to be walked near pupils who are taking part in physical education classes. The broken steps leading to the playground, and the hole near the steps also present hazards, whilst litter on the all weather pitch is a potential danger.

47. Procedures to promote health in school are good. The school nurse attends on two days a week and offers pupils a "drop in" session. She has made a very good contribution to the Smart Shop after school study facilities by organising a first aid course, baby-sitting course and she has spoken to the school council. She contributes expert advice to any concerns raised by pupils, teachers or parents in school.

The school's good personal, social and health education programme raises pupils' awareness of safe and healthy living, relationships and growing up, and includes sex and drugs education.

48. Procedures to monitor and improve pupils' attendance are very good. The attendance officer monitors the attendance of all pupils on a daily basis so that reasons for absence are known by the second day of absence. The educational social worker monitors registers weekly and liaises with staff responsible for pastoral care. The school and the social worker have very good procedures to support families in their efforts to raise their children's attendance levels. Very good individual and class attendance is rewarded and many pupils have excellent records.

49. The school has a satisfactory policy and procedures to promote good behaviour by using merit marks and certificates, although the application and monitoring of the policy varies with departments. The school has plans to trial an electronic logging system which will provide a profile of the rewards and achievements of each pupil as well as any sanctions. Every pupil's planner has a copy of the school code of conduct and the rewards and sanctions in operation. The school's "on call" procedure makes sure that any disruptive behaviour is dealt with immediately and lessons are not interrupted.

50. The monitoring of oppressive behaviour is very effective. Staff always respond to any incidents of unacceptable behaviour and take action to avoid a repetition of such incidents, often in co-operation with parents. A designated teacher monitors the behaviour of any pupil involved in incidents of racism and sexism and keeps a record. The school makes good use of ICT to provide programmes which help pupils who need to develop positive attitudes to school and learning.

51. Pupils are well supervised during break and lunchtime. The language resource centre provides a homework "help-line" in a family atmosphere which is particularly welcoming to pupils new to the school. Some pupils and their parents say that they would like a wider range of clubs and activities during lunchtime. A scheme run by a member of the local police force provides activities outside school targeted towards disaffected pupils although the response to the activities arranged is sometimes disappointing.

52. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and personal development are a strength. Mentors from industry support pupils who need to consider their plans for the future and, in school, staff provide extra mentoring for groups of pupils who are approaching their GCSE examinations. The ICT staff provide revision opportunities on Saturdays. All pupils have opportunities to assess their own personal and academic progress during their review days which will take place early in the spring term and again in the summer term. Pupils discuss their educational and personal progress with their tutors and set one personal and two academic targets.

53. Since the inspection of 1996 good progress has been made with regard to the assessment of pupils' academic performance and the use made of the data collected. Greater consistency across the school has been achieved. Pupils are now more involved in managing their own learning, particularly through the annual review days when individual pupils agree targets with their tutors. Targets are regularly reviewed in most subject areas.

54. The school now receives data from national tests at the end of pupils' primary school years, and this is supported by the school's own standardised testing of pupils' cognitive ability in Year 7. The information gained allows a forecast to be made of what each individual should achieve, and further tests at the end of Year 9 provide a check on progress made. Data from these tests and from national tests in English, mathematics and science are well co-ordinated by senior staff, and it is then the responsibility of departments to analyse them by gender and by ethnic group.

55. This is done very well for pupils learning English as an additional language and also in respect of those with special educational needs. It is also very well done in English as a subject, where there is effective dialogue between teachers and pupils about standards, levels, grades and targets; this is supported by some very good marking, so that pupils understand where they are at and what they need to do to improve. Most other subjects are well established in the use of assessment data, though there are still shortcomings, for example, in geography and to a lesser extent in music. Overall, procedures are good.

56. The use of assessment data to guide the planning of the curriculum is also good. Information is well

used to group pupils according to their prior attainment in several subjects, for example, modern languages and mathematics. However, the school does not yet identify gifted and talented pupils from whom more could be expected, though it is planning to do so as part of the local education authority's response to the Excellence in Cities initiative.

57. The procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and the strategies for the reviewing of individual educational plans and statements are very good. The learning support assistants make a very effective contribution towards the general well-being of the pupils through the good relationships they have built up, and they play a major role in developing positive attitudes and outcomes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The school has very effective links with parents and parents are pleased with the education the school provides. Parents who completed the questionnaire are unanimous in their agreement that the school expects their child to work hard and do their best. They are particularly pleased with the standards of teaching, their children's progress and with the way the school is helping them to become mature and responsible. The very large majority are pleased with the school management, the standards of behaviour and the way they feel they can approach the school with concerns or questions. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were unanimous in their agreement that the school's promotion of racial harmony is a major strength.

59. Some parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The school Smart Shop makes excellent provision for study support supplemented by a programme of activities including opportunities to learn first aid and other health related activities, child care and drama. At present the large majority of pupils attending the Smart Shop are from Years 7 and 8, and the school does not provide a wide range of clubs which would encourage other pupils to pursue and develop hobbies and interests. ICT, physical education and the careers programme make good provision for activities out of school hours. However, inspectors found that parents' concern is justified, and that the extra-curricular programme is not extensive. Opportunities are missed to extend and enrich pupils' learning through activities beyond the classroom.

60. A significant minority of parents have concerns about the amount of homework but opinions are divided on whether there is too little or too much, and inspection findings suggest that homework is mainly appropriate and used well by teachers. Pupils in Year 7 say that those of them who attend the Mosque after school sometimes have difficulty in fitting in all their studies. The school has made very good provision for parents to share concerns with staff through the half-yearly review and the opportunity to meet all class teachers, and through annual parents' evenings, careers evenings to discuss options, and special information evenings arranged by the careers co-ordinator for parents of Year 11 pupils. The school always welcomes parents who have any concerns to discuss them with the pastoral staff and, when necessary, provides language translators. The pastoral staff and the educational social worker work very closely with parents to support pupils if there are any concerns about their well-being, behaviour or attendance.

61. Procedures to support parents who have recently arrived in the country are very good indeed. Even when families move on to a different school catchment area many parents prefer that their children remain at Moor End because they are happy with the welcome and support that the whole family receives from the school. Parents have very good access to the headteacher and other staff, who talk to groups of parents at the Mosque, and regularly visit families at home. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Parents are involved at every stage of their children's progress and with the school's assessment procedures. They help their children to decide targets and individual education programmes and they have access to guidance from external agencies and a specialist career adviser. Parents of pupils who have visual impairment enjoy similarly close and profitable links with the school.

62. The school has many good procedures to provide information for parents. Information is provided in Urdu and English and other appropriate translations are available. Pupils enjoy taking part in the open evening which welcomes prospective parents to see the school's work and facilities. The prospectus is well produced and provides a realistic picture of the school. Parents receive a copy of the twice-yearly

review sheet which details pupils' progress and the educational and personal targets which each pupil has agreed with their tutor. At the previous inspection in 1996, reports were judged to be insufficiently evaluative. At present pupils' annual reports give a good evaluation of pupils' academic and personal achievements and progress and the effort they have made with their studies in each subject. The monthly newsletter keeps parents well informed, for example, most recently about the progress of plans for the major refurbishment of the school building, extra-curricular activities, community projects, extra Saturday revision classes and a visit by five pupils to Cambridge University.

63. Pupils' planners include useful advice for pupils and their parents, for example, on preparing for examinations, study skills, spelling and literacy skills, and a weekly space for comments by parents and teachers. Planners provide effective communication, but sometimes homework set is not adequately recorded, for example, in English, and teacher checking could be more rigorous. Planners provide a major link between teachers and parents which enables parents to make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The overall leadership and management of the school are good. Since the previous inspection in 1996, a new headteacher has been appointed, and a clear sense of purpose and direction has been established. There is a determination to sustain and improve standards, and to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve their full potential as integral members of a multi-cultural school community. Recent initiatives, notably the successful bid for technology college status in 1999, place the school in a strong position as it enters its next phase of development.

65. The governing body is conscientious and committed to the school's well-being. Their business is discharged well through a clear committee structure and regular programme of meetings. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have strong and productive links with the headteacher and staff. The governors' positive role in strategic planning is clearly evident in their support for the technology college bid, and their successful negotiation of a private finance initiative. Through the headteacher, they check on standards in the school, and receive regular reports from subject heads. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well, including setting challenging targets for GCSE examination results. Their action plan in response to the previous report has mainly been successful, although arrangements for religious education require further improvement.

66. The leadership of the headteacher is good, and his appointment in 1998 has resulted in considerable development and a sharper focus on raising standards. The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils – his ambition for the school is endorsed by the governors, and supported by the senior leadership team and staff generally. A dynamic agenda for development is in place which is leading to successful improvement, notably in the successful technology college bid, and the private finance initiative which will bring much-needed accommodation refurbishment. Staff and pupils are responding well to the challenging pace at which improvements are evolving, with positive impact in a number of important areas. The inherited budget deficit has been almost eliminated, and reviews of curriculum and staffing structures have taken place. School development planning and subject performance reviews have been introduced, linked to the developing use of data relating to pupils' prior attainment as a basis for checking on their progress. Suitable arrangements for performance management have been introduced as a development of the school's own established procedures.

67. The headteacher and senior leadership team work well together to provide consistent leadership and support across the school. Their roles are explicit, with clear responsibilities for annual performance review and target setting with subjects; in addition to their wide-ranging senior team responsibilities, all carry considerable teaching loads. Pastoral support is well managed within an effective year system, but there is need to develop the role of the form tutor in monitoring pupils' academic and personal development.

68. Subjects are well managed and organised generally, and are increasingly using prior attainment data to monitor pupils' progress and set targets for improvement. However, with the exception of English, ICT and design and technology, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet well developed. As a result, in the majority of subjects, there is insufficient debate about teaching skills and how pupils learn. Strategies such as the regular scrutiny by subject heads of pupils' books and teachers' marking, or their

observation and review of lessons were not evident in the majority of subjects. This area of management responsibility is a weakness which requires greater emphasis in the work of subject heads and the senior leadership team.

69. The special educational needs department is very well led. The co-ordinator gives clear educational direction and guidance and ensures that the department runs smoothly and consistently. All the staff in the department are committed to a high standard of work from pupils, and improvement in learning. Departmental procedures and projected targets are firmly based on very comprehensive, secure assessment data which tracks individuals' progress throughout school life. Resources are adequate, enabling the curriculum to be taught effectively. The accommodation is well placed centrally, and is a very acceptable learning environment. All statutory requirements of the Code of Practice are met.

70. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been good. The school's strategic planning has been strengthened, and is now closely linked to the budget. Progress has been satisfactory in tackling the other key issues from the previous report. At the same time, standards in national tests at age 14, and in GCSE results have steadily improved, alongside the development of performance reviews and target-setting for improvement in subjects. In addition to reduction in the budget deficit, notable progress has been made in the successful introduction of educational initiatives designed to support the school in raising standards, such as investors in people, the basic skills quality mark and technology college status. Subject priorities now form part of the whole-school development plan and provide a secure focus for review and evaluation by the senior leadership team.

71. Taken overall, staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate for the maintenance of the curriculum.

72. Overall the match of staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory though the absence of one teacher in mathematics means that more than one teacher teaches some sets. Some problems related to the match of qualification and experience of teachers to the needs of the curriculum are mostly unresolved since the previous inspection: there remain insufficient teachers of music and religious education to deliver a full curriculum. Whilst staffing problems in geography have been resolved very recently, those for history remain so that a high number of non-specialist teachers are deployed.

73. The school has set in place good strategies for appraisal and performance management, and has gained the Investor in People award. There is strong commitment to professional development closely linked to the school's development priorities. The induction of newly qualified teachers is satisfactory.

74. Staffing costs are high for historic reasons linked to the decline in pupil numbers. A high proportion of staff carry responsibility allowances, and spending on technical and learning support staff is well above average. However, support teachers and learning assistants are well deployed to make an essential contribution to the good progress of pupils with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language.

75. The accommodation as it now stands is unsatisfactory: there is a lengthy history of neglect of the buildings causing extensive disrepair, and unsatisfactory standards of cleaning and maintenance. There are, however, sufficient teaching spaces to deliver the curriculum effectively and the school has successfully entered into partnership with a commercial company in a private finance initiative which will refurbish the school, and provide cleaning and maintenance for the next 30 years. This should resolve the current unsatisfactory situation.

76. Teachers work hard to minimise the shortcomings, and provide purposeful learning areas. There remain issues of serious concern. The areas of flat roof and sky lighting are in parts in poor condition. As a result, water leaks into the design and technology areas, creating safety problems because it makes floors dangerously slippery and blows the wiring of extractor fans that are themselves out of date. There are other health and safety issues which require urgent attention: paths used by the whole school to the playground during fire drills are unsafe, being broken at one side and too narrow at the other; this second set of steps is partially blocked at the top by a large unrepaired hole in the path caused by a collapsed drain. The all-weather surface in physical education also is in an unsafe condition because of litter and broken glass.

77. Examples of intrusion onto the premises by members of the public were observed during the inspection. There is no security fence around the premises and there is much vandalism during the evening and at the weekend. Currently fifty-one windows are broken and awaiting repair as part of the imminent refurbishment programme, and sprayed paint has heavily defaced walls facing the field. The gardens and recreational areas around the buildings are poorly maintained. Litter is a cause for concern in many areas, and there are insufficient litter bins provided to try to improve the situation.

78. Resources are generally satisfactory, and there has been considerable investment in improving and developing resources for learning over the past two years. However, the welcome recent expenditure on computers masks some remaining shortages, for example, in geography where there is a severe shortage of books. Resources are inadequate in art and religious education, and in music there are still insufficient instruments and other equipment. The library is well placed at the centre of the school and well-spent investment has raised its profile and increased its use by some departments, though the art stock is unsatisfactory because it lacks multi-cultural art books.

79. The school is in the early stages of receiving additional funding from the Technology College Trust; consequently the number of computers is only broadly average, although higher than in many local schools. Some strands such as the network to support the curriculum and equipment, which would turn the library into a multi-media learning centre, are not yet in place.

80. Systems for financial planning are good. The budget is carefully planned each year and is effectively administered. The headteacher and new bursar have worked hard to ensure that the budget is secure. Forecast implications are clearly understood, although a longer-term projection than the current one-year cycle would be helpful in confirming future staffing structures. Principles of best value are applied effectively, and specific grant is always used for its designated purpose. Financial control is good, and regular budget statements are monitored carefully by the bursar, headteacher and governors.

81. The school receives well above average funding per pupil as a result of additional monies received from the successful technology college bid, and from the funding for ethnic minorities pupils. Attainment on entry is well below average, and the school serves an area of considerable disadvantage. However, outcomes in examination results are well above average compared with schools in similar circumstances. Teaching and learning are good, and pupils achieve well. School management is good and pupils' behaviour is secure. Taking all these factors into account, the school is providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of educational provision in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1) Improve the curriculum by:

- ensuring that sufficient time is allowed for religious education in Key Stages 3 and 4;
(see paragraphs 6, 29, 185, 187)
- ensuring that appropriate time is allocated to music, history and geography in Key Stage 3;
(see paragraphs 6, 29, 132, 145, 169, 174)
- reviewing current opportunities for pupils' course options in Key Stage 4.*
(see paragraphs 30, 118)

2) Improve the quality of subject management by:

- improving the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in subjects;
(see paragraphs 68, 93, 98, 107, 116, 145)
- identifying those aspects of teaching and learning which require improvement;
(see paragraphs 68, 98, 107, 116)
- disseminating widely the good range of successful teaching and learning in the school.
(see paragraphs 19, 20, 107)

3) Improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils (mainly boys) by:

- consolidating the effective on-call systems for central support;
(see paragraphs 14, 26, 49)
- developing improved strategies for teaching and learning, and the management of challenging behaviour in the classroom;
(see paragraphs 20, 26, 113, 127, 134, 158)
- monitoring the use and effectiveness of agreed strategies for rewards and sanctions.
(see paragraphs 14, 49)

In addition to the key issues, the following should be considered:

- improving the provision of specialist teaching in history;
(see paragraphs 72, 144, 145)
- developing the role of form tutor; *
(see paragraphs 45, 67)
- increasing the range of activities beyond the classroom and enrichment opportunities outside the normal curriculum;
(see paragraphs 33, 173, 180)
- in conjunction with the forthcoming improvements to accommodation, reducing the incidence of litter and promoting pupils' awareness/concern for the school environment.
(see paragraphs 17, 46, 75, 76, 77)

* issues identified for improvement in the current school development plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	139
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	19	47	28	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	705	-
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	312	-

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	38	-
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	248	-

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	421

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.0
National comparative data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	70	70	140

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	38	26
	Girls	59	42	34
	Total	103	80	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	74 (31)	57 (51)	43 (50)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	46 (6)	27 (36)	11 (15)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	42	24
	Girls	45	51	34
	Total	75	93	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54 (45)	66 (61)	41 (53)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (13)	33 (38)	17 (29)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	75	91	166

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	20	68	72
	Girls	32	78	85
	Total	52	146	157
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	31 (28)	88 (86)	95 (93)
	National	47 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	33 (31.8)
	National	38.4 (38)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	12
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	35
Pakistani	369
Bangladeshi	19
Chinese	1
White	244
Any other minority ethnic group	22

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	20	-
Black – African heritage	2	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	1	-
Pakistani	41	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	108	-
Other minority ethnic groups	5	-

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	47.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	386

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	19.3
Key Stage 4	19.4

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	2079843
Total expenditure	2070395
Expenditure per pupil	2761
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	9448

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	750
Number of questionnaires returned	93

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	53	8	5	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	56	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	51	5	2	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	42	23	3	3
The teaching is good.	37	56	3	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	49	11	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	39	6	5	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	46	19	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	32	51	3	2	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	50	6	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	38	17	2	9

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

83. The standards of attainment of pupils at both 14 and 16 are below the national average. Results in English tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 9 have risen over the last three years, but the trend has been erratic. Attainment at the age of 14 is now just below national average, the difference between boys' and girls' performance being no greater than that in most schools. Compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils, English results are well above average. An appeal against the 1999 results, which were well below national average, resulted in substantial upgrading and an acceptance by the examining board that there had been 'poor service'. 2000 results were well above national average because of the unusually high proportion of pupils gaining higher levels. Whilst this year group (at present in Year 10) is undoubtedly a stronger one in English terms, evidence from their work in lessons and files does not substantiate the well above average higher level results.

84. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is below the national expectation. Pupils are strongest in reading aloud, listening, and extended writing. The first two combine when classes are looking at text, and pupils' effort and attention result in sound understanding and some appreciation of the writer's intentions and craft. Most pupils have good listening skills which are well used both in class discussion and in group work. Written work is neat and pupils of all abilities are able to write at length or take concise notes. Pupils are less successful in contributing to class discussion. They listen closely, but usually not deeply enough. Whilst over half are willing to take part, they often do so with short, unexplained answers. Too many are used to uncritically following the teacher's line of thought and reacting to questions rather than thinking about and extending original ideas.

85. GCSE results have improved since the 1996 inspection in terms of increased entry, increased proportions of pupils gaining grades A*-C and A*-G, and more pupils gaining grades A*/A. In 2000, English language results were below national average but well above the average for similar schools. The achievement of boys has improved generally, this being most marked in their English literature results. The 2000 English literature results were amongst the best in the school and well above national average, although the school entered only a third of pupils against the four-fifths typical of most schools.

86. The evidence of pupils' work and the lessons observed showed that Year 11 pupils' attainment is below the nationally expected level. They do best in written work which they see as very important, sometimes to the detriment of oral work. The more able demonstrate high level skills in analysing and interpreting literature, and have the confidence to begin essays with an original and interesting statement: 'Ghosts have puzzled humans for hundreds of years' being the opening to a paragraph setting the tone for a comparison of two texts with a supernatural theme. In group discussion most are comfortable using Standard English. Reading standards are less secure than is the case with younger pupils. As in Year 9, pupils' skills in class discussion are weaker. Pupils revising poetry through notes which they had prepared in groups were limited in their ability to support or disagree with ideas by drawing on their wider knowledge or experience.

87. The range of test results and scores available to the school indicate that pupils' attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below national average, with a low overall verbal scores. From this low baseline pupils make good progress in both key stages. This is because of good teaching, very well organised and appropriate work, and the clear commitment to succeed by the vast majority of pupils and all teachers. In Years 7 to 9, where they are now taught in mixed ability groups, pupils make good progress in learning to work in groups mixed by gender and cultural background. This results in civilized, tolerant attitudes. They learn to analyse ideas, agree views, and structure written work when teachers choose stimulating materials, ask open-ended questions, and plan work to suit the range of pupil abilities. A Year 8 class made very good progress in responding to a Blake poem because they were expected to explain their ideas, and refer back to the poem for evidence. Some had learnt to integrate quotation into writing; higher attainers were able to explain that the schoolmaster's 'cruel eye' in the poem was metaphorical; all understood the theme of restriction creating unhappiness and realised that schoolrooms had changed since Blake's time!

88. This good achievement continues in the GCSE years, where there is a tight focus towards the knowledge and skills needed for the final examination. Teachers take considerable care to ensure that

tasks and language are appropriate to pupils' abilities, and that pupils know exactly what to do to achieve success. In a very good Year 10 lesson pupils in groups faced a time challenge to sequence a poem which had been cut up. They inevitably read and discussed the poem in detail, looking for clues and inferences to understand its flow. This then formed the basis for an examination of the personal and cultural messages in the poem ('Teenage Seduction'), and the moral and practical issues related to it.

89. Pupils with English as an additional language, the visually impaired, and those with special educational needs all make very good progress, as shown in the reduction in non-entries, and the improving pass rates in public examinations. This is because teachers are highly aware of these pupils, very sensitive to what will enable them to increase in confidence and skill, and thoughtful about how to deal with practical issues which arise. All groups are very well integrated into classroom practice. In one class the teacher, having had prepared ready-brailled notes for a visually impaired pupil, checked that he had understood the implications of an illustration. When there was reading round the class, pupils appreciated the lively expression in his reading.

90. Overall the teaching and learning observed was good, and there is a high proportion of very good lessons. Lessons are well planned, and pupils very well managed in a range of circumstances. In two very good lessons mixed pupil groupings were very effectively used to increase pupils' empathy with characters and situations: the Jews in Nazi Germany in Friedrich's; migrant farmworkers during the American depression in 'Of Mice and Men'. They learnt to understand the language of prejudice and persuasion in the former; how low status and esteem affects people in the latter. In their use of encouragement and praise, the avoidance of simple exercises, and the demands set by targets for pupils, teachers show that they expect pupils to give of their best and succeed. The work of a GCSE pupil achieving grade A for coursework was annotated by the teacher to show how even further improvement could be effected, and an A* target was set. A strength of English teaching is the regular, consistent and detailed marking of written work, which is a key factor in the raising of standards.

91. There are weaknesses in some teaching. Some aspects of teaching style can become too brisk and intimidating, as happened in a Year 7 class where the teacher talked too much and too quickly, imposing ideas which were only half understood by pupils. The aims of a lesson are not always made clear enough for pupils to see the value of a specific activity or approach. This resulted in a Year 10 class studying Captain Scott's diary not realising the usefulness of discussing its language, and becoming unsettled. The same teacher was very successful with another class who were engaged in group role play because they fully understood how this approach was helping them towards a written task. In a minority of lessons teachers are insufficiently aware of, or unwilling to challenge, pockets of quiet inattention and lack of involvement. A more general weakness is in class discussion where teachers ask too few challenging, supplementary, or extending questions. This results in too much passive listening, and pupils too rarely expressing original or unusual ideas.

92. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They show interest, give much effort to written work, and behave well. Classes are sociable and civilized, reflecting the very good and harmonious relationships between pupils and with teachers, although small groups of disaffected boys can be testing in Years 10 and 11.

93. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has been sustained, and there is much better use of information and communication technology. Examination results have been improved even as the number of pupils being entered for examinations has significantly increased. Very thorough and accurate assessment systems, supported by detailed and informative marking, are a strength of the department. All this stems from the combined efforts of a skilled and committed team of experienced teachers, very well led by the head of department. There is a strong departmental drive for raising standards, which is well supported by exemplary organisation and paperwork. Regular meetings, moderated assessments, and monitoring written work enable the work of the department to be scrutinised, but there is no adequate system for regularly monitoring lessons and for enabling teachers to watch each other at work to learn from each other's strengths.

94. Because of the way in which its philosophy is put into practice, and its emphasis on media and literature work, the English department makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils. This is very apparent in the careful choice of materials made so that multicultural, topical and controversial issues are sensitively and appropriately taught.

Key skills across the curriculum – literacy

95. Strategies for improving pupils' literacy skills are good. The positive impact which they are having is reflected in the examination results, and in more planned opportunities within lessons. Literacy skills are better than those at the time of the previous inspection as evidenced in the improved reading and writing standards shown by many pupils. These have resulted from very thorough analysis of pupils' literacy levels, an additional English lesson with a language skills emphasis for Year 7 pupils, and an insistence that all subject areas have a literacy target in their development plan. The school has been awarded a Basic Skills Quality Mark in recognition of its provision.

96. The literacy levels of pupils joining the school at the age of 11 remain low. Their ability to use language is, however, improving partly because of literacy hour work in primary schools. The school has built on this initiative by organising three summer literacy schools for Year 6 primary pupils, and by providing a weekly 'literacy hour' of its own for Year 7 pupils. Here they are taught in smaller groups, some with a focus on basic skills, others with an emphasis on language awareness. In this and other ways the English department makes a very significant contribution to pupils' general literacy skills. The results of reading scores and NFER tests are issued to all departments so that teachers are more aware of pupils' language issues. Results are also carefully analysed to determine trends and to ascertain progress, and to examine how different groups within the school population are performing.

97. Most pupils can read lengthy text, understanding the main points and extracting information. Because reading aloud is a regular feature in many lessons most pupils are willing and confident at this, but too often such reading is too quiet or rushed, and few pupils read expressively. Given their abilities pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation standards are good. Most are able to communicate at length in their writing. Teachers' use of writing frames to support structure is more widespread. Pupils' listening skills are very good, although too many pupils are not made to think deeply enough in class discussion. Almost all pupils are comfortable with colloquial speech and many adopt suitable Standard English in group work. Their contributions to class discussion, however, are too often reliant on the teacher's ideas and frequently too brief. This was a weakness in the previous report. Where teachers make use of more open-ended class discussion, as in art, religious education and mathematics, good learning takes place. Technical vocabulary is well integrated into the teaching of mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, art and music. In a science lesson pupils gained from having to identify and use key words by fixing labels onto an enlarged diagram.

98. Classroom practice is at least satisfactory in all subjects but there is no effective means of checking how, and how well, literacy issues are handled in lessons. As a result pupils' speaking skills are being insufficiently encouraged in some subjects and in others, such as music, little attention is paid to correct spelling, even of specialist terms.

99. The large central library is bright and welcoming. Following criticism in the previous report old and inappropriate stock has been withdrawn. Successful efforts have been made to increase the range of fiction, and generally to reflect the diversity of cultures both in the community and beyond. Funding remains low, and the library is not open after school. It is well used both at break and lunchtime, and borrowing rates are increasing, partly as the result of a reading award scheme for Years 7 to 9 run jointly with the English department. Subjects such as art, science and geography encourage library use by setting research homeworks, and liaison between all subjects and the librarian is good. Despite the lack of computers, the library has developed well under the care of the librarian and the teacher in charge. It is a valuable, well managed and well organised resource which provides effective support for literacy and study skills.

MATHEMATICS

100. Standards in mathematics are below the national average. The attainment of 14 year-old pupils in the 2000 national tests was below the average in comparison with all schools, but well above the average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. Pupils' test results were lower than in English but higher than in science. Although in most years boys produce higher results than girls, in the 2000 tests the girls out-performed the boys, as they did in English and science. However, there is no consistent pattern to suggest that there is a significant variation from the national picture in which boys perform better than girls in mathematics tests. Results are gradually improving. The trend in results is lower than the national trend, partly because the ability profile of the pupils differs from year group to year group.

101. In the 2000 GCSE examinations the number of pupils obtaining A*-C grades was below the national average, but well above the average for pupils in similar schools. The proportion obtaining GCSE certification within the A*-G grade range was close to the national average. English and mathematics results were similar. Overall, most girls performed a little better in mathematics than in their other subjects, but boys less well. As in the national tests at the end of Year 9, GCSE results since the previous inspection have varied in line with the differences in the ability profile of different year groups. Likewise, there is no pattern in GCSE results to indicate significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

102. The standard of work observed in lessons and pupils' exercise books reflects the examination statistics. The overall attainment of pupils, though below average, is improving. When account is taken of pupils' levels of attainment before coming to the school most achieve well and significantly improve their levels of performance. They make good progress and attain standards much higher than predicted at the time of their joining the school in Year 7. For example, in the 2000 national tests at the end of Year 9, two-thirds of pupils added at least two National Curriculum levels to the levels they attained before joining the school.

103. Pupils are now given greater experience in using and applying mathematics than at the time of the previous inspection, particularly in relation to investigating the properties of number. Most pupils can generate and tabulate data and interpret information presented to them in graphical and tabular form. They are familiar with the more common geometrical shapes and most can understand and describe the various types of angles, triangles, quadrilaterals and polygons. All teachers emphasise key mathematical words as part of the whole school literacy drive, and this is enhancing the pupils' capacity to explain their work. Pupils are given experience in the required areas of mathematics but, despite rehearsing basic number skills in almost every lesson, many pupils, including some higher attainers, have difficulty with basic arithmetic. The positive impact of the national numeracy strategy on pupils' arithmetic competence is already evident with Year 7 pupils who are showing a greater confidence and skill with their mental arithmetic. The style of mathematics lessons is also being positively influenced by this initiative. For example, learning objectives are usually shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. However, the opportunity to consider the success or otherwise of meeting the objectives at the conclusion is not yet being fully realised. All pupils study the same aspects of the subject at levels that are matched to meet the individual needs of pupils. In both key stages, pupils of different attainment levels, working on common topics, make good progress through the use of appropriate texts and exercises. For example, groups of higher and lower attaining pupils both investigate sequences and patterns, tabulate their results, recognise rules and then describe the rule with degrees of formal expression appropriate to their attainment levels. The support that is provided for visually impaired pupils and for those for whom English is an additional language, is very effective and ensures that they make good progress.

104. The overall quality and strength of teaching in mathematics is good. It is good or very good in equal proportions in six in ten lessons, and satisfactory in the remainder. All the specialist teachers have a good command of the subject and there is a generally high commitment to improving the achievements of the pupils. In the best lessons the teachers fully involve the pupils during the introduction, set realistic tasks that are well matched to individual pupil needs and, through the use of challenging time limits, engender a brisk pace. Teachers are energetic, ensure that lessons have a structure that builds on previous learning, and that consolidation is accompanied by the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. For example, a below average attaining group of Year 8 pupils was enthusiastically involved with the teacher in discussing the properties of numbers. The teacher radiated infectious enthusiasm that resulted in a very brisk, challenging pace and the use of creative examples captured the pupils'

imagination. The work matched individual pupil needs and there was an appropriate balance between allowing pupils to work independently and giving assistance. The teacher's skills and command of the subject included an insight into the difficulties encountered by pupils and, therefore, the facility to measure their understanding and foster confidence and self-esteem. The response of pupils was mature and responsible and the high quality of the relationships helped the teacher to promote their learning and progress. As a result, pupils competently coped with questions at a higher level than generally expected. In less successful lessons there is a slower pace and less challenge. This is sometimes because the teacher does not engage the pupils in explaining the work, and relies too much on the text book for determining the style and content of the lesson. In such lessons, the teacher has to replicate the explanations separately on an individual basis and there is an avoidable loss of pace. Many pupils, therefore, become passive and opportunities are missed to develop and share ideas that extend the levels of knowledge and understanding. For example, an above average attaining set of Year 10 pupils, studying simultaneous equations, readily succeeded with routine tasks without being provided with more challenging work. Consequently, despite the fact that the pupils produced a satisfactory quantity of work, their potential for reaching a higher standard was not fulfilled and their sights were not sufficiently raised.

105. In lessons there is no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls and the vast majority of pupils work well and are very well behaved. The attitude of pupils to their work is positive and, when required, they work in small groups or pairs in a collaborative and cooperative manner. A small minority of pupils requires frequent teacher cajoling and skilful handling to be kept on task. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally very good and the atmosphere in almost all lessons is characterised by cooperation and harmony. Teachers know their pupils well and work effectively with support assistants to meet the requirements of those with special educational needs. Like the visually impaired pupils and those for whom English is an additional language, pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into their classes. A particular strength of the relationships in almost all lessons is the respect and regard shown by pupils to their peers when they are either asking or answering questions; they do so without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. Although most pupils take a pride in their written work, the quality of solutions is often lacking in clarity. Learning is good, but is sometimes impeded because the lack of structure fails to foster understanding and retention. This applies particularly in algebra in which a lack of systematic, rigorous presentation often inhibits progress.

106. The department has good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' performance. The use of assessment data has improved since the last inspection and is now effectively used in establishing long-term individual pupil and departmental targets. The scope for advancing the use of the data to create short-term targets that speedily identify under-achievement is recognised by the department. The use of ICT in mathematics lessons has been inadequate, and the requirement to make greater use of ICT to enrich and support learning in mathematics is included in the department's plans.

107. The department is well led and efficiently organised. It has cohesion and a clear sense of common purpose. Documentation is practical and continuously evolving. There is scope for improving the monitoring of teaching so that good teaching practice is shared and all pupils benefit from the strengths of the department.

Numeracy across the curriculum

108. The school has adopted a pro-active approach to promoting numeracy across the curriculum and provision has improved since the previous inspection. Most subject areas have appropriate policies in place and standards of numerical proficiency across the curriculum are satisfactory. However, except for most Year 7 pupils whose primary school experience of the national numeracy strategy has resulted in greater competence with number work, a lack of fluency with tables and hesitant mental arithmetic sometimes inhibits progress. This weakness is being satisfactorily tackled in almost every mathematics lesson by the inclusion of regular, short doses of mental arithmetic. Pupils' measurement and data handling skills are sufficient to ensure that learning in a range of subjects is enhanced. For example, pupils' measurement skills are effectively used in geography in order to carry out calculations relating to maps and scales. Their understanding of 20th century American history is illuminated by the effective use of data handling skills in analysing a range of statistics. In science, pupils' numerical skills positively contribute to their learning and progress. For example, higher attaining pupils in physics display competence in using a range of algebraic skills in manipulating formulae to solve speed problems.

SCIENCE

109. In 2000, the pupils' results in national tests at age 14 were well below the average for all schools. However they were in line with the average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Girls did better in these tests than boys. Average attaining pupils performed very well in these tests compared with their peers in similar schools. Over the past four years results have fluctuated depending on the calibre of the particular intake. At the end of their compulsory education pupils are entered for either GCSE double award science or the three separate sciences biology, physics and chemistry. The choice of paper the pupils sit is determined as a result of well-structured on-going assessment procedures. Although comparison with the national picture is difficult due to the two populations sitting different examinations, in general the A*-C pass rate in 2000 was below the average that would be expected if all students did double award science. However the proportion of pupils gaining at least an A*-G grade was above the national average. Over the past four years, although there has been some fluctuation in individual subjects, both A*-C and A*-G pass rates have improved. The proportion of pupils gaining a A*-C grade in physics is generally below the other separate sciences due in part to the higher mathematical skills required in this subject.

110. The range of inspection evidence, including lesson observation and work scrutiny, indicates that throughout the school standards of work are below the national average. By the age 14 pupils' attainment is below average for their age although there is a steady improvement as pupils get older. Recent changes to the science curriculum in this age range is ensuring that the pupils' knowledge and understanding of biology, chemistry and physics are improving. For example, higher-attaining pupils are able to classify substances as acids and alkalis by the use of universal indicator to measure their pH-value. Middle-attaining pupils know that foods contain vitamins, minerals, fats and proteins and why these are important in a balanced diet. Lower-attaining pupils were able to identify successfully the difference between animal and plant cells. Experimental and practical skills are weak when pupils enter the school but these improve gradually. For example, pupils are able to set up apparatus to measure the temperature change as ice is changed to steam. In Years 10 and 11 attainment is also below average for their age. However, pupils continue to build on their previous knowledge of science to improve their understanding of scientific concepts and theories. Higher-attaining pupils have a good knowledge of the structure of the heart and its function in relation to the circulatory system. Average-attaining pupils appreciate that there are three different types of rock and that these are converted into each other via the rock cycle. Lower-attaining pupils have some knowledge of the different types of fossil fuels although their understanding of where these fuels' energy comes from is limited. In some groups there are higher standards of knowledge and understanding. For example, a group of Year 11 physics pupils had a very good understanding of dynamics. They were able to calculate correctly the take-off speed of an athlete knowing his mass and the gravitational force acting on him.

111. Overall achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is well below average for their age. However, in Years 7, 8 and 9 they achieve well over time. In lessons they acquire knowledge and understanding of science well, as a result of good teaching combined with positive pupils' attitudes. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' achievement is also good in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of the National Curriculum including scientific enquiry.

112. The department makes a good contribution to the development of the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Key words are used in lessons so that pupils can more easily access scientific vocabulary. Writing frames are used to improve the pupils' scientific writing skills. However, pupils get little experience of information communication technology (ICT) in their science lessons and this limits their interest and motivation in science. The lack of computer facilities in the past has limited the department's ability to fully deliver the science ICT requirement. Pupils with special educational needs and visually impaired pupils make good progress in their science lessons as a result of the good support given to them.

113. Pupils' attitudes are good overall. The majority of pupils are well behaved and display positive attitudes towards their work. They collaborate well in groups during practical lessons and are mindful of their own and others' safety. They have good relationships with their class teachers, which supports their learning. However, some groups of middle-attaining pupils, particularly boys, display challenging behaviour which is effectively managed by their teachers.

114. Teaching and learning are good. It is good in over four-fifths of the lessons observed. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and convey scientific ideas and concepts to pupils with clarity. Pupils are well managed, particularly in practical work. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils in terms of achievement and behaviour, and are hard working and very committed to their pupils' progress. Pupils' behaviour is well managed. However, only a limited range of teaching styles is employed and this prevents pupils taking a more central role in their own learning. The day-to-day marking of pupils' books, although satisfactory, does not generally highlight their strengths and weaknesses or show them how to improve. In Years 7,8 and 9 pupils are not generally aware of the National Curriculum level at which they are working. Overall, however, teaching is very competent and well directed to the needs of the pupils.

115. Accommodation, although adequate, is in need of refurbishment and does not present an attractive environment in which to learn science.

116. The department is well managed and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers are well-qualified and experienced, and technicians work hard and efficiently to ensure that the department operates smoothly on a routine basis. Health and safety requirements are met and due regard is given to safety. Teachers work very well together as a team. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' capabilities and these are used well so that pupils receive a science curriculum that is appropriate to their needs. However, at present, there is no direct observation of teaching that would serve to share good practice and improve teaching and learning.

117. Since the previous inspection the department has made good improvement. The quality of teaching has improved. New schemes of work are more focused on scientific enquiry resulting in the better delivery of this attainment target. The quality of assessment data and its use to set targets for pupils has improved. In order to further improve the department needs to ensure the teaching of the science ICT requirement as computer facilities become more available, improve the evaluation of teaching and learning, and develop its day-to-day marking policy.

ART AND DESIGN

118. GCSE results in 2000, for grades A*-C and average points scores, were in line with the national average. All pupils entered gained an A*-G pass. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when results were well below average. Over the past three years in particular, there has been a good trend for improvement in boys' results. Although higher A*/A passes have remained below average, the department gained its first A* grade in 2000; this was achieved by a boy. Overall A*-A passes for boys in 2000 were above the national average. Pupils entered for the art examination achieve well in comparison with their other subjects. Art operates a non-selective, inclusive policy for pupils choosing the subject as a GCSE option. This positive, welcoming approach enables the subject to be open to all pupils. There is, however, some pupil disaffection; there was a high non-entry rate in 2000 as a number of pupils eventually opted out of the course. In spite of art's increasing success in GCSE this is an issue which the school needs to tackle.

119. Standards of work seen in lessons for pupils in Year 9, at the end of Key Stage 3, and in Year 11, at the end of Key Stage 4, are average and achievement is satisfactory. This confirms the consolidation and trend for improvement seen in the recent examination results. In all year groups, there are greater strengths in pattern, colour and textiles work, for example, in Year 8 work based on the symbolism of Aboriginal art or in Year 7 mosaic studies arising from the work of Gaudi. Older pupils, in Year 11, make particularly good use of pattern in their work-based on the designs of Macintosh. The diversity of the pupils' ethnic and cultural backgrounds is also used well throughout the department, with Asian and Islamic artistic influences positively informing the pupils' work. The teaching encourages creative and imaginative approaches. However, the range of ability levels, particularly in the GCSE course, can mean a more tentative approach to risk taking by those not so secure in key skills and techniques. Final GCSE exhibition work often showed potentially interesting concepts and interpretations, although some of these had not been sufficiently thought through by the pupils, or backed up by enough preparation work. In order to improve further, the art curriculum requires broadening to include more observational drawing and painting, as well as more opportunities for larger scale painting work.

120. There is good provision both for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language, and they make good progress. For example, there is good support from teachers and learning assistants for visually impaired pupils. In one Year 9 lesson on the theme of "The Material World", a pupil from the unit achieved particularly well in the creation of a mobile using man made and natural objects. The pupil was clear, articulate and confident when sharing this work with the rest of the class at the end of the lesson. Background research was well backed up in Braille, with transcripts which could be easily shared with teachers and other pupils. Such work and effort is openly appreciated and valued by other pupils in the class.

121. Teaching and learning are good. They are never less than satisfactory and are mainly good at both key stages. Art lessons are productive because the teaching approach is clear, properly planned and well focused on encouraging pupil confidence in undertaking practical work. Assessment of work is also good. Pupils retain copies of assessment records in their folders; they are clear as to the levels they are attaining, the progress they are making and their targets for improvement. They co-operate well and attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. Teachers' personal skills as artists are well illustrated through class demonstrations. Good use is also made of the pupils' own work to share strengths and highlight techniques for improvement. Such approaches are often very good for raising the self-esteem of the pupils; for example, in one Year 11 lesson where they were setting up their final GCSE exhibition work. The very good, professional working relationships between pupils and teacher supported their approach to critically analysing each other's work in a positive and open manner. The strong focus on presentation skills enabled very good progress to be made by the group in enhancing their work and showing it in the best light.

122. The leadership and management of the department is good. Both art teachers have experience as heads of department and support each other well. There is very good commitment to the development of the department and the capacity to improve further. Expertise is openly shared and the department provides good facilities for student teachers in training. During the inspection one such teacher contributed significantly to the quality of learning of the pupils through personal experience and subject knowledge. In order to improve further, the department needs to develop its embryonic information and communications technology facilities and contribution. The use of "sketchbooks/ preparation sheets" requires development to allow for more experimentation and the independent collection of resource material by pupils themselves. Library resources for art also require development to improve facilities for independent research in order to augment the research materials available within the art rooms.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. Overall GCSE results in 2000 were below the national average and similar to other subjects in the school. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C was similar to the previous two years. Girls achieved better results than boys in line with the national trend. Results in food technology and electronic products were better than in resistant materials and graphics products.

124. The overall standard of pupils' work seen in Year 9 is below average, although this represents good achievement during Years 7 to 9 because their starting point is very low. Standards of making are mostly good and, appropriately, often focus on techniques which are applicable in industrial situations, such as using computer aided machines for embroidery and for milling, and using jigs and other controlling devices. Pupils are beginning to make satisfactory use of computer aided drawing techniques and link these to manufacturing, for example, in a project to design and make a desk tidy in Year 7 in which shapes designed on computers are transferred to a computer controlled milling machine. Pupils' ability to make considered decisions about both designing and making is not sufficiently developed. They acquire a good range of knowledge and skills, but their ability to select appropriate knowledge or techniques for a particular purpose is weak. Design in most projects at this stage only requires pupils to make decisions about appearance based on their own opinions rather than to meet specific criteria. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000, which indicated average standards, did not take sufficient account of this weakness.

125. The overall standard of pupils' work seen in Year 11 is below average, but shows that pupils are continuing to achieve well during Years 10 and 11 in relation to their starting points. The number of pupils taking examinations in this subject has increased since the previous inspection and many pupils are

achieving better grades, although this is not yet reflected in the proportions achieving grades A*-C. Differences in the examination results in different areas of the subject largely reflect differences in pupils' attainment up to Year 9, but standards in graphics have improved this year because this area was adversely affected by teacher absence last year. Pupils make good use of computers for the presentation of their project work in all areas and, particularly in the GNVQ engineering course, where good use is made of a range of software for designing circuits and for design and manufacture. Standards of making are good in all areas but pupils' designing often lacks well-focussed research and experimentation. Where experimentation is good, particularly in food technology, pupils' GCSE results have improved recently. Pupils can use models to test their ideas and are beginning to use them to try alternatives

126. Teaching and learning are good throughout all years. Although one lesson was unsatisfactory because action was not taken early enough to avoid a group of pupils disrupting learning, the majority of lessons observed were good or very good. There is a consistency in the teaching arising in part from effective monitoring. Lessons are well planned and prepared so that pupils are fully involved throughout. Teachers mostly have a good relationship with pupils, encouraging them whilst ensuring that they work hard. They give very thorough individual help and, through discussion with individuals, ensure that pupils think about their work. They take opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy. Because of this thorough individual approach, pupils learn well, and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress. Also different groups of pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress. However, some of the structures that are designed to ensure that all pupils achieve success tend to limit the progress of higher attaining pupils. In order to further raise standards in all years, teachers need to plan the development of pupils' ability to make decisions progressively through Years 7 to 9 so that, for instance, they learn how to use an experiment to find the best way of resolving a problem or to test an idea against design criteria.

127. Pupils work hard in most lessons and enjoy their work. However, in a minority of lessons, some pupils show indifference and at worst attempt to disrupt the work of others. On the other hand a Year 7 class were sufficiently enthusiastic to start their food technology lesson during lunchtime, and most pupils in a Year 11 graphics products class worked through their break.

128. The department is well led and has been involved in many recent initiatives, for instance, intermediate GNVQ in engineering and intermediate GNVQ in manufacturing have been started this year as has GCSE textiles. A technology week has been introduced which has enabled pupils to extend their understanding of the subject. The subject is involved in a pilot scheme which involves the use of computers for both design and manufacture. These, and other improvements since the previous inspection such as more systematic assessment, improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and better monitoring of both teaching and pupils' progress, have maintained standards whilst raising the numbers entered for GCSE. Other matters raised at the previous inspection, such as encouraging independent learning, and designing against criteria still need further attention. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement. Standards are adversely affected by a leaking roof which requires classes to be moved when it rains and, whilst dust extraction has been improved, fume extraction does not meet current standards, both of which were reported at the previous inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

129. Many pupils come into the school in Year 7 knowing little geography, and standards overall are well below average at this stage.

130. By the age of 14, at the end of Year 9, teachers in 2000 estimated that most pupils were at the national average. The inspection of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work show that most pupils are below the national average in 2001, in contrast with the teacher assessments which are not well moderated.

131. By the age of 16, standards at GCSE in 2000 are significantly below the national average at grades A*-C, despite an improvement by nine per cent over the previous year. The average grade attained was an E compared with a D nationally. Pupils performed less well in geography than in most of their other subjects within the school. Nevertheless, given their low starting points, these results represent satisfactory achievement for these pupils.

132. In class, in Years 7 to 9 pupils build on their prior attainment. Good progress accelerates in Year 9 for the highest attainers when they study how much it costs to make a pair of shoes in one country compared with how much it costs to buy the same shoes in another. The majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress at this stage. Those with a wide range of special educational needs make good progress. A Year 7 pupil with special educational needs, produced a project on earth movements that was a whole National Curriculum level above the general level of her exercise book. There is good special educational needs support from additional teachers and classroom assistants, although there is insufficient support for those pupils for whom English is an additional language in geography, and this is holding back their progress.

133. Higher attaining pupils have not previously opted for GCSE courses in geography. This is changing, but there are more boys than girls in Years 10 and 11, and many of the boys have poor attitudes to work. Consequently standards are generally low in class. The course work scrutinised ranges from average to poor and four pupils, for reasons of poor attendance or poor attitudes have not been entered for the examination in 2001, because they have not produced course work.

134. The behaviour of the great majority of pupils is good. However, progress in both key stages is slowed in some classes by the disruptive behaviour of a significant minority of boys. Procedures for dealing with this disruption are effective, but there is need to develop strategies to modify behaviour and improve attitudes of the pupils concerned.

135. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Half of the teaching observed was good and the rest satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The strength of the teaching lies in the good subject knowledge of the teachers displayed in the way they plan their lessons and organise and explain appropriate materials so that pupils know what they have to do and why. Teachers provide tasks that challenge pupils to think and use the information they are given; this enables them to work together to answer questions and solve problems and gives them access to the higher levels of the National Curriculum, for example, in the Year 9 lessons where good use was made of moral issues in work about world trade in fashion goods. Other good examples of collaborative discussion were seen in the Year 8 work on coasts and the Year 7 work on volcanoes and earthquakes.

136. Every lesson contains strong elements of the teaching of basic skills. The development of literacy is well supported, and there are good plans in place to develop support for numeracy in the same way. Access to computers is limited to half of Year 8 for one lesson per week and there are no computers in the department, so that teachers cannot teach the required part of the National Curriculum through the medium of ICT. Good use is made of a computerised smart board. Pupils enjoy and learn from the visual stimulus of video clips and the smart board, supported by word frames to give shape to their writing about the information gathered.

137. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Teachers assess informally as they support round the class and use this to develop points and correct common errors. Marking varies and does not always show pupils how well they are doing, the standards they are reaching, or how to improve their work. There is not yet common agreement about the measuring of National Curriculum levels. Homework is set and planners are well used as a means of communication, but homework is not always completed: for example, in a group of low attainers in Year 8, only one girl did a simple homework.

138. Following re-structuring, a new departmental team has been recently established which is beginning to tackle the issues of the previous report and to make an impact on standards. Subject leadership is satisfactory, and the department are working effectively together. Appropriate reviews are taking place, for example, in considering various examination syllabuses to match courses more closely to pupils' needs, and in developing a more practical approach to work in Years 7 to 9 in order to raise standards. The time allocation across the subject is below what is expected nationally. Two rooms lack blackout, and there is a shortage of display space. Planned priorities provide a clear guide for future development following a departmental review with the Local Education Authority advisor and a training day to consider and plan future need.

HISTORY

139. In 2000, GCSE results in history were below average. Standards have been below the national average since the previous inspection, and girls in particular have performed less well in history than in their other examination subjects. Given their well below average standards when they join the school, these results represent satisfactory achievement.

140. The standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 10-11 are approaching average, and represent both improvement for boys and girls, and good levels of achievement and progress given their starting points. This improvement results from generally good teaching, well chosen class materials and a clearly applied policy on literacy.

141. Standards indicated by teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 for 2000 were below average, although showing good improvement on 1999. Currently, standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are average, and show secure progress in historical understanding and the use of original sources. Well-prepared materials include a consistent approach to improving pupils' literacy skills. Two classes in Year 7 were each able to understand the causes of the Peasants' Revolt when shown fact sheets and a list of events, which they were able to put into a sequence in a well structured writing frame. Key words and emphasis on vocabulary enhanced the learning of each class. Good examples of numeracy and ICT are used in Year 9, where classes use spreadsheets to show local population growth in the industrial revolution, using original tables of statistics. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 studying for the GCSE, are making good progress with boys and girls achieving equally well. Both are now achieving at roughly average levels, with some achieving the higher grades in written tests. They can understand historical documents and many become skilful in researching projects using the internet. One class in Year 11 was able to construct good written reports about the USA in the 1920s, when stimulated by computer generated material. They achieve good standards of disciplined writing as a result of good teaching and very good materials.

142. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. Their individual learning needs are identified in lesson plans and, since the previous inspection, good learning materials, suited to their needs, have been developed. Some good extra learning support is provided, but there are too many large groups with a wide range of abilities and special needs where no extra support is given. The structured materials and tasks also provide extra stimulus to more able pupils, but there is a need for up-to-date textbooks to enhance the learning of all pupils.

143. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are consistently good in all classes and contribute to their satisfactory progress. They show interest in the subject and can sustain their concentration for long periods. Two classes in Year 9 were combined for a lesson on Hitler, they maintained good behaviour and interest in the computer presentation almost to the end, although more written work could have been introduced at an earlier stage to consolidate their learning. Whilst some progress has been made in stimulating pupil involvement since the previous inspection, many Asian girls remain reluctant to ask questions.

144. Overall, teaching, and the learning that it promotes, are satisfactory. Teaching is mainly satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but it is better in Years 10 to 11, where it is good or very good. There is an unsatisfactory deployment of staff in the lower school, where up to nine non-specialist teachers are used. The planning and organisation of all lessons, together with support materials, is provided by the specialist head of department, which ensures that those classes taught by non-specialists are at a satisfactory level. Assessment, grading and work sampling are also carried out effectively by the specialist head, ensuring that consistent progress is made in those classes. Teaching in the upper school is well planned, well disciplined and challenging. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT, often linked to good use of Powerpoint by the teacher. All the materials for each course are available to pupils on the school network. Since the previous inspection, teachers have adopted a more consistent approach to assessment. A very good database enables targets to be set at National Curriculum levels, and shared with pupils and their parents.

145. The department is led well and the curriculum documents conform to the new National Curriculum requirements. The head of department provides all the teaching and learning materials, all on the ICT network. Direct monitoring of teaching does not occur, but advice, support and guidance are provided for the non-specialist teachers. Accommodation is just satisfactory and printed resources are good, but

there is a serious shortage of textbooks at all levels. The time allocated for the subject is less than usually found. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen, teaching methods and assessment have improved, but the capacity to improve further depends on making better arrangements to deploy specialist teachers to share in the planning and teaching of the history curriculum

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

146. Standards of work in ICT are above average in Years 7 to 9 where achievement is very good, and well above average in Years 10 and 11 where achievement is excellent. This is largely a result of the very good teaching pupils receive and the positive attitudes they bring to the subject.

147. All pupils are entered for a GCSE examination in ICT. Results have been well above the national average for a number of years up to and including the 2000 results. In 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving grade A was above the national average but for the highest *A grade it was below. Boys overall achieved a higher grade in ICT than in any other subject. Girls overall did better in only one other subject.

148. In work seen during the inspection standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average. Pupils enter the school with mixed experiences of ICT but standards overall are well below average, so that the improvement in standards during these first three years represents very good achievement. It is in these first three years that the majority of pupils develop a sound base of essential knowledge and skills. Standards in handling information and in modelling are particularly good. Pupils know the essential elements of data-logging and are aware of the different types of electronic sensors and what they are used for. They know basic database terminology and can distinguish between text and number data. Pupils can enter data into a spreadsheet and use formulae for simple calculations. In one Year 7 class pupils were able to enter two variables and use formulae for simple calculations in a pocket-money exercise. Pupils are aware of the advantages of electronic communication, can use e-mail and know the major Internet search engines.

149. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average. Given their well below average attainment on entry to the school this represents excellent achievement. Pupils can communicate, retrieve and analyse information efficiently and reliably. They can investigate patterns and relationships. They can create a web page from first principles. Design work is of a very high standard and pupils can identify where ICT can be used to solve problems, both real and imaginary. One Year 11 pupil, for example, had analysed the paper-based procedures of Huddersfield Town's football supporters' club and had drawn up a detailed plan for raising the football team's profile in the community. This included preparing a database of members, producing publicity leaflets to promote matches and using spreadsheets for cost analysis.

150. Standards for visually impaired pupils are as high as for other groups. They receive very good support and have laptops to complete class work and homework and access the on-line curriculum. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. An analysis of GCSE results for 2000 shows that there was no significant difference in attainment between this group and the rest of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and often achieve the higher GCSE grades. However, there is a need on a lesson-by-lesson basis to monitor how well they are learning so as to ensure that this group of pupils, especially in Years 7 to 9, achieve as well as other pupils.

151. A number of subjects make a contribution to developing and enhancing pupils' skills in ICT. In design and technology pupils use computers for presentation and electronic design. In textiles pupils use computer-aided embroidery and design systems. Pupils with special educational needs make extensive use of a specialist software programme to reinforce and encourage independent learning. Spreadsheets are used in history to analyse population growth. In modern foreign languages pupils are encouraged to use computers to access language learning materials via the Internet. For careers education, good use is made of specialist CD-Roms and pupils research the Internet for careers information. In English, pupils have used desk-top-publishing software to produce posters but the use of ICT to support learning generally is haphazard, especially for lower attaining pupils. However, subject departments are at different stages of development and have not yet had time to fully utilise the advantages that technology college status has brought, for example, making full use of the Smart Board technology that is now a part of most departments' resource base. There is restricted access to the computer rooms during lesson times and no other resource base, for example, the library, has yet been developed. There is currently insufficient use of ICT in science, mathematics, art, religious education, Urdu, physical education and

music. Some subjects, for example, geography, have detailed plans to incorporate ICT to support learning from September.

152. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge is an important factor in motivating and encouraging pupils. Concepts are explained clearly. Teachers provide straightforward and effective demonstrations of applications. New topics are introduced to combined classes using a computer linked to an overhead projector and involving all ICT teachers in team teaching. These lessons are attended by support and technical staff who are then in a better position to support pupils back in the classroom. Consequently pupils find their lessons interesting and stimulating. They show enthusiasm for the subject and are capable of working independently, attempting to solve for themselves any problems they encounter before asking the teacher for help. Relationships with pupils are very good which gives pupils the confidence to ask questions and risk making mistakes. During the inspection week behaviour observed in lessons was never less than good and was often exemplary.

153. The leadership and management of the department are excellent. The coordinator is exceptionally well qualified. The excellent base of knowledge and skills he brings to the subject permeates the work of the department and is a major factor in how well pupils achieve. Teamwork is encouraged and the assistant coordinator takes an active role in helping to manage the department; together they make a formidable team. The focus throughout is on raising standards and helping pupils achieve. Even though GCSE results are always above the national average the department has switched from a GCSE to a GNVQ qualification partly in the belief that GNVQ provides a better preparation for pupils to continue to improve their attainment in ICT in further and higher education. The department is innovative and imaginative. The ICT curriculum is on-line and ICT lessons in Year 10 now extend beyond the end of the school day. Procedures for the assessment, evaluation and recording of pupils' progress and attainment are very good though more needs to be done to ensure that this data is used to make a difference to pupils' subsequent learning and help them improve. One area for development is to devise a strategy to ensure that pupils who do not have access to a computer at home do not get left behind. The department is aware of this need and the computer rooms are available and staffed from early each morning, lunch times (when approximately fifty pupils each day use the computers) and after school. However, when the extended day is increased from the current two days, access to computers after school could be severely restricted.

154. Although accommodation is otherwise good, rooms have no air circulation systems and become extremely hot. In other respects, since the previous inspection, there have been a number of improvements most notably in new resources and the replacing of outdated technology with new computers.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH AND GERMAN

155. Formal assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2000 indicated that those pupils were in line with the national expectation in French. There was no German. The 2000 GCSE standards in French were well below the national average for grades A*-C but in line for grades A*-G; all pupils achieved at least a grade G. This compares well with those schools which enter a proportion of their pupils for a Certificate of Achievement course. Standards in German were in line with those in French in terms of grades A*-C but well below average for grades A*-G. Results in both languages compared unfavourably with other subjects in the school. Girls' results were better than those of boys in proportions similar to those found nationally. Standards were similar to those seen in the previous inspection in 1996.

156. The standards at the age of 14 as seen during this inspection show an improvement on these outcomes. In line with the assessments made by teachers, standards in both languages at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with the national expectation. In general pupils are good at listening and speaking, though many of those learning English as an additional language have difficulty with pronunciation in French or German. Pupils can read sufficiently well to cope with words, sentences or some longer texts put before them, but writing is a weakness. Some pupils are now using personal computers to obtain materials relevant to language learning from the internet. Low and middle attaining pupils, including many with special educational needs, respond to the challenge of using past tenses.

High attaining pupils cope with longer texts, but they could benefit from more demanding materials.

157. In Years 10 and 11 standards seen are below average, though all pupils are taking full GCSE courses and no easier options are taken. Pupils continue to make progress with all language learning skills. The coursework option introduced two year ago has led to an improvement in writing or, more precisely, word processing in the foreign language; interesting work on the town of Huddersfield was seen. It is, however, still a difficulty for teachers to motivate pupils to meet all the deadlines involved, and failure to respect dates is a weakness on the part of some pupils which has in the past adversely affected examination outcomes.

158. Achievement overall is satisfactory, with pupils starting from a baseline which is well below average. During the first three years their achievement is generally good, in response to high expectations which are intended to enable all pupils to tackle a full GCSE course. However, there is also a minority of boys, mainly but not entirely Asians, whose achievement is unsatisfactory. This is evident in both Years 9 and 10. Most girls, whatever their background, achieve well in this subject. Pupils' attitudes are a key factor in determining whether or not their achievement is satisfactory. In most lessons pupils are happy to learn, respond well to their teacher and to each other, concentrate on their work and remain on task for the whole lesson. However, the minority referred to bring with them unsatisfactory attitudes, and some unsatisfactory behaviour which adversely affects learning and therefore achievement, both their own and that of some other pupils in their groups.

159. Overall, teaching is good. In all lessons seen, it was at least satisfactory and over half was good, with particular strength in the first three years. Teachers show both patience and firmness in dealing with challenging behaviour. There are good procedures in place, well understood by everybody and appropriately used. Management of pupils is therefore good. All teachers teaching modern languages at the time of the inspection are well experienced in the school. They all contribute to the teaching of both French and German and display good language skills, which provide good models of speaking. It is understood, however, that where there have been temporary vacancies the school has experienced difficulty in recruiting appropriately qualified supply staff. Expectations are high in respect of middle and low attaining pupils, so that all can access GCSE. Assessment is well used in target setting, in monitoring progress, and in grouping pupils from Year 8 upwards. There is a need to expect more of high attaining groups. Lesson planning, though sketchy, provides an appropriate range of activities in each lesson.

160. Learning is satisfactory – it is better in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4 where the unsatisfactory attitudes of some pupils affect the rate of learning. Good learning is a reflection of good teaching, except where negative attitudes or over-large classes result in unsatisfactory learning conditions. Pupils with special educational needs other than those related to behaviour are not segregated and learn at the same pace as others. This is also true of those at an early stage of English language acquisition. Visually impaired pupils can understand as well as others the listening and speaking part of the lesson and are given good support, sometimes involving the use of closed-circuit television. A strength is the use of Braille in both European and Asian scripts. School trips to France are an important contribution to learning and personal development for those who take part.

161. Since the previous inspection the school has improved its foreign language provision by incorporating Urdu into the mainstream curriculum in addition to a European language, leading to an improvement in standards. Some aspects of teaching and learning have improved. Standards at GCSE in French and German have been maintained. Overall, the progress of the department has been satisfactory.

URDU

162. In 2000, 58 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C grades at GCSE, a 7 per cent rise compared to 1999, and all achieved A*-G. There are no national comparative figures available for Urdu. The performance of girls is slightly higher than that of boys. The results were well above those for other languages in the school and most other subjects. The subject is only offered from Year 10.

163. Standards of work seen are in line with national expectations. Pupils listen with a high degree of understanding when Urdu is spoken. Spoken replies are often short phrases or single words or in

English but pupils can engage in role plays on shopping trips and relate personal information about themselves in videoed presentations. Whilst some pupils read Urdu fluently a number rely on English phonetic script to acquire meaning. Written work is usually restricted to copying, gap filling or sentence completion. A few pupils are independent writers.

164. Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives set. Regular assessment informs planning and monitors progress made. Work is appropriately set for pupils at different attainment levels. One pupil who is visually impaired is able to access the curriculum with the support of a bilingual assistant who understands both Urdu and Braille. Relations with pupils are good. Good use is made of audiovisual resources including a video camera. Classes are effectively managed with the support of a qualified teacher. The Urdu teacher, although unqualified, has thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject. Despite Urdu software being available and the teacher's specialist skills in the area, insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning and progress.

165. Pupils are highly motivated and work well in lessons. They listen well to each other during oral presentations and respect others' opinions. Boys and girls work well together when required, although there is some immature behaviour from some Year 10 pupils

166. Urdu is well supported by the head of modern foreign languages. The teacher is unqualified but is undertaking training to achieve qualified teacher status. Pupils are now being screened at the end of Year 9 to determine their suitability to pursue a GCSE course but there are some pupils at higher level of achievement who do not need to pursue a two-year course to achieve a high grade. The language has status within the department with its own teaching room and good resources.

167. Since the previous inspection, Urdu has received an increased time allocation and is now on the timetable. Standards are rising at GCSE for pupils at all levels of attainment. In order to raise the standards the department should make wider use of ICT, and continue to screen and promote the GCSE course in Year 9.

MUSIC

168. Standards of attainment in music for pupils at the age of 16 are good. Although only a very small number of pupils take music at GCSE over the past three years all have gained grades in the range A*-C.

169. Standards of attainment for pupils at the age of 14 are below average. Pupils enter the school with limited experience and below average attainment in music, but in Year 7 they achieve well and rapidly develop good rhythmic responses, good aural responses and can follow basic scores. They recognise and correctly explain musical elements as they are used, and acquire a simple technical vocabulary. Particularly good progress was seen in a lesson which was enriched by the additional input from two instrumental teachers who taught bass guitar lines and Latin American rhythms to around half the class. These pupils were then able to combine with parts played by the remainder of the class, developing satisfactory ensemble skills. Achievement in Year 7 is good, and the attainment of the majority in this year group is average for pupils of this age. However, because pupils in Years 8 and 9 do not have a regular weekly lesson in music they are unable to maintain this rate of progress. Continuity in learning is disrupted by the long gap between lessons and time is spent re-establishing skills in lessons before further progress can be made and across these two years many pupils under-achieve. Within lessons, pupils' progress well. As a result of systematic teaching pupils develop satisfactory aural responses and can work out melodic intervals. They understand keyboard lay-out and are able to follow and interpret simple notation. More able pupils in Year 9 built on these skills to play a simplified version of 'Für Elise', some adding a left hand part. Because most pupils have to share keyboards they are unable to develop good fingering technique and fluency. Almost all classes have a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. These pupils make good progress in music.

170. Standards of attainment by the small group of pupils, all girls, following the GCSE course in Year 10, are above average for this stage of the course, and achievement is good. All have instrumental and voice lessons, and are involved in musical activities in the wider community. Standards of performance

are good, and standards in composing are very good. All are able to compose attractive, balanced melodies which are appropriately harmonised, and are developing skills in devising suitable accompaniment styles. They make good use of ICT to store, refine and present their work. Their ability to appraise music and relate it to its historical and social background is satisfactory although their use of technical vocabulary is limited.

171. Pupils' attitudes towards music are positive. They listen closely, co-operate well and are generally considerate in the manner in which they play instruments. Most persist well with tasks set, although some lose concentration when too much time is allocated to the same activity or when the lesson's structure is not clear and they are unable to make further progress without the intervention of the teacher. The high level of motivation shown by pupils on the GCSE course contributes significantly to their rapid progress.

172. The quality of teaching in all year groups is good; there is no unsatisfactory teaching, and some very good features were observed. Lessons are carefully planned, equipment is well organised and a controlled, positive atmosphere prevails. The pace of lessons is generally good, particularly when the sequence of activities is explained in advance so that pupils are able to progress at different rates. In one Year 8 lesson, where pupils were clearly mastering short tasks quickly, activities were suitably adapted to encourage more challenging, independent learning. Because criteria for each activity were clear to all those involved, including periods of "audience" listening, pupils made very good progress in reading and performing a simple melody, and in critical listening, and were able to comment employing musical terms. Occasionally too much time is devoted to a single activity, or to different activities linked to a narrow topic, and as the pace of the lesson slows the rate of pupils' progress declines.

173. Management of the department is satisfactory. The assessment system is used to inform planning of the curriculum, but would be improved by being adapted so that pupils know the levels of attainment they have reached. Because of inadequate staffing there is too little time for teaching the subject in Years 8 and 9 and it is not possible to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in music. As a result too few pupils have a sufficiently secure background in the subject to be able to choose it as an option at GCSE. Further inequality of access to the subject arises because so few pupils can afford to have instrumental lessons. The enrichment of the experience of two Year 7 classes, who make particularly good progress, is not available for the remainder because of constraints of staffing. Pupils' learning is further restricted because there is not sufficient equipment. As observed in the previous inspection most pupils have to share keyboards, the small amount of tuned percussion is of poor quality, and there are too few computers for teachers to use ICT in music. The department has support from local authority facilities and from time to time musical events take place, but there is no regular choral or instrumental activity outside the classroom.

174. Although some aspects arising from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily improved the time available for music in Years 8 and 9 is well below the recommended level of one hour per week. The difficulties for learning caused by pupils having to share equipment still persists, and improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

175. Standards in physical education are average for Year 7 to 9 pupils, and above average for Years 10 and 11. Given pupils below average attainment on entry this represents good achievement for all pupils, a consequence of the good teaching they receive and the enthusiasm and commitment they bring to lessons.

176. GCSE results in physical education in 2000 were well below the national average. Pupils did better overall in their other subjects than they did in physical education. Only boys were entered for the 2000 examination but in the current GCSE group there is a small minority of girls.

177. In work seen during the inspection, standards in Years 7 to 9, where boys and girls are taught separately, are average overall. Boys' standards are slightly higher than those of girls. Standards are highest in athletics where in lessons a significant minority of pupils demonstrate above-average technique, times, distances and knowledge of rules. In the triple jump, Year 9 boys are aware of the need

to gain maximum distance from the stride and the vast majority of pupils are able to achieve a valid jump at the first attempt. Year 7 boys know how to adopt the correct body position for a sprint start. In the shot, Year 9 girls know the correct finger positions for holding the shot and can achieve distances in excess of eight metres. Standards are weakest in rounders where few girls are able to catch the ball cleanly at the first attempt and throwing lacks accuracy.

178. By the age of 16 standards in physical education are above average, particularly in athletics and badminton. Pupils are able to understand and apply the rules to a number of games and activities. In badminton pupils can sustain rallies, know the rules of both singles and doubles play, and can execute an overhead clearance shot with a reasonable degree of height and length. Higher-attaining pupils show very good technique in the drop shot. Standards are below average in the theoretical aspects of GCSE work where pupils' knowledge and understanding of sport related issues are weak.

179. Visually impaired pupils take a full part in activities and their standards match, and sometimes exceed, those of other pupils. In one Year 7 athletics lesson, for example, a visually impaired pupil achieved a faster time in the 100 metres sprint than many others in the class. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs, or English as an additional language, achieve standards as high as the majority of other pupils.

180. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils in physical education are very good. Levels of participation are high. Pupils arrive on time, get changed quickly and enjoy their lessons. They work hard, show confidence and use sports equipment safely and responsibly. They listen attentively to instructions, readily answer questions, think about what they are doing and make efforts to improve. When working in pairs or groups they help and support each other. Girls' extra-curricular activities are not well supported and the department should continue to encourage girls to improve their standards through extra-curricular participation. During inspection week only five Year 7 girls out of all the girls in the school attended any extra-curricular sporting activity.

181. The quality of teaching and the learning it promotes is good overall both in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 the teaching of boys is very good and that of girls is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is good. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and make progress. Relationships are very good. Effective organisation ensures that little time is wasted and learning opportunities are maximised. Lessons are varied and interesting and with clear demonstrations and explanations. In one Year 11 indoor cricket lesson, the teacher was able to show both boys and girls the correct body and arm position at the point of releasing the ball when bowling so that both boys and girls improved their bowling accuracy and length by the end of the lesson. Assessment procedures are very good and good use is made of pupils' records in setting new targets, for example in athletics where pupils are encouraged to improve on previous years' times and distances. Pupils are involved in written self-evaluation at the end of each unit of work but there are insufficient opportunities in lessons for pupils to evaluate either their own work or that of others. Although one of the department's aims is to give pupils more responsibility for their own learning through opportunities for planning and discussing their work, this is not yet a regular feature in most lessons. For example, pupils take no part in planning or leading the warm ups which are always teacher led. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning, including in GCSE groups where little use is made of word processing or desk top publishing. In only one lesson seen, a GCSE theory lesson, was teaching unsatisfactory. In this lesson pupils spent too much time copying from the blackboard and listening to the teacher reading aloud from a text-book. It is this style of teaching, and the underdevelopment of pupils' study and research skills, that is a major factor in the poor GCSE results pupils achieve in physical education compared with their other subjects.

182. Leadership and management in physical education are good. There is a strong focus on raising standards, particularly in performance. Effective assessment procedures are in place. Pupils are involved in self-evaluation and setting targets for improvement. The department runs smoothly. Effective planning and organisation ensures that pupils maximise the time available for the subject. The department endeavours to support the school's positive behaviour strategy and certificates are given for regular attendance, participation and standard of kit. Since the previous inspection GCSE in physical education has been introduced. A major area for development is the encouragement of teaching styles within the department that will ensure that pupils become independent learners.

183. The department is very active in its support for visually impaired pupils. It provides opportunities for

them to participate in competitive sport at local and regional level where they have been very successful in Goalball competitions. The department is a source of great encouragement both to visually impaired pupils and their excellent support assistant.

184. There is an urgent need to undertake a risk assessment of facilities and accommodation. The school is used as a public thoroughfare. During one lesson with Year 7 girls, a man walked a large dog within thirty metres of the group. Both hardplay and field areas, including the running track, are littered with glass and rusty metal cans.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

185. At the time of the last inspection, no provision was made for the teaching of religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The time allocated to the subject for pupils in Years 7 to 9 was inadequate to allow coverage of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Whilst the school has gone some way to meeting statutory requirements in respect of religious education provision, improvement overall has been unsatisfactory in relation to these key issues. The amount of teaching time allocated to the subject is still restricting its development and the achievement of pupils. Less than half the lesson time recommended by the locally Agreed Syllabus is provided, and in Year 11, pupils only get half an hour every three weeks. Overall, the lack of curriculum time leads to problems of continuity in learning and seriously restricts the breadth and depth to which the subject can be studied. As a result, pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory.

186. There is a new head of department, who is working conscientiously to raise the value of the subject in the eyes of the pupils and the local community. In this, he is being extremely successful. Parents no longer choose to withdraw their children from religious education. A new GCSE course was established at the start of the current academic year; and eighteen Year 10 pupils are now studying to examination level. However, he is the only religious education teacher, and staffing is inadequate to properly provide religious education to the locally Agreed Syllabus requirements. Curriculum provision and staffing therefore remain issues for the school, and require improvement.

187. Standards in lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and in the Year 11 non-examination course, are average, but their achievement is unsatisfactory. In Year 11, for example, pupils know about, and can give examples of mono and polytheism, but are less secure concerning atheist or agnostic concepts. They are able to identify and discuss issues of world evil and suffering, and are developing concepts of "natural" and "moral" evil. Such work is very good for discussion and co-operative groupwork. However, the very short lesson time severely restricts the quality of learning and the pupils' progress, and as a result, pupils are underachieving. They show very good attitudes and involvement in lessons. However, there is a marked element of frustration in that after 30 minutes, when debate is really starting to take off, the lesson stops for a further three weeks! There is little or no time for pupils to make notes or records of their discussion work. In any case, finance for the department is insufficient to provide proper exercise books or folders.

188. Standards for pupils in the new Year 10 GCSE course are average, and their achievement is satisfactory. However, even here, curriculum time is one-fifth below the national average, with longer-term implications for full coverage of the examination syllabus. Through the thematic teaching approach, pupils are, for example, able to associate "water" with various life issues and show an understanding of its importance, as a symbol, to all the major world religions. They were well prepared to answer questions relating to the sacrament of baptism. However, some Muslim pupils were having difficulty in relating to the Christian concept of "original sin". Overall, the pupils show a secure, self-motivated approach to the course. Work in their exercise books shows sound, summary notes, which are properly focused on providing a secure basis for revision.

189. In a debate on euthanasia, Year 10 non-examination pupils, from all backgrounds, showed good levels of respect for the teacher and each other's points of view. There was good achievement in their developing understanding of "moral" and "life" choices. This was an example of the very good provision made by the subject for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils were being effectively challenged in the consideration of the sanctity of life and matters of conscience. They learnt well from each other in respect of matters of personal faith, and concerning their understanding of "scientific" and "religious" belief. There is a very strong emphasis in the work of the department on

respect for the values of others and the promotion of religious and cultural tolerance.

190. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is consistently good across both key stages. In some lessons it can be very good or excellent, for example, in one impressive Year 8 lesson on the subject of death as a "Rite of Passage". Here, the high quality and encouragement of the teaching enabled the pupils, working in pairs, to show a sensitivity and maturity in their approach to the preparation of a letter of condolence to a friend on the death of a close relative. The positive use of background music and the effective use of an Auden poem on death set a reflective atmosphere. The teacher's clear encouragement and expectations gained the respect and confidence of the pupils. Those with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, are given good support and enabled to make sound progress. Appropriate resources, for example enlarged copies of texts, are provided for visually impaired pupils. Teaching and learning are good because the religious education teacher communicates very well with the pupils. Work is placed in context and objectives for lessons clearly shared. Lessons are well planned and questions well focused on assessing pupils' understanding to ensure a realistic pace is maintained. Religious studies are made interesting and relevant, and pupils become self-motivated to learn.

191. There is good leadership and management of the department. There are significant strengths in its commitment to improvement, direction for development and in its reflection of the school's aims and values. However, in order for the department to fully meet its objectives, improvements are required in key areas. These are principally in the allocation of sufficient curriculum time and staffing to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is currently insufficient funding to enable the department to update its resources, including the provision of GCSE textbooks and religious artefact material. Display space within the specialist classroom is limited and additional space required to do full justice to the pupils' work and efforts. Religious education also lacks information and communications technology equipment within the department. This is required in order to exploit the wide range of world faith material and resources available on the Internet, or through CD-ROMs, and to properly support independent pupil research.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

192. At the end of Year 9, standards of pupils for whom English is an additional language are above national averages in English with 72 per cent achieving Level 5 or higher, but below in mathematics and well below in science. At the end of Year 11, 31 per cent of pupils have achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C despite 91 per cent of boys and 79 per cent of girls entering school, in Year 7 with reading ages below their chronological age. Girls' performance was ahead of boys', with all pupils achieving at least one GCSE at grades A*-G.

193. Pupils learning English is an additional language make very good progress. By the end of Year 11, pupils can analyse texts for style, purpose and audience. They can write formal letters for a particular audience such as parents. They are confident users of ICT and can access other curriculum subjects where appropriate support is in place such as mathematics and science.

194. Support teachers and bilingual assistants provide good support for targeted pupils. They contribute to lessons as a whole, for example, through team teaching in science, and to a Year 11 English discussion on the harmful effect of video games. Bilingual support is effective, enabling recent arrivals to access the curriculum through Urdu, for example, in graph work in Year 8 mathematics. There is a good match between teachers' specialisms and the subjects they support, especially in English, ICT, mathematics and science. Lessons are effective when there is joint planning and evaluation with mainstream teachers. Individual learning plans are used well to monitor the progress of new arrivals and inform planning. In some instances support teachers are inactive in lessons and perform ancillary duties such as handing out worksheets.

195. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are not embarrassed about receiving support and actively seek it out in lessons, during break times and after school. They regard support teachers and bilingual assistants as having equal status with mainstream staff. Pupils are comfortable using home language in lessons.

196. The department is well led. Support staff are well supported but departmental managers have insufficient non-teaching time to ensure planning, liaison and monitoring. The use of EAL teachers to teach curriculum subjects is not appropriate and reduces the time available to provide specialist language support, for example, in the humanities subjects where there is no teacher support at present. Pupils and parents benefit from home visits, initial first language assessments, meetings in school with interpreters, a buddy system for new arrivals and a homework helpline during lunchtimes.

197. Since the previous inspection results of pupils for whom English is an additional language in GCSE and national tests at the end of Year 9, have continued to improve, closing the gap with their monolingual peers. There is need to continue to develop strategies to improve boys' achievements generally, and to focus support in science to help raise standards for all pupils by the end of Year 9. In other respects, the organisation of the department and targeting of support for specific subject areas is effective. The department makes good use of the data it collects to monitor pupils' progress. Other members of staff are kept fully informed of pupil progress. ICT is used well to support pupils.

PROVISION FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PUPILS

198. Overall provision for visually impaired pupils is excellent. All pupils are very well supported by a very good team and because of this are able to access the full curriculum. Standards of attainment are in line with their peers and this is because their disability is not allowed to hinder access or opportunity. Progress is very good and much of this can be attributed to the excellent relationships developed between staff and pupils.

199. The management of the unit is excellent with all paperwork immaculately presented and all management and curriculum areas fully covered. In particular, the yearly diary is very impressive. This is well thought out, structured and is indicative of the thought and planning taking place regularly to ensure the smooth running of the unit. There is a very good policy document which is clearly written, and sets out clearly the department's excellent arrangements for meeting visual impairment. There is very good monitoring of the staff development requirements of the specialist visually impairment teachers. Arrangements for all school staff are good, including for new staff.

200. The unit is seen as an integral part of school and this is reflected in the smooth integration of pupils with their peer group. The availability of a base for pupils on arrival and at other times during the day provides security without inhibiting the pupils and obstructing their independence. It also enables visually impaired pupils to invite sighted friends into their base and this helps the unit to be seen as an integral part of the school.

201. Visually impaired pupils are readily accepted into classrooms alongside their peer group and this excellent acceptance of each other is the result of the unobtrusive support and encouragement given to these pupils by visual support staff and all staff generally. A typical example was a Year 7 pupil who took part in a music lesson working equally alongside his peers without support, and then later in a small group where he played a full part in the activity.

202. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and they move confidently around school, and successfully tackle, for example, busy corridors. They arrive promptly to lessons, making their own way, and quickly settle in the classroom making, as one pupil did, a good contribution to a personal and social education lesson. Much of this confidence must be attributed to providing the very best experiences which will enable pupils to lead as full a life as possible in the wider world.

203. Planning to support the curriculum is excellent. Pupils' needs and personal targets are well known to staff. All staff are well briefed as to role and lesson contents in advance. They are very well versed in ways of meeting individual needs, and potential difficulties posed by lesson content and materials are foreseen. This enables any modification to be completed in readiness.

204. The unit is in an unusual situation. Often in a school there are some pupils where English is not their first language, but in Moor End these pupils are in the majority. The provision of a teacher of Urdu, coupled with the use of braille reflects the excellent provision made to meet individual pupil needs.

205. The unit is very well resourced, for example, in the banks of materials developed by staff to support

Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations. There is also a very good selection of specific equipment necessary for many of the pupils. Because of this they are gaining expertise in, for example, the use of braille and computers. This in turn enables pupils to make very good efforts to achieve their full potential.