

INSPECTION REPORT

BROWNHILL SCHOOL

Rochdale

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105861

Headteacher: Peter Strzalko

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 5th - 9th June 2000

Inspection number: 192893

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Heights Lane Rochdale Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Alan Teague
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

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		Design and technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Modern foreign languages	Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Daljit Singh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Mel Blackband	Team inspector	Science	
		Geography	
		History	
Aileen Webber	Team inspector	English	
		Music	
Michael Whitehead	Team inspector	Mathematics	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Art	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
		Personal, social and health education	
		Equality of opportunity	
		Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brownhill is a community special school for 65 pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A very small number have additional special educational needs such as dyslexia and weak skills in reading and mathematics are a feature of many pupils on entry to the school. There are currently 62 pupils on roll, a significant increase since the last inspection, although the number fluctuates throughout the school year. A local education authority pilot project, involving the setting up of a special 'outreach' class for pupils without statements of special educational need began last September. There are two pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and the school's population does not reflect the multicultural nature of the area. There are only a small number of girls on the school's roll. The school underwent a major building programme last year resulting in considerably improved facilities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school where pupils achieve well overall. Despite histories of severe and challenging behaviour in their previous schools and more than a half of pupils being 'out of school' prior to admission to Brownhill, pupils behave very well and work hard. This is due to the school's very good ethos, its commitment that 'attenders always achieve' and because staff manage pupils very well. The quality of teaching, which is now good overall with very good features, has really made a difference to classroom activities which are generally lively and stimulating. The school is well led and managed and the headteacher's very good leadership has resulted in him forging an effective staff team who are highly supportive of the pupils both academically and in terms of their welfare. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to their work. By the time they are 16 they are confident and well-prepared for the next stage of education or work. The very strong moral 'culture' of the school and the school's behaviour programme results in pupils' strong awareness of the effects of their behaviour on others and the consequences of their actions.
- The very good provision for pupils' personal and social development has a positive effect on their understanding of how to get on with one another and with adults; some good examples of positive relationships between pupils can be seen.
- The hard work the school has put into monitoring pupils' attendance and their behaviour has resulted in them attending more often, behaving better and there being fewer exclusions.
- Pupils with additional needs such as specific reading or learning difficulties are very well supported through the school's computer assisted learning programme and the individual support staff give. They make very good progress because of this.
- As a result of very strong leadership by the headteacher, considerable staff commitment and hard work, the school's strategy for, and practice in, literacy and numeracy is now well embedded.
- The good and often very good quality of teaching results in pupils making good progress overall. At Key Stage 2 pupils' achievements are very good because of the very good teaching.

What could be improved

- The lack of a modern foreign language in Key Stage 3 and music in Years 8 and 9.
- The planned learning opportunities for information technology (IT), modern foreign language, geography, and history at Key Stage 3 and music in Years 8 and 9. That assessment in these subjects and religious education does not inform planning.
- The facilities where these are less than satisfactory: the hall/gymnasium, music and storage in general.
- The poor resources in geography and the limited software for subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good improvement overall since its last inspection in July 1996. Statutory requirements are now met in mathematics and religious education and the quality of curriculum planning in many subjects has improved at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, there are still some subjects where it is weak. Music and design and technology are still being developed and a full learning programme is not yet provided for music. Management of subjects is satisfactory overall. In most it is good or very good whereas in history and geography it is unsatisfactory. Overall, the quality of teaching has vastly improved from a position in which 25 per cent was unsatisfactory; it is now good overall and has very good features. The quality of teaching has improved to very good in design and technology and satisfactory in history. The school has lengthened the school day and will extend this further in September 2000 to build more personal study into the curriculum. As a result of the effective strategies put in place, attendance is now similar to other schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Appraisal is in place and enables the school to monitor teaching and set targets for staff. The number of support staff has increased and they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. An extensive building programme has transformed the accommodation, which now includes shared facilities for science and an excellent design and technology workshop.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 16	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	very good A
reading	A	B	good B
writing	A	C	satisfactory C
mathematics	A	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils achieve well overall, although they have only just begun to learn skills in design and technology and music. In IT a lack of a formally planned programme, particularly at Key Stage 3, limits pupils' achievements. Progress in these subjects over time is unsatisfactory although in lessons it ranges from satisfactory to very good. The school's setting of targets is wide ranging and challenging; the setting of targets for National Curriculum test levels, GCSE results and other targets, including attendance, have a positive effect on raising academic standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work very hard in lessons, ask interesting questions and are genuinely interested in what they are learning. Their attitudes to work are remarkably good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school creates a very positive atmosphere where pupils are respected and firm boundaries set. As a result the majority of pupils behave very well. Although some difficult behaviour can occur from time to time the school has very high expectations and negative behaviour is not tolerated. The number of exclusions is reducing.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are aware of the consequences of their actions and many are beginning to take responsibility for these. They are polite and hold doors open for adults. They are beginning to form supportive and caring relationships for one another and they have constructive and purposeful relationships with staff.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory as it is below 95 per cent but satisfactory in relation to similar special schools where attendance figures are slightly better.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Very 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 is good overall and has very good features. It is particularly strong at Key Stage 2 where it is very good. At Key Stages 3 and 4 it is good. Nearly all the teaching was satisfactory or better (97 per cent) with only three per cent (two lessons) being unsatisfactory. Just over eight tenths (82 per cent) was good or better and just under half (48 per cent) of the teaching was very good or better. In a tenth (10 per cent) of the lessons (seven lessons) the teaching was excellent. The teaching in English (including literacy) is good and in mathematics (including numeracy) is very good. It is satisfactory in science but very good in personal, social and health education. A strength of the school is the way in which all staff (teachers and support assistants) expertly manage the pupils. They work extremely closely together, with support staff preparing themselves effectively for lessons by checking planning beforehand and, in some cases, discussing plans with teachers. Support staff make a significant contribution to the work in the classroom and to the smooth running of the school. Some have significant roles, which they undertake very well, such as managing the programmed learning resource in the library. All staff ensure that pupils get down to their work as quickly as possible and that any personal issues are sorted out in a compassionate, supportive and non-confrontational way. Computers are used effectively to support pupils' learning and to record their work, as well as to extend their IT capability. The support the school gives for pupils with additional needs and the way teachers plan for the differing abilities of pupils in their classes is very good. The effort that pupils put into their learning, and their interest in their work is very evident.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements because a modern foreign language is not taught and music is not yet taught throughout Key Stage 3. However, apart from this, there is a richness in the curriculum where learning opportunities are made highly relevant for pupils. In Key Stage 2 some subjects are taught in an 'integrated' way, through themes; this helps pupils understand better what they are learning because clear links are made between subjects and what they learn is made very interesting. There is a 'heavy' and appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and PSHE, areas which have been recently targeted in the school's improvement plan.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very strong opportunities for moral and social development, good for spiritual development and satisfactory for cultural development. Pupils' personal development is good and is very well supported through the school's strong programme and the very good role models which staff provide. An atmosphere of high expectations and excellent relationships with staff create the opportunity for pupils to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Pupils have many opportunities to put social skills learned in PSHE lessons into practice, in work experience, integration and residential visits.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Provision for pupils' educational and personal support is very good and carried out in a safe and secure learning environment. The needs of the small number of girls are well attended to. The school's discipline and behaviour policy is very well implemented. Attendance is very well monitored and the many incentives encourage improvement.

The vast majority of parents and carers enjoy a constructive, purposeful and productive relationship with the school. They have positive views about their children's progress and the improvements in their behaviour and attendance.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The very strong leadership by the headteacher has resulted in a strong staff team who have a high commitment to pupils' progress, personally and academically. There is a keen desire for improvement.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The work of the governing body is satisfactory and strongly led by the chair who has a good commitment to the school, a broad understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and an established role in school development. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities with the exception of the curriculum and new governors are developing their role as a critical friend.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school evaluates pupils' gains in reading and has recently begun to analyse pupils' writing. Pupils', parents' and staffs' views on the school's work are sought. The school improvement plan is checked regularly and presented to governors to aid their monitoring. Some criteria for judging its success are insufficiently precise and not considered in terms of their impact on standards. This makes it difficult for governors to judge cost effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The improvement plan identifies clearly defined, costed priorities and money is used well to support designated areas for development. Budget management and financial monitoring are very good. The school uses its finances well to promote pupils' academic and personal progress.

There are good staffing levels and a high level of expertise. Accommodation has significantly improved although some areas, such as the hall, still need attention. Resources are good overall but in geography they are unsatisfactory and there is very little software to support pupils' learning in subjects. Best value principles are satisfactory and strongest in seeking cost-effective purchases. The school consults on a wide variety of issues and is beginning to make comparisons. It is a reflective organisation that constantly seeks to improve.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like coming to school, they are expected to work hard and make good progress. The school cares well for children and treats them as individuals. It is welcoming and responds to parents' concerns. The way the headteacher runs the school. Good standards of behaviour and good teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount and consistency of homework provided. Some carers feel that communication could be improved between school and the residential homes.

Inspectors agree with parents about most of the issues identified above. They disagree about homework the pupils receive which is considered satisfactory. It is difficult to make any judgement about the issue relating to communication but the school could monitor this to check on effectiveness in this area.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. *The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand, and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.*

2. Overall, the pupils' attainment is below national averages although some produce work within the expected level for their age. The number of pupils achieving this varies each year and is dependent on a number of factors prior to their admission to Brownhill. Most pupils' attainment on entry to Brownhill is below and often well below expected levels, because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties and the length of time they have been out of school before being admitted.

3. The school works hard to raise pupils' achievements and some pupils at Key Stage 2 attained the nationally expected level (Level 4) in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics in 1999, although in English the same pupils were well below this level. Teacher assessments indicate a similar picture this year, although three pupils are currently achieving at Level 4 in English. At Key Stage 3 few pupils attain the expected level (Level 5) although some come close. In 1999 their levels ranged from two to four. The school has a good, and increasing range, of accredited courses for pupils to follow and the incentive of these motivates pupils well and helps them to try hard to attain a good level in coursework or examination. The school is keen to keep abreast of accreditation which is suitable for the abilities and the cohort of pupils it has. For example, it has instigated new courses this year in IT and design and technology. Pupils currently study for GCSE, Certificate of Achievement, and Youth Award, in English, mathematics, science, IT, art and design and technology. Last year (1999) two pupils achieved a grade G in GCSE mathematics and science, in Certificate of Achievement two gained passes in science and three in English (one a distinction). In their Youth Award work, four gained the bronze award and the school has already extended coursework in Year 10 to include the silver award. Comparisons with similar special schools are difficult, although on the whole pupils' levels at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 appear to be higher.

4. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are satisfactory overall although some are still too general (for instance, 'improve behaviour') and difficult to assess. The school is insistent on teachers demonstrating how a target has been met and the progress made. This is ensuring clearer targets are written and that targets are increasingly specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-related. The quality of targets has improved and pupils make good progress towards these.

5. The school sets a wide range of challenging and realistic targets aimed to raise pupils' achievement. Good progress is made towards these by the school. Statutory targets relating to National Curriculum test levels and GCSE results are set (and are based on the good knowledge the school has of the particular cohort of pupils). Some targets relate to attendance and the school's recent attendance project, where the school adopted the slogan 'attenders always achieve', has produced improved attendance, giving pupils the

benefit of more time at school to learn.

6. Pupils with additional special educational needs make very good progress overall. Staff have a very good knowledge of these pupils' needs and of the specific way they can be supported. All pupils are assessed on entry (including the use of previous records where they exist) and any pupils with specific difficulties are targeted for additional support work using the school's computer programmed learning resources ('Successmaker', 'Numbershark', 'Wordshark'). In addition to this, form time, at the beginning of every morning, is used for personal study and reading support (ERIC – 'everyone reads in class'). Very good quality individual support really helps pupils build upon their previous learning in small, carefully planned, steps. For instance, in a lesson where pupils learned very well in Key Stage 2, the teacher planned a range of activities, which built upon what they already knew and could do, to help them make progress in reading and writing. The excellent match of work to the pupils' abilities really encouraged them to think about what they were doing and how they should do it better. This resulted in them making very good progress in producing better ascenders and descenders in their writing. Some pupils, in the same lessons used Wordshark and loaded the program independently, carefully listened to the instructions through the headphones and responded to simple games involving parts of words; similar very good progress was made in constructing words with 'ay'. The school uses information technology well to support pupils' additional needs and it regularly seeks to look at new products which can help - such as a 'pen' which can scan a word in a piece of text, say the word, and give its meaning. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls and the school is vigilant in ensure that the small number of girls have every opportunity to learn.

7. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall. In speaking and listening, throughout the school, they make very good progress. Typical of many pupils' weaknesses in English upon entry to Brownhill is a reluctance to contribute in front of others and speak in a confident and coherent way. Through the many opportunities they receive and the school's strength in promoting pupils' speaking and listening, by the time they are 16 they perform in drama productions such as 'Blood Brothers' in front of an audience and are usually able to express themselves confidently in lessons. This adds much to their personal and social development and particularly their ability to get on with others. In reading, at Key Stage 2 pupils' achievements are very good and at Key Stage 3 and 4 are good. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards reading and their ability to concentrate, read for enjoyment and explore text for research purposes develops well over the time they are in the school.

8. ERIC ('everyone reading in class') is used very effectively by teachers and support staff to develop pupils' wider reading, writing, and personal study skills. The use of computer assisted learning programs which assess and 'teach' the pupils also makes a significant contribution to their learning of sound parts in words (phonics) and spelling. The school has very successfully introduced the literacy strategy. This, together with teachers' increased skills of teaching literacy, and the setting of pupils by ability so teachers can better match work to pupils' abilities, has really moved pupils on with their reading (and writing). In writing their achievements are very good at Key Stage 2 and at Key Stages 3 and 4 they are satisfactory. Pupils' writing develops well in the early part of the school and they make progress from having few skills and little confidence to writing 'thank you' letters using an appropriate format, adapting their writing for the reader. Letters and words are well formed and are properly positioned. By the time they are 16, pupils make satisfactory progress, working on writing short clips of a play and having a clear understanding of how to use tenses appropriately in their writing. Some lower attaining pupils are still at the stage of needing support to produce simple text, such as writing a letter by hand, although most

can use simple word-processing packages, including basic layout features such as centering and bolding.

9. The pupils' progress in mathematics is good across the school. They achieve very well in Key Stage 2 and in Key Stages 3 and 4 their achievement is good. By the end of Key Stage 4 some pupils take the GCSE examination and some produce work in line with national expectations. They become very confident and are competent at solving mathematical problems. They make good progress in identifying number patterns relating features of two and three-dimensional shapes. The pupils' very good progress in Key Stage 2 is because teachers provide activities which are very thoroughly taught and in such small steps, so as to build upon pupils' successes. Pupils are involved in the setting and monitoring of their own mathematical targets and know that working to 'time' really helps 'mental agility' in mathematics. They are also concerned with accuracy and thinking through the processes. At Key Stage 3 pupils have a clear understanding of decimals to three places. At Key Stage 4 pupils build upon skills learned earlier to solve algebraic equations (problems involving symbols and numbers). Computers aid pupils well in their number work and particularly the use of 'Numbershark'. Pupils sometimes recall how this program has helped them. In a Year 10 design and technology lesson a pupil remarked on using the program to learn how to find the diameter, circumference and area of a circle using p ('pie'); he then used this information to create his design.

10. Teachers build in many opportunities for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy into their lessons and, as a result, this enhances pupils' progress in these areas. For instance, in the use of mathematical formula relating to area in design and technology and the development of specific subject vocabulary, such as in science.

11. The pupils' achievements in science are good at each key stage. The good emphasis on practical work motivates pupils, enhances their knowledge and understanding and significantly contributes to their good progress. Pupils' work on forces in Key Stage 2 and their practical use of balloons contributes to their understanding of how air can be used and harnessed to provide varying amounts of pressure. At Key Stage 3 their study of major organs of the body, builds on their work on balloons and they conduct simple experiments and investigations to illustrate how the heart and lungs work. At Key Stage 4, in their studies for GCSE and Certificate of Achievement, they gain a greater understanding of reproduction, and the interrelationship between organs and their functions, such as the digestive system and the passage of waste products. A new teacher for Key Stages 3 and 4 is now supplementing the teaching of the co-ordinator in the secondary department. Although teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, there are some weaknesses in teaching and, subsequently, some limitations of pupils' progress linked to a lack of knowledge and skill in teaching all aspects of the subject.

12. In IT, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The progress which they make over the time they are in the school, is unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 because they follow an accredited course with a specific syllabus. However, they could make more progress if there was more systematic planning within a whole school scheme of work which enabled pupils to build upon what they have learned at Key Stages 2 and 3. At Key Stage 2 the three teachers plan well for their individual classes and build in plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn about all the aspects of IT appropriate to the key stage from the National Curriculum programme of study. Although they could make better progress if the planning was more uniform, nevertheless, they make satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 3 pupils do not make the progress they could because of the lack of curriculum planning. The school uses IT well to support learning across the curriculum but it is the specific skills and understandings relevant to IT as a subject that are

underdeveloped, particularly at Key Stage 3.

13. In religious education pupils achieve well throughout the school. The subject is well taught and the school's well-planned syllabus and scheme of work based of the local agreed syllabus. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their knowledge of different faiths and have a clear understanding of the five pillars of Islam. Pupils learn well from the teachers' role model of washing hands before touching the Qu'ran and through the teachers' skilled questioning and the practical use of artefacts, make good progress. In Key Stage 3 they gain a better knowledge of other religions and this is linked with other subjects such as history when they study the Second World War from the Jewish perspective and the Diary of Anne Frank. Religious education is taught through the Youth Award scheme at Key Stage 4 and in 'Beliefs and Values' they study the work of Martin Luther King and the American Civil Rights Movement. Their study of aspects of life such as euthanasia and capital punishment gives them good opportunities to reflect on moral issues and prepares them well for future life.

14. Pupils make very good progress in personal, social and health education and opportunities for progress in their personal development pervades the curriculum. The school sessions start with the breakfast club. This is aimed at calming pupils but also encouraging relationships in a relaxed, friendly, social setting. Comprehensive assessment of pupils' personal skills on entry to school, and the staff's subject monitoring, helps them keep a good check on progress in this area. Pupils in Key Stage 2 take turns in games and are learning to be patient, to wait and to carry on with work when the teacher has to give personal attention to others. In Key Stage 3 there are many opportunities for sharing and turn taking in games and teachers have the highest expectation with sportsmanship well promoted and taught about, for instance. Pupils respond well and there is little sulking and no 'put downs'. In Key Stage 4 through opportunities provided in history and drama lessons pupils reflect on issues relating to the Holocaust and gain empathy for the plight of others. The school's use of pastoral sessions very effectively promotes pupils' personal development. Personal issues are explored, practical problems resolved by advice provided by the form tutor on an individual basis.

15. In art, pupils' achievements are very good overall; they are good in Key Stage 2 and very good in Key Stages 3 and 4. In design and technology pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory because it has only just begun to be taught at Key Stages 3 and 4; however, pupils in these key stages are currently making very good progress. They make good progress at Key Stage 2. In music, overall pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because not all pupils are taught music in Key Stage 3 although those who are learning it, in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 are making good progress.

16. History and geography are taught at Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils' progress in geography is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils in history in Key Stage 2 make good progress. In Key Stage 3, records are sparse and, although recent planning and the school's new practical approach incorporating drama shows that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress, their progress over time is unsatisfactory. There is little planning in history in Key Stage 3, although in Key Stage 2 the teacher's planning is good. Pupils achieve well in physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and the school encourages pupils to contribute to lessons by providing a highly relevant curriculum and good quality teaching. In addition to this, the positive way staff approach pupils in lessons, means that they are not afraid to speak up and all answers and contributions are valued. No pupil is 'put down' because of a wrong answer to a question. The vast majority enjoy school and many want to continue their learning during break and at lunchtime. There is a genuine enthusiasm (and sometimes excitement) at joining in discussions where moral and social issues arise. Despite the fact that many pupils have low attainment in reading and mathematics, the school's interesting approach to these subjects, results in pupils concentrating well. Older pupils have positive attitudes to work experience and are an asset when representing the school in out of school activities and trips.

18. The vast majority of pupils achieve very good standards of behaviour and this is a significant strength of the school. Most pupils are polite and respectful to staff and visitors. They observe the school rules and there are no signs of bullying.

19. Occasionally some pupils display silly, immature behaviour and this is dealt with in a professional and fair manner. Pupil exclusions indicate that a very small minority continue to engage in serious anti-social behaviour, but the level of exclusions continues to fall. There are no permanent exclusions and staff continue to retain pupils in school by providing quality teaching and very good classroom management. Parents are pleased with the good standards of behaviour the school achieves.

20. Relationships between pupils and with staff are constructive and purposeful. They are strongest with staff, and built up particularly through an atmosphere of mutual respect, especially during pastoral sessions. Teachers encourage effective learning and socialisation and pupils respond effectively. Relationships between pupils are based on mutual tolerance and respect. This interaction provides a friendly and tolerant learning environment.

21. Pupils' personal development is good and is further supported by the very good opportunities, for older pupils, to be part of the local community through work experience. Local training providers are pleased with the efforts of students and the maturity and confidence they display during the period of placement. Pupils respect the responsibility placed upon them as school monitors their work diligently to fulfil their roles. These opportunities enhance the learning of pupils and contribute significantly to their social and personal development.

22. Attendance at school is unsatisfactory overall as it is below 95 per cent. However, it is satisfactory in comparison with similar schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although the attendance continues to fluctuate there has been a significant improvement, which supports standards. This improvement is primarily due to the efforts and commitment of staff, the very good leadership and the support of the majority of parents. Attendance has been further improved by the very effective working relationships between school, home and the education welfare officer. Unauthorised absence is still very high and the school must continue to address this issue. However, unauthorised absence percentages are similar to other schools for pupils with such educational difficulties.

23. Since the last report the school has made good progress in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Raised attendance has occurred through effective use of various strategies. Exclusions are falling and the school continues to provide a caring, tolerant and friendly learning environment.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is good overall and has very good features. At Key Stage 2 it is very good and in Key Stage 3 and 4, good. Much of the excellent teaching seen during the inspection was in Key Stage 2 where nearly 60 per cent was very good or better. At this key stage, the quality of the teaching adds much to the curriculum. The integrated themes help to make the learning relevant for pupils and the way teachers put this across means that they learn very well.

25. Nearly all the teaching is at least satisfactory (97 per cent) with only three per cent unsatisfactory. Good or better teaching accounts for 82 per cent of all that seen. In just under a half (48 per cent) of lessons the teaching was very good or better and in 10 per cent of lessons (seven) it was excellent. The 25 per cent of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced to just the three per cent in the current inspection. In only two lessons was the teaching unsatisfactory and these were in science. Weaknesses, which caused the teaching to be unsatisfactory, related largely to a lack of subject knowledge in one lesson where the teacher is a non-specialist and has little recent training. In the other, the expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low and the pace too slow; as a result pupils lacked motivation and did not learn enough.

26. The quality of teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection where it was only 75 per cent satisfactory or better. Although there is not a teaching and learning policy as such, the headteacher and staff have discussed what constitutes good teaching and learning and looked at criteria by which to judge this. The headteacher has monitored the quality of teaching as part of the appraisal process and supported teachers as they strive for more improvement. In addition to this, the school has been careful to recruit staff who have expertise in subjects and who can teach them well, although for some subjects recruitment has proved difficult. The school has taken this as the main criterion for selection and has provided support, guidance and on-site training for new teachers in the management of pupils. This approach has certainly paid off and the very good management of the pupils is one of the strongest features of the quality of teaching all the way through the school.

27. The teaching in English (including literacy) is good and in mathematics (including numeracy) is very good. The way teachers assess the pupils and set groups based on their achievement throughout Key Stage 2 and 3 has a positive effect on raising their levels of attainment. The teaching of speaking and listening, reading and writing at Key Stage 2 is very good. It is good for speaking and listening and reading at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the teaching of writing is satisfactory. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the literacy strategy and lessons are well planned. In one lesson in Key Stage 2 the way the teacher carefully taught pupils' to predict which words could be used to complete some rhyming text led to them have a greater understanding of which words would make sense in the passage. Pupils clearly enjoy the numeracy lessons and the challenge of the mental 'maths' element is sharpening their skills. In a Key Stage 3 lesson they were asked to guess a number by asking some important questions so as to better identify what the number could be. For instance, some asked if it was odd or even, if it was between X and Y, or if it was greater than a certain number. Pupils showed great determination and interest in solving these

problems and as a result of the way the teacher extending the way pupils' asked their questions they made very good progress.

28. In science the teaching is satisfactory overall. It is strongest at Key Stage 2 where it is good and satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and 4. The co-coordinator, who mostly teaches the subject, is not a science specialist but has undertaken training to increase her knowledge; another teacher who teaches the subject is new to the school and has little experience of science teaching. The impact of all this was seen in two lessons where the teaching of science was unsatisfactory. The way experimental and investigative science is taught and its emphasis in the curriculum really helps to interest and engage pupils. Teachers, particularly those at Key Stage 2, emphasise subject vocabulary well and effectively link this with work in reading and writing, as part of literacy.

29. In IT, little direct teaching was seen, although in the two lessons where there was substantial teaching of skills, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Some teachers have a very good knowledge of IT and how to teach it, although some say they have attended courses but need further training. Computers are, however, used extensively in lessons. This is mostly for pupils to record their work but also to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, sometimes for aspects of mathematics/IT, such as controlling / programming a toy ('Roamer') or collecting information using simple databases. In Key Stage 4 it is taught as a separate subject and in the one lesson seen the teaching was satisfactory. Teachers rarely use computers for demonstration although the school has just purchased a digital projector which it intends to use for such purposes. Support staff and teachers take every opportunity to help pupils to use computers so as to enhance their particular IT skills. This is strongest in Key Stage 2 and is the reason why they make satisfactory progress at this key stage in IT despite a whole school, formally planned programme, not being in place.

30. In religious education the teaching is good overall. A particular positive feature of the teaching is the way in which teachers encourage pupils to present and share their views with the rest of the class. Issues are dealt with sensitively and this approach makes a significant contribution to their confidence, self-esteem and speaking and listening skills.

31. In art, personal, social and health education, music (where it is taught) and design and technology the quality of teaching is very good. It is good in physical education. In history is good in Key Stage 2; however, it could not be seen at Key Stage 3 as the teacher / co-ordinator was absent due to illness during the inspection. It was, therefore, necessary for the school to re-schedule some lessons. In geography the teaching is satisfactory.

32. Throughout the school the mostly lively and imaginative teaching has a significant effect on pupils' learning and means that they learn well. Pupils work well for extended periods of time and some want to continue their work or use computers during lunchtime and breaktime. Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with pupils which inspires pupils' confidence in what they say and do. Teachers ensure that they plan well for pupils' individual needs and that work is matched well to these. A modern foreign language is not taught so no judgement on teaching is possible.

33. Support staff and teachers work very closely together and form a very effective staff team. Planning time is built into to the support staff's work programme, allowing them to be informed about the lesson and enabling to plan activities with the teacher. Some support staff have significant responsibilities in support of teaching. For instance, the management of computer programmed learning resources ('Successmaker') in the library, keeping track of pupils' opportunities to develop basic skills and informing teachers of the results of assessments made by the computer. This, together with the opportunities pupils get in form

time and at some other times, significantly enhances their learning. Pupils with additional educational needs particularly benefit from this and regular assessments show very good progress made in their literacy and numeracy skills. Although pupils are often withdrawn from other lessons to use these programs, the staff ensure that pupils who miss a part of their lesson only do this for a short time (10 minutes) and are very successfully re-introduced to the lesson when they return. Another strong feature of the support staff work in the classroom, apart from helping pupils in their learning, is the way they deal with any pupils who are feeling disaffected or angry. They use their initiative well to ensure that pupils get down to their work quickly and relate to them in a compassionate, supportive and non-confrontational way. As a result pupils usually respond quickly and value the personal attention and care the staff give.

34. Teachers know their pupils well and, particularly, their personal circumstances and difficulties. The staff's good knowledge of pupils' individual education plan targets is supported by the way they are displayed in the staffroom and all have access to these 'at a glance'. There are some weaknesses in subject knowledge where teachers are not teaching their specialist subject (such as in science identified above) but overall their knowledge is good. Teachers at Key Stage 2 are particularly adept at making what they teach meaningful and relevant for primary aged pupils, yet provide challenging activities which help them learn effectively. They are also particular skilful at the teaching of literacy and numeracy and have a very good knowledge of how to implement these strategies. The teaching of literacy and numeracy extends through Key Stage 3 where teachers' knowledge is good.

35. All staff have the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour the work they should produce in a lesson and the effort they should put into this. They demand the best behaviour and positive attitudes and most of the time get a very positive response from pupils. They consistently manage pupils very well and use rewards and sanctions very effectively; as result any difficult behaviour which occurs from time to time has little impact on other pupils in the class and the pupils carrying out a misdemeanour are made clearly aware of the consequence of their actions. Pupils are expected to get down to their work quickly and concentrate well. They are clearly aware that any time lost in lessons through negative behaviour has to be made up after school in detention. Subject specific vocabulary is usually well promoted and pupils are expected to use this, although for some, it is not re-enforced enough in some lessons. In the majority of lessons what they are going to learn and how they will do this is made clear to pupils, sometimes orally but often through written targets identified on the blackboard. Most teachers review these at the end of the lesson in the plenary session, but sometimes in literacy and numeracy sessions too little time is left, although what is covered is of good quality.

36. In nearly all lessons the pace is brisk which helps maintain concentration and motivation. Occasionally pace wanes in some lessons in mathematics and science and there is a tendency for pupils to lose interest. Questioning proceeds at a pace which keeps pupils on 'their toes' and stimulates pupils to think carefully about the answer. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and what they have learned well through this process but there is not always a written assessment or lesson evaluation made, although this is better at Key Stage 2.

37. Teachers written planning is satisfactory and more detailed at Key Stage 2. Objectives are mostly clear although some are too broad to be evaluated. Homework takes a variety of forms; this can be reading in the lower school or research work in the upper school. Pupils generally enjoy the challenge of what they are set. Some pupils are provided with laptop computers to work at home to aid their research. Pupils show an increased confidence in using computers to aid their learning as a result.

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

Learning opportunities

38. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The content is now highly relevant for pupils and helps motivate them to learn effectively, something they have found very difficult, prior to entry to Brownhill. At Key Stage 2, particularly, pupils learn to make the connection between what they are learning and how they can use the skills in other subjects. Through carefully thought out themes for some subjects, clear links are made, such as in history with design and technology and science. Older pupils are also beginning to make such links, particularly in design and technology, and apply their skills in other subjects, such as IT and mathematics.

39. The curriculum, however, does not meet statutory requirements because of the lack of provision for a modern foreign language and for music at Key Stage 3; music is taught in Year 7 but not yet taught in Years 8 and 9. The school has faced considerable difficulties regarding recruitment of staff. Because of a lack of expertise in these subjects it has decided not to teach them to Key Stage 3 pupils until suitably qualified and experienced co-ordinators are in place. The school is clearly aware of the shortcomings within the curriculum and is addressing these issues as a matter of urgency. A music specialist was appointed last September and has decided to teach groups successively as they move through Key Stage 3. Furthermore, because of similar difficulties, design and technology has only recently begun to be taught at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils are now making very good progress because of the skills of the experienced co-ordinator now in place. The school is seeking to appoint a teacher who has expertise in teaching a modern foreign language.

40. The planning to enable pupils to make progress in subjects is mostly good at Key Stage 2. English and mathematics are planned according to the literacy and numeracy strategies, 'themes' (in the form of cross curricular topics) are planned for some subjects such as history, geography and design and technology, and medium-term planning is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work. However, there is a lack of planning for information technology in Key Stages 2 and 3 and in geography and history at Key Stage 3.

41. The curriculum, despite its areas for further development, is generally broad and well balanced, with the exception of Key Stage 3. Its major strength is the appropriateness that it has for the pupils who attend Brownhill. The curriculum is extremely well monitored and audited by the deputy headteacher. The information obtained from these processes is used very well to help plan the future curriculum.

42. The school has improved in the match of teaching staff to the demands of the curriculum and now has a specialist teacher for art and design and technology. The curriculum in these areas has developed very well as a result of these appointments. There are appropriate subject policies in place and schemes of work are planned effectively around those policies. However, there are some areas for development concerning a whole

school approach, for the marking of pupils' work and assessment in general.

43. The Youth Award Scheme plays a major role in the development of curriculum for the present Year 10 pupils. Subjects covered include environmental issues, beliefs and values, sport and leisure and home management. The school has a good range of accreditation suitable for the needs of the older pupils and constantly seeks to ensure that the courses are relevant for the different cohorts as they progress through the school. This motivates pupils and gives them a sense of achievement and pride in what they do. Pupils undertake GCSE English, mathematics, science and recently art, as well as Certificate of Achievement in some of these subjects. In addition, they also study for Certificate of Achievement in design and technology and information technology.

44. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very well and are strengths of the school. Many pupils enter the school with a poor self-image and limited skills in these areas and the initiatives are directly and significantly improving pupils' literacy and numeracy levels and their ability to apply these skills in other subjects and their everyday life. The school's programme of personal, social and health education is also a significant strength. It is well planned and co-ordinated and enables all pupils to apply their understandings and developing social skills in all aspects of their school life. There are good opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills in others lessons and teachers are very aware of pupils' limitations, especially in reading and writing.

45. Information technology is well promoted and used throughout the school, across the curriculum. The lack of a planned programme in Key Stages 2 and 3 limits pupils' progress, although by the time they reach Key Stage 4 and undertake an accredited course, they do make satisfactory progress. Programmed learning (where pupils use computer programs to improve their literacy and numeracy skills) is used extremely effectively to meet pupils' individual needs.

46. The school prepares pupils very well for their transition to the next stage of their education and the world of work and the curriculum that underpins this is very strong. The careers service has just introduced to the school the Careers Education Quality Award. This ties the work experience and careers programme closely into the school's improvement plan. There is an established and very successful programme of work experience and a work related programme for Year 11 pupils which links to pupils' other studies. For example, some pupils in Year 11 attend work placement and a further one day per month at the local college. The school gets very good reports from the college concerning the pupils' progress and commitment. A garage owner who is also a member of the governing body takes students on work-experience. He is pleased with the progress that the pupils make and also with the high level of support and monitoring that the pupils receive. A local joiner also takes individual pupils for one full day per week over a period of ten weeks.

47. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in extra curricular activities including ice hockey, a breakfast club, theatre trips and visits to art museums. Groups of pupils have also been taken to see the illuminations at Blackpool, the museum of light and photography in Bradford and 'Eureka' in Halifax. The school has received numerous 'Education Extra' awards, including a distinction, for its work in providing educational experiences outside school.

Links with the community and other institutions

48. Links with other educational institutions and the opportunities for pupils to extend their academic and other learning are very good. There have been very beneficial college links courses to which the school is highly committed despite a lack of funding. All Year 11 pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for and develop their own educational experience; beyond that available in the school. This year eight of ten pupils have done so. Each Year 11 pupil attends for one day each week for a year and three pupils have been so well motivated by their college experience that they enrolled full-time for the next academic year. For example, one pupil has enrolled for a computer literacy and information technology course, another two pupils are following a sport and leisure course.

49. The school has good links with local mainstream schools. Where it is felt that a pupil in any year would benefit from integration into a mainstream school, a carefully planned and staged programme is set up. Pupils visit the school for half a day a week with support. The amount of time at the school and the level of support is carefully monitored and adjusted. The school has successfully re-integrated an average of one or two pupils each year over the past six years. In addition, since September the school has developed extra provision for five pupils to attend a special class (the 'Outreach' class) with the agreed intention of re-integrating them back into their mainstream schools. Pupils are now successfully spending time back in these schools, as part of their programme. Headteachers say that they benefit from the additional support provided by Brownhill school and that this gives the mainstream school teachers confidence in their ability to provide for, and manage, the pupils when they are included in lessons.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

50. Provision for this area of pupils' development overall is good. Opportunities for pupils' social and moral development are very good and for spiritual development they are good. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

51. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school's positive ethos, and the good role models staff provide, encourage pupils to explore their own values and those of other people and to reflect on what they have learnt in lessons and the effects of their behaviour on others. Through assemblies pupils are encouraged to reflect on how people relate to each other and to see things from another person's point of view, as well as to celebrate each other's successes. In music lessons pupils are able to be creative and to use their imagination well. For example, they learn to compose their own expression of mood with percussion instruments. There is also an excellent innovation where pupils are given the opportunity to express themselves in Aerobic Movement, followed by quiet reflection and relaxing encouragement to find a quiet, positive place in their 'inner world'. This assists them to approach the last lesson of the day in a calm and productive way.

52. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school promotes an atmosphere of high expectations, excellent relationships with staff and the opportunity for pupils to reflect on the consequences of their choice of actions. The personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to be very clear between right and wrong. The school code and class rules provide a very good framework for expectations. There are whole school targets for behaviour, such as the one in place during the week of the inspection of "Don't put people down" and "Listen to each other", support pupils' valuing of themselves and others. Pupils also have their own individual targets that they are clear about and work towards. Pupils are shown how to accept disappointments with a good grace, without "sulking". For example' when they play "Guess Who" in a personal and

social education lesson part of the game is to cover up what they are thinking and not to show what they feel.

53. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The personal and social education programme teaches social skills and pupils demonstrate that they are learning to transfer these, within the school context, in their polite, friendly approach to visitors. Drama lessons and the very good relationships with teachers help pupils to be aware of their attitude towards authority. For instance in studying the text of "The Demon Headmaster" they begin to defuse any "anti-authority" views they may hold. The good extra-curricular activities and educational visits, such as residential trips, integration into mainstream schools as well as the work experience opportunities, provide a range of ways for pupils to learn and practice their developing social skills.

54. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Art, drama and music all make a good contribution to pupils' cultural and multi-cultural experiences. For example pupils learn about the work of famous artists and produce their own work in the style of these. Pupils learn about the American Indians and Indian dance and about different religions. Visitors to the school, such as Asian dancers and people in National dress, extend the pupils' understanding of other cultures. Some pupils have the opportunity to visit a nearby mainstream school, which is representative of the multi-cultural diversity of the local area, and take part in their assemblies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

55. The school continues to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the school community. Staff listen and respond effectively to pupils' concerns and take appropriate action to ensure their safety and well being through individual counselling. They acknowledge and celebrate pupils' achievements and take steps to raise pupils' self esteem and confidence. All teachers and support staff have purposeful and constructive relationships with pupils which enhance learning and contribute to the warm and friendly environment.

56. The arrangements, policy and practice for child protection are sound and a caring, designated teacher implements procedures effectively. He ensures good quality leadership and co-ordination and also works closely with specialists and their agencies to provide a safe and secure learning environment.

57. The personal, social and health education programme is very comprehensive and delivered to a high standard. It very adequately supports pupils' welfare and their individual and social development. They learn about aspects of health, drugs, anti-bullying, racism and sexism in a warm and friendly environment and are enabled to make informed choices about themselves. The weekly pastoral sessions are particularly effective in providing personal support for pupils and help build self-awareness and personal esteem. They also assure very strong relationships between pupils and staff.

58. The school's very good policy on behaviour and discipline is implemented very well. It encourages very good standards of behaviour and a relaxed and learning environment, particularly in the classroom. There is no written anti-bullying policy, but all reported incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. All anti-social behaviour is recorded and monitored, but there are limited procedures for recording any incidents of racism, although the headteacher and senior management team challenge all such incidents appropriately. The school should instigate procedures whereby incidents are classified and can be

monitored more effectively.

59. The school actively encourages good levels of attendance by thoroughly investigating all absences within 24 hours. There are very good procedures for rewarding individual achievement. Pupils are encouraged to set individual targets and parents are given support and resources to increase attendance and discourage unauthorised absence. There are very good links between the school and the education welfare officer. Learning support assistants work diligently to record and monitor pupils' attendance and the information is used very effectively to challenge unauthorised absences and encourage improved levels of attendance. These arrangements have a significant impact on raising existing levels of attendance and standards. Since the last report the school has made good progress in successfully implementing the many monitoring strategies it has introduced.

60. The school's provision for the monitoring of personal and academic performance is good overall and this is a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. It is very good for personal development and the school's personal support for its pupils, also very good. The monitoring of academic performance is satisfactory. Some good developments have taken place in the school's monitoring generally, but many of these are still very recent and have yet to fully impact. The school's working party on assessment has written a good, comprehensive, new policy, which aims to bring together many of the new initiatives and will ensure that all information on each pupil will be held in one file that will move through the school with the pupil. Baseline assessment takes place within two weeks of a pupil entering the school and includes information on behavioural and personal development. This also provides information about achievement levels and diagnostic information on reading, writing and numeracy. Pupils undertake the National Curriculum tests (Standard Attainment Tests) and teacher-assessed tasks at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3.

61. Individual educational plans (IEPs) have a simple but appropriate format, with general school targets and individual targets for literacy and numeracy. Individual behaviour plans (IBPs) include personal development targets. The school is adopting a good procedure of asking staff for evidence to demonstrate how targets have been met. This is assisting all staff to ensure that targets set are becoming more measurable and specific. For example, the school encourages them not to write statements such as "to reduce incidences of disruptive behaviour" but "to achieve a class merit for all lessons in a complete week".

62. The pupils are able to take some accredited courses, such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in English, mathematics and science and the Certificate of Educational Achievement in English, mathematics, art, information and communication technology and they have also recently introduced design and technology (including food technology). They are also able to work towards the Bronze Level of the Youth Award Scheme (Award Scheme Development & Accreditation Network) (ASDAN). There are some plans to increase General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) opportunities in the future and to accredit subjects such as religious education and modern foreign language (when it is on the timetable) within the Youth Award Scheme and Year 10 pupils are now working towards Silver Level. Some pupils work towards Key Skills in "Working with others" and "Improving your own learning" accreditation, at the College link. Examples of pupils' work goes towards files for Record of Achievement separately at the primary and secondary departments.

63. Pupils' reading skills are assessed annually for accuracy and comprehension. The "Successmaker" and "Wordshark" programmed learning software have their own in-built assessment systems and this information is shared with teachers and informs what level the pupils will work on next. However, data obtained from other assessment sources is not yet analysed to look for trends and thus pupils' progress in some subjects is not fully supported.

64. The school has chosen to focus on the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies which it has done very well. However, in some subjects, the assessment of what pupils' know, understand and can do, does not sufficiently inform teachers' planning of what pupils will learn next. For example, this is not yet satisfactory for: history, geography, music, information technology and religious education. For these subjects there has been a lack of development in this area since the last inspection.

65. There is a new marking policy that has not yet been implemented. This has a good system of sharing a marking key with pupils so they are clear about the criteria for success. However, it does not include sufficient emphasis on giving pupils written feedback on why their work is good, as well as pointing out possible areas for improvement. Some teachers, particularly in the primary department, are already doing this but it is not yet widespread throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

66. The vast majority of parents enjoy a constructive, purposeful and productive relationship with the school. Parents and carers have rightly expressed positive views about the individual progress made by pupils and the significant improvements in the behaviour and attendance of disaffected pupils. They value the good quality support and guidance, which ensure that children learn in a safe and secure environment. Parents attribute these significant improvements to the very effective leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team. Parents are concerned, however, about some inconsistencies in the homework policy and practice. This inconsistency means that parents feel they are not as involved in supporting their pupils' learning as much as they would like to be. The level of homework is generally considered to be satisfactory by inspectors, although it would be beneficial for the school to monitor its consistency in some subjects.

67. The quality of information that parents and carers receive from the school is good. Parents are pleased with the very good quality information they receive through the school prospectus, newsletter, annual report from governors and the regular informal and formal contact between parents and staff. Parents and carers receive satisfactory levels of information about their child's progress, levels of attainment, attitudes to work, as well as information about their personal development, through the school's annual report on progress. Parents are consistently encouraged to attend pupils' reviews and according to the majority of parents the discussions between them, staff and other specialists are objective and take the views of parents and children aboard. These arrangements ensure that the school complies with its statutory obligations and parents continue to share in the academic and social development of their child.

68. Parents are constantly encouraged to support learning in the classroom. During the inspection some parents were observed interacting effectively with pupils and attending school assemblies, which celebrate the achievements of the child. These opportunities ensure that parents share in the success of their child and encourage more effective learning and communication.

69. Most of the information provided through the home/school agreement (HSA) is being implemented. This ensures good exchange of information between the school and parents and continues to form a solid foundation for learning. The information and guidance provided through the HSA has significantly contributed to the improvements in pupils' attendance and reduction in the levels of unauthorised absence.

70. Many parents appreciate the efforts of the teachers and the headteacher and the manner in which they respond to concerns and suggestions. Parents, particularly, value the school's 'open door' policy. This encourages parents to be involved in all aspects of their children's learning and adds to the effective partnership between the school and home. However, the relationships with the residential carers of some pupils could be strengthened further to ensure more seamless care and provision for these pupils.

71. Since the last report the school has improved the levels of communication between the school and home, which has contributed significantly to the very good standards of pupil behaviour and improved levels of attendance. The school continues to build on the constructive links, which exist between staff and parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

72. Good improvement has been made in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. This is now good overall and the school meets its aims well. The good quality leadership and management contributes well to pupils' achievements, both personally and academically. Governors were rightly concerned at the negative features identified during the last inspection and have suitably supported the headteacher in his quest for improvement and raising standards. The headteacher has attended a serving headteacher's management course and has brought to the school some of the ideas related to performance management, consultation and a greater understanding of how staff need to be guided and supported in carrying out their roles. This has resulted in staff being more 'empowered' and facilitated to take on more of their responsibilities. Both the headteacher's and deputy headteacher's teaching timetable has been reduced and they now have more time for their management functions.

73. The leadership by the headteacher is very strong. He is very supportive of his staff and maintains a regular presence overseeing pupils' work and standards of behaviour through his daily 'walkabouts'. This has a positive affect on the way pupils behave and any difficulties are resolved very quickly. He has a clear vision for the future development of the school, a great determination to improve all aspects of the school's work, and a very capable staff team to do this. Regular reviews of the work of the school, such as the ongoing monitoring of attendance to see whether measures put in place are working, are improving the opportunities for pupils. The detailed and wide-ranging five-year school improvement plan, with its very appropriate priorities, is continuously under review. Not only is it formally and rigorously reviewed and revised annually, but also minor changes take place during the course of the year to keep it on track. Because of this the steer for the school's future is very clear. This clear vision is further replicated in individual subjects particularly where subject co-ordinators provide detailed action plans to support the outlined development in the improvement plan. Not all do so, however, and for some subjects there is a less clear direction. For instance, information technology (IT) is clearly identified for review and improvement up to 2002 but there is only an outline plan in place. For design and technology, a more detailed plan was instigated by the new co-ordinator shortly after she arrived. This has just recently been revised and updated in the light of her monitoring of the subject and gives better direction for the development of the subject. Some criteria for judging the success of the school improvement plan are insufficiently precise and do not

state how standards will improve. This makes it difficult for those monitoring the plan to judge its cost effectiveness.

74. The management team has appropriately expanded since the last inspection and comprises headteacher, deputy headteacher, a senior teacher for the primary department and one for the secondary department, and the school's administrator. Each one has a very clear job description and they carry out their management functions well. The deputy headteacher's role is now well developed (a weakness in the last inspection) and he has a responsibility for monitoring the curriculum, ensuring breadth and balance and that planning enables pupils to make progress. Through this work deficiencies in the curriculum have been identified and addressed (although some are taking some time because of difficulties in recruiting staff with particular expertise). For example, the approach to teaching history and the programme at Key Stage 3 was noted to be unsuitable for the type of pupils the school has and their work was showing limited progress. This has recently been changed to include learning through drama, an approach which motivates pupils strongly and which is beginning to impact on progress and understandings in this subject. The deputy headteacher's work in staff development, has allowed staff to undertake a wide range of training and his insistence on the debriefing means that all staff benefit from issues arising from the training. This has a positive affect on their knowledge of recent development and helps them put new initiatives into to practice fairly quickly.

75. The senior management team meet regularly, and the headteacher and deputy headteacher meet separately, in addition. Although an agenda is often produced minutes are not kept of their discussions; senior staff indicate they have in-depth discussions on a range of matters but a written record would aid both internal and external monitoring of the school. This strong senior management team is very supportive of staff for whom they are responsible. They undertake their monitoring roles well, although this work is largely informal. Each phase co-ordinator meets with their own 'curriculum' team and, to ensure there is continuity across the phases, some co-ordinators have cross phase responsibilities. For instance, in literacy and numeracy, although others have these to a more limited extent. Subject co-ordinators are in place for most curriculum areas and have appropriate job descriptions. Some are new and are developing their roles including the budgeting and managing of resources. The management of subjects is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. It is good or very good in many subjects; for instance, in literacy, mathematics (including numeracy), art, design and technology and music it is very good. In geography and history, however, it is unsatisfactory.

76. Appraisal procedures within the school are now satisfactory and the school has made significant progress since the last inspection when this aspect of staff development was identified as a weakness. Support staff meet termly with the deputy headteacher to discuss concerns and strategies for the monitoring of teaching staff are becoming embedded and are successful.

77. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory. The headteacher formally monitors teaching using the appraisal process and has clearly identified what constitutes good teaching through a number of documents and proformas which have arisen from discussions with staff. Although there is no formal policy on teaching and learning, staff are clear that when they are monitored, they are assessed against these features. The headteacher's comments are supportive and give direction for improvement. Staff are set clear targets as a result and this also informs staff development. Co-ordinators monitor planning and aspects of the subject curriculum, but there is no opportunity for formally checking on the quality of teaching in their subject. The headteacher takes on much of this responsibility but this could usefully be extended to subject leaders so as to enhance their

roles even further.

78. Staff development is efficiently managed. Priorities are established and appropriately costed through the school improvement plan. The school has invested heavily in whole school training on such topics as 'Positive Handling' in which all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as governors and parents are involved. Individual staff are also encouraged to promote their own development and suitable lists of local education authority courses and by other providers are kept in the staffroom.

79. The headteacher has built a strong staff team and, despite recruitment in some subjects being difficult, the school has been determined to fill vacancies with the best candidates who can provide a high quality of teaching and who have high levels of expertise in a particular curriculum area. For some subjects this has taken a long time, and has resulted in some statutory curriculum requirements not being met over the past few years. A specialist design and technology teacher is now in place who has a high degree of knowledge and is designing a very relevant and challenging curriculum for the pupils. Similarly, there have been deficiencies in art and music but two co-ordinators for these were relatively recently appointed. Through the quality programmes, which are being designed, and the very good quality of teaching in all three of these subjects, pupils' attainment is being rapidly raised.

80. The school responds well to government and local initiatives, such as the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the very short notice given by the local education authority to develop 'outreach' facilities from last September. The school has reacted very positively and constructively to all of these and very effective provision is now in place. Priorities for school development are accordingly adjusted but not lost sight of.

81. The work of the governors is satisfactory overall. As a consequence of their close partnership, there is a strong and trusting relationship between the governing body and headteacher. The newly re-constituted body is developing its skills at being a 'critical friend' to the school, although some governors are already very experienced, fairly adept at asking the right questions, exploring options and possibilities, and holding the school to account for its standards and performance. Other governors are new to the school and only just beginning to learn about being a governor through school information and training opportunities. The chair is highly committed and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in broad terms and takes an active part in the planning for school development and the monitoring of progress towards targets. Last year this was through a residential workshop with staff which also resulted in him getting to know staff better. He meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss ongoing matters of management. Although the attendance at governors' meeting is relatively good, there are a small number of governors who are not always able to attend regularly. The school has, appropriately, decided to undertake the work of the previously formed committees, as one body. Governor's meetings effectively aid their monitoring of the school's work and support its development, especially through the wide-ranging information provided in the headteacher's report.

82. Financial management is good. The designated governor has a background in this work and the school regularly calls upon his expertise. This, together with the highly effective work of the school administrator, results in very good monitoring of the budget. Day-to-day administration is very efficient and financial procedures followed well, although there has been no local education authority audit since the last inspection. School priorities in the improvement plan are appropriately costed and all subject co-ordinators have a

budget to manage based on the subject priorities at the time. The school has built up a sizeable surplus over the past few years in preparation for the funding of building work which has now been paid for by the local education authority. In order to reduce this surplus to a reasonable contingency, but also to use the money effectively, some funds have been put into increasing support staff on a temporary basis. Together with the planned increase in pupil numbers and budget, some of these positions are now to be made permanent. Grants are used well and the increased standard fund grant is partly being used to support much needed additional clerical support in the school office, for instance.

83. The school applies 'best value' principles satisfactorily and these are strongest in seeking cost-effective purchases. The school does consult on a wide variety of issues and often includes staff, parents and pupils in these consultations; for instance, recently on what pupils' views of the work provided were. The school is beginning to compare GCSE results and other characteristics with similar schools. This is a highly reflective school which does seek improvement and asks critical questions of itself. It is constantly challenging itself to find new and better ways of meeting the needs of pupils who can be very disaffected upon admission to the school.

84. Staffing levels and expertise are good overall. The number of teachers is sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils. Staff are appropriately qualified and there is sufficient experience and expertise to meet the demands of most of the curriculum. There is some weakness in that few staff possess specialist qualifications in teaching children with special educational needs but this is compensated for by the strengths of staff in terms of experience and in managing pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. There is no member of staff qualified to or with expertise to teach a modern foreign language, a subject not currently taught.

85. There has been significant improvement in the allocation of support staff, which was identified in the last inspection as a weakness. Most classes benefit from this support although at the moment most of these staff are temporary and, in some cases, fairly new to the school. Some support staff carry out significant responsibilities such as monitoring attendance and supervising the extensive use of computer assisted/ programmed learning. They do this well and support staff are fully involved in all staff training. Their contribution to the work of the school is a significant strength. Time is allocated within the timetable for support staff to help plan curricular activities and to ensure that their classroom contribution is effective. This exemplary practice is supported in some cases by written briefing notes for lessons whereby support staff are given precise instruction and guidance towards their function in particular lessons. This enables them to provide better support for pupils and positively impacts on pupil progress.

86. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are in place (as well as the mentoring of newly qualified teachers). There is no formal policy for induction but a secure procedure is followed which can be adapted to the needs of the relevant new staff member. Recently appointed teachers have expressed satisfaction with the process and feel they have derived benefit from it. There is a useful staff handbook.

87. Accommodation is generally satisfactory except for the poor facilities available for physical education which limits pupils' progress in gymnastics. Substantial building improvements have taken place since the last inspection. Accommodation in art and the school library is very good and in design and technology there are excellent facilities. The library is well stocked and pleasantly decorated and is staffed by a very efficient librarian, who, besides keeping books in good order, provides relevant assistance to pupils in their

research or recreational reading. Changing and showering facilities are much improved and are no longer the weakness identified in the last report. New classrooms are well planned and appointed and the school now possesses a pleasant resource in the new quadrangle. The school will soon have the advantage of security fencing along the whole perimeter. The buildings are generally in good order and are proudly maintained by enthusiastic and committed caretaking staff. Weaknesses remain in that the hall/gym is small, cramped and very unsuitable for physical education activities. The food technology room, converted a previous staffroom is too small for its purposes. Storage remains a considerable problem within the school. Resources are generally not able to be stored appropriately through shortage of space. This detracts from efficiency in terms of their retrieval and accessibility. Boys and girls toilets are still problematic. They are not well ventilated, there are no substantial doors and they are separated from the main corridor merely by partitions. As music develops through Key Stage 3 it is likely that the lack of a separate music room will cause some difficulty with delivery of the curriculum.

88. Resources are generally satisfactory and are good in English, mathematics, art, information and communication technology and music. In design and technology they are very good. They are, however, poor in geography, particularly in Key Stage 3. Resources are generally used well and are of high quality. The school makes substantial use of computer technology and classrooms are well equipped with software and other technological aids. However, specific software to support learning in subjects, such as science and history, is very limited.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- (1) Ensure that a modern foreign language is taught at Key Stage 3 and that music is taught in Years 8 and 9;
(paragraphs 39, 153, 154)
- (2) Ensure that there is a planned programme of work throughout the school which helps pupils make progress in information technology, in a modern foreign language, geography and history at Key Stage 3 and in music in Years 8 and 9;
(paragraphs 12, 15, 16, 39, 40, 136, 144, 146, 152, 153, 157)
- (3) Ensure that assessment in these subjects and religious education informs future planning;
(paragraphs 64, 137, 145, 147, 152, 178)
- (4) Improve the facilities for teaching physical education, music and the storage of resources;
(paragraphs 87, 157, 164)
- (5) Improve resources in geography and software for subjects.
(paragraphs 88, 138, 152)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. These are indicated in the following paragraphs:

- Ensure that there is a system of keeping records of pupils' progress in information technology;
- Have more formal monitoring arrangements for checking the quality of teaching and standards in subjects;
- Improve teachers' knowledge of teaching science in the secondary department;
- Ensure that the school is able to better monitor any incidents by carefully classifying each one.
(paragraphs 28, 58, 77, 147)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	38	34	15	3	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	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	62
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	9.2	School data	7.5

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 2

1999 National Curriculum tests

English – one pupil Level 4, four pupils below level to take test

Mathematics – three pupils Level 4 and two pupils Level 3

Science - four pupils Level 4, one pupil Level 3

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

1999 National Curriculum tests

English – all pupils below level to take the test

Mathematics – four pupils at Level 4, three at Level 2 and one pupil at Level 2

Science – four pupils at Level 4, one at Level 3 and three assessed by their teacher at Level

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

1999

GCSE

Mathematics – one pupil Grade G

Science – one pupil Grade G

Certificate of Achievement

English - one pupil achieved a distinction, one pupil merit, and three pupils a pass.

Science - two pupils gained a silver award and one pupil a bronze award.

YOUTH AWARD

Four pupils gained the bronze award

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	60
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	25	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6
Average class size	8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	286

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	402 171
Total expenditure	394 674
Expenditure per pupil	8 055
Balance brought forward from previous year	35 494
Balance carried forward to next year	*42 991

* Accrued due to building plans which has now been externally funded - to be reduced in 1999/2000 to approximately £18,964

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	62
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	41	8	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	36	5	5	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	45	21	5	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	19	41	19	8
The teaching is good.	67	23	3	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	28	0	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	18	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	15	3	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	59	28	8	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	64	26	3	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	33	3	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	23	0	3	8

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

ENGLISH

90. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall in relation to their prior attainment and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests are nearly always lower than for mathematics and science, showing their particular weaknesses in English and on entry to the school baseline tests, confirm this. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this, supported by the programmed learning initiatives such as "Successmaker", "Wordshark" and "ERIC" ("Everyone Reading In Class), has enabled the pupils to make good progress. Pupils enter the school at differing ages and most, on entry, have difficulties with all aspects of literacy and poor self-esteem in relation to their abilities in these areas. As they progress through the school they change their attitudes, particularly towards reading, and improve their skills in all aspects of English. They use these skills more effectively to support their achievement in other curricular areas.

91. Achievements in speaking and listening are very good across the school. All subject lessons promote this very well and teachers are very sensitive to the need to help pupils gain confidence in this area. When they arrive at the school many pupils have little confidence in speaking up in front of the class and do not attend well to what others have to say. As they progress through Key Stage 2 they listen more carefully to stories, talk about their meaning and predict what might happen next. By the age of 11 (at the end of Key Stage 2) they make very good progress. For example, they discuss what would be a "recipe" for a poem to be performed, such as the need for rhyming words, characters and action. They continue to make very good progress in Key Stage 3. For example, by Year 9 (at the end of Key Stage 3), they discuss dilemmas faced by teenagers in a magazine story and suggest what they think they ought to do, giving appropriate reasons for their judgements. By the end of Key Stage 4, their achievements and progress are good. Their use of language is more complex and they adapt it for different contexts. They are now more confident in presenting their views and in speaking in front of others. For example they perform a scene from the play of "Blood Brothers" to an audience in a confident way, showing obvious enjoyment and pleasure at their own success.

92. Achievements in reading are very good at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils gain positive attitudes towards books and reading and this raises their self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. By the age of 11 higher attaining pupils make good progress and read reasonably confidently and accurately. They read with expression, and correct their own mistakes. They know the title, author and illustrator of books and can build phonically regular words including more difficult and polysyllabic words. Lower attaining pupils read hesitantly and wait for help, but are able to employ picture and phonic clues and use meaning to predict. They can talk about the characters in the story and the plot. If they are not sure of a word they cover up parts of the word to help them to build the word. By 14 (at the end of Key Stage 3) they make good progress. For example they work on a range of sounds in words ('phonics') such as the split digraph of "i-e", and on the vowel phonemes of "igh", and "ie". They pick words out of a text and organise them according to their spelling under these headings. Higher attaining pupils work independently and lower attaining pupils have support from a learning support assistant (LSA).

93. Progress continues to be good by 16 (at the end of Key Stage 4) when higher attaining pupils read school library books fluently and accurately with expression. They choose to read classics at home such as "Little Women". Lower attaining pupils can read books they are familiar with accuracy and, if they make any mistakes, they correct themselves without hesitation. They are only unsure about unusual names of people and places. They know where the index and contents are and the difference between fiction and non-fiction books.

94. Pupils' achievement in writing is very good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils have little confidence in their ability to write well when they arrive at the school and limited skills. At Key Stage 2 the National Literacy Strategy is helping them to gain skills and confidence in their writing. For example pupils match up rhyming words taken from the story "Tall Tale Laura" on card and notice that the spelling of some words is different, even though they sound similar. Higher attaining pupils write "Thank you letters" showing that they can adapt their writing to the reader. The spelling of regular words and common polysyllabic words is usually accurate. By 11 they make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils add the relevant suffix to words and check if the spelling is correct by looking it up in a dictionary. They extrapolate the spelling rules that apply from the list of words they complete. Their handwriting is neat and well formed. Lower attaining pupils work on "Wordshark" and spell out words and find them in "word searches". Their handwriting shows accurate form and consistent size.

95. The school's literacy strategy has only recently been introduced into Key Stage 3 and has yet to fully impact positively on standards, although it is helping pupils to make better progress in writing. By the time they are 14 they make satisfactory progress. For example they write a letter to a 'teenage magazine' suggesting alternative solutions to the dilemma faced by one of the characters. They are well motivated, but they do not have many strategies to help them with sentence construction or imaginative ways to begin their writing. Higher attaining pupils write letters with a simple structure, with correct spelling and well-formed handwriting. Lower attaining pupils still need support to write a few lines, which are developed into a sequence of sentences, punctuated with capital letters and full stops. At Key Stage 4, in Year 10, they show they understand about some of the requirements of writing a play. They study "The Demon Headmaster" and discuss stage directions, setting the scene and pick out the present, past and future tense of different verbs. By the time they are 16 they continue to make satisfactory progress.

96. Pupils at Key Stage 4 work towards the Certificate of Educational Achievement in English. Higher attaining pupils study the play of "Buddy" and produce their own book cover and having watched a production of the play on stage, they produce a short clip of it. They show that they have edited and corrected their work. Lower attaining pupils produce an invitation for a Christening, showing that they can use different fonts, sizes, bold and centering. They are given help to ensure that their spelling is accurate.

97. The quality of teaching in English is good overall and the work motivates and interests pupils, resulting in their attitudes to the subject being very good. The show very good levels of concentration and even where the work is not intrinsically very exciting, for example on spelling and phonics, their very good relationships with teachers means that they keep on task very well and try hard at all times. The interesting way lessons are presented results in them using their imagination well. For example, they predict what might happen next in stories they hear or they read themselves. Teachers are well organised and as a result pupils show they are clear about classroom routines. For example they check the board for what they will be doing that day in "ERIC", depending on which day of the week it is. They enjoy a good sense of humour with their teachers and extend this to

thinking about how authors use humour to achieve empathy in their readers.

98. At Key Stage 2 the teaching of all the attainment targets of speaking and listening, reading and writing is very good. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the teaching of speaking and listening and reading is good and the teaching of writing is satisfactory. Teachers have very good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and the school's interpretation of this. The teaching of the Literacy Hour is always good and frequently very good, particularly at Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned to include text, sentence and word levels and whole class, group and plenary sessions. Activities are relevant and interesting for the pupils. They are organised well and pupils of different abilities are appropriately challenged. Their behaviour is very good and frequently excellent even when the work is particularly challenging for them. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are used very well in class to work with groups of pupils and they follow the learning objectives of teachers closely. Pupils work individually with LSAs on "Word Shark" within lessons and when withdrawn to the Library to work on "Success Maker", are very well supported by a fully trained LSA. Such individual support enables each to make progress and to build steadily on their identified skills. The introduction of the Literacy Hour at Key Stage 3 is supporting pupils' progress. However, at Key Stages 3 and 4 the teaching of writing does not include a range of strategies to help pupils who find sentence construction and imaginative writing difficult

99. The curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory and at Key Stage 2 it is very good. The literacy co-ordinator has provided very good leadership to the school. The implementation of the literacy strategy is also very good, as is the additional support provided for pupils with literacy difficulties, through "ERIC", "Successmaker" and "Wordshark". The school has already identified that the range of writing experiences provided at Key Stages 3 and 4 is too narrow and has extended its literacy strategy to address this problem. This is beginning to provide improvement, although there is insufficient support given to pupils for creative writing and for planning and organising their thoughts on paper. Drama, which is also taught in other lessons such as history, gives good opportunities to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills and raise their confidence and self-esteem. The assessment of pupils' literacy skills is good and helps teachers to plan more effectively for lessons and to meet pupils' needs. The in-built recording systems linked to the programmed learning schemes, also helps to decide the level at which pupils will work next and provides teachers with information about pupils' progress. The library is well stocked and pupils are supported in their choice of books by the LSA working with "Successmaker". Resources in the subject are good.

MATHEMATICS

100. The school has made good progress in its provision for mathematics since the last inspection and mathematics is now well established and enjoyed by all pupils. The quality of teaching and planning has improved and the subject is carefully monitored to ensure that all pupils are receiving teaching that is suitable for them.

101. The attainment levels of pupils at all key stages are generally below the national average, however, they make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have progressed so well that some are able to take the GCSE examination. Thus for several pupils, the standard of their work is almost in line with the national average and all have certainly gained a great deal in confidence and competence.

102. Throughout the school pupils make very good progress in knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The use and application of what they have learned is more difficult for them and they need particular guidance in 'seeing' which aspects of mathematics will help them solve a particular problem. A wide variety of teaching methods is used to ensure that the individual special needs of the pupils are being met fully. For example, in one lesson pupils have the experience of some precision teaching (teaching in very small steps) which they thoroughly enjoy. This involves pupils as individuals, making decisions about their learning targets and setting themselves time targets to meet when answering questions

103. In Key Stage 2 the very good calm and sensitive questioning by the teachers ensures that the pupils feel positive about their work and are not afraid to answer questions. Consequently pupils make very good progress as they learn about the different properties of two-dimensional shapes including, circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. This knowledge is further advanced then, by studying the three-dimensional objects including spheres, cylinders, cones, cubes, cuboids, prisms and pyramids.

104. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress in all aspects of their mathematics' work and receive an appropriate variety of lessons that cover a wide range of subjects. All pupils benefit greatly from the use of computers and special programs such as 'Number Shark'. These support pupils' motivation, confidence and skills, and enable them to learn at their own pace; they never get 'left behind' and are also able to 'forge ahead' when they find the work easier. Pupils at Key Stage 3 have a clear understanding of decimal places, they know that figures that appear in the second decimal place refer to hundredths and those in the third decimal place refer to thousandths.

105. Pupils in Key Stage 4 follow a course that leads to the GCSE in mathematics. They make good progress as they investigate number patterns generated when considering two and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils gain in confidence as they revise their knowledge of mean, median, modal and range. They also practice their knowledge of prime numbers, multiples and factors and have a growing understanding of what these mean and how to calculate them. A small group of pupils work independently as they solve algebraic equations, then substitute the answers to check that they are correct. With the help of the teacher, pupils reinforce their knowledge of decimal place value ready for their examination.

106. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is excellent in Key Stage 2. As a result the behaviour of all pupils in all classes is very good. They are highly motivated by the work and the enthusiasm of the teachers. Pupils take responsibility for their books and materials and are expected to make sure that everything is put away at the end of the lesson. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are very excited and very careful as they measure the dimensions of their classroom by stepping out 'feet' along the length and breadth of the room.

107. Lesson planning is of very high quality; the teachers manage the behaviour of pupils extremely well and help them to overcome their difficulties. Teachers are very calm and careful in their questioning of pupils in order to encourage them and this supports pupils' confidence and willingness to 'have a go' well. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is also very good and matched with their very good knowledge of the pupils they are teaching means that work is very well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is very good; lessons proceed at a brisk pace which helps to keep pupils well motivated. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and help to encourage them by using special rulers for counting and reciting tables. Occasionally

lessons lack pace and the pupils get a little unsettled, but this is soon rectified when they begin their individual tasks that are designed to meet their individual needs. The overall quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 is good. Pupils are very well managed and often expected to work in small groups. The teacher is very skilled in motivating the pupils and helps them to overcome their fears and anxieties that are building up just before their GCSE examination.

108. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very successfully introduced to the school. All classes follow the programmes of work from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4. All pupils are benefiting greatly from the initiative and are clearly enjoying the improved standards that have resulted.

109. The mathematics curriculum is very good and ensures that a strategy for number work is totally incorporated in to the life of the school. The subject is well led and managed, teachers are able to seek advice from the co-ordinator and also have the freedom to plan individual special lessons to suit the needs of the pupils. The progress of pupils is carefully monitored and the records kept enable accurate judgements to be made on the progress that pupils are making in the school. The overall quality and sufficiency of resources are good throughout the school.

SCIENCE

110. Pupils' progress and their standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection and these are now good; previously they were judged to be satisfactory. Throughout the school there is a very good emphasis on practical work and this enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding well. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. They cover a range of topics across the programmes of study, including work on forces where simple, but effective, experiments add to pupils' enjoyment and extend their learning. Pupils have used balloons to study air pressure and made progress in their knowledge and understanding of the way air can be used and harnessed to provide varying amounts of pressure and force. They gain a sound basic knowledge of animals' habitats; they are able to make good use of a local park to extend their understanding of the variety of plants and how they reproduce and adapt to their environment. Evidence from pupils' work shows that they have studied 'light' and have covered a topic on 'changes in materials'. This involved observation of melting and dissolving. They have learned how substances such as ice or treacle change both appearance and texture when heated or dissolved. Throughout this work there is evidence that pupils carry out and evaluate simple experiments as well as record their scientific findings in a variety of appropriate ways. The basic recording skills which pupils learn at this key stage are applied throughout the school and enable pupils to maintain a good level of progress in the scientific principles of hypothesis, prediction and inference.

111. In Key Stage 3, pupils cover a wide range of topics appropriate to the programmes of study. Pupils make good progress and by the end of the key stage have experienced a substantial amount of work on the human body as an organism. They study the various major organs of the body such as heart, lungs and kidneys and are able to conduct simple, but effective, experiments to illustrate how each organ works. The use balloons to demonstrate the working of the lungs and make a simple pump to illustrate the function of the heart. Pupils also study the physical, chemical and geological changes, which can occur in everyday materials. Pupils have made detailed studies of types of rocks and linked this to work on volcanoes to the study of how oil is formed. In this key stage there is a continuing emphasis on practical work. Pupils are enabled to gain knowledge of how materials change through direct observation and experiment and by the end of the key

stage are able in many cases to demonstrate good progress in the ways in which they record and write about their practical work. During this key stage pupils are introduced to the idea of a fair test and to more sophisticated methods of recording using pie charts and graphs.

112. During Key Stage 4, pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils cover a range of topics applicable to the programmes of study. They have studied the health, reproduction and functioning of the human body with greater depth and sophistication than in the previous key stage and pupils study the inter-relationship of various body organs, the birth process and how the body processes food and waste. Further work on the changing states of materials has led to some worthwhile work on the nature of rocks. This has broadened and revisited work in Key Stage 3, and has involved pupils in consideration of the molecular structure of different rocks in comparison with the structure of liquids and gases. All work in this key stage leads to accreditation in Year 11. Courses are followed which build up units of work. Pupils are entered for GCSE foundation level science and for the Certificate of Achievement.

113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2, and is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 although two unsatisfactory lessons were observed at Key Stage 3. An additional teacher, who has little knowledge or previous experience of the subject, has begun to support the teaching of science at Key Stage 3. In lessons where the teaching was weak, expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low and the pace of teaching, too slow. Pupils were not motivated to give of their best and as a result in these lessons the pupils did not make the progress they could. Throughout the school, teachers employ a very good practical approach and mostly demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding of the subject. This enables pupils to ask questions with confidence and satisfy and stimulate their curiosity. The teaching of basic skills is good, particularly in Key Stage 2, where scientific vocabulary and the pupils' writing is clearly linked to their literacy work enabling pupils to reinforce good progress in reading and spelling of the technical words required by the subject. In this key stage teachers plan effectively and take account, in their planning, of pupils' individual education and behavioural plans and work is suitably adapted to take account of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teaching in the subject is characterised by clear and appropriate questioning of pupils, which encourages them to think carefully and to suggest ideas and solutions. In the lower part of the school, teachers are lively and enthusiastic and this leads pupils to be interested and motivated to make progress.

114. Throughout the school, most pupils are well behaved, join in discussions and complete written work with care. Support staff are particularly effectively used in lessons and are well briefed as to their role. Exemplary written lesson notes provided by the co-ordinator for support staff add to the effectiveness of teaching. Teachers use a wide variety of relevant and appropriate resources, which enables pupils to access a range of worthwhile practical activities. Weaknesses in teaching occur when teachers' expectations of pupils' progress are limited. This can result in practical activities which, though well planned and resourced, do not challenge the thinking of pupils sufficiently and progress is poor. When lessons are enthusiastically delivered with pace and vigour then pupils' achievement is good.

115. The school's planned work for science is good. Units of work follow prescribed National Curriculum programmes and detailed planning of the units is thorough and makes appropriate consideration of individual pupil's educational and behavioural plans. The planning in each key stage shows evidence that issues of pupils' progress are addressed. Teachers in the primary department are able to plan together and thus to establish breadth

and progression and in the secondary department the co-ordinator is able to oversee detailed planning by colleagues. Weaknesses in planning occur because the school does not have a policy which has been updated since the last inspection or an overall statement or strategic plan for the whole science curriculum. The detailed unit planning is, however, being added to on a termly basis and will result over time in a comprehensive scheme of work. Good use is made of appropriate commercial schemes which ensure coverage of programmes and which are helping pupils to make progress. Units of work are revisited in different school years and careful planning ensures that pupils study the units in progressively greater depth. The appropriate use of accredited courses in Key Stage 4, ensures that programmes have the necessary breadth and relevance.

116. Assessment in the subject is good throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stage 2, are formally assessed on an individual basis at the end of each unit of work and these assessments are used to adapt future work. In Key Stage 3, pupils benefit from assessment at the end of units and also from individually monitored self-assessments completed with the teacher. These assessments lead to individual targets which are carefully monitored during future work. Lesson evaluations are a feature of planning and these include informal assessment of pupils' progress during lessons. They are effective in helping teachers prepare suitably adapted work for individual pupils. This helps the pupils to make good progress and to maintain their interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

117. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides clear guidance for secondary colleagues and is able to monitor planning in Key Stages 3 and 4. The co-ordinator does not, however, maintain a whole school responsibility for science and this is a weakness because there is no evident overall plan for monitoring standards in the subject nor is there evidence of planned budgeting for resources or of planning for long term development of the subject. Planning for staff development in science is linked to individual teachers' requirements identified in the appraisal process. There is no plan to widen the general scientific knowledge and expertise of staff teaching science throughout the school.

118. Resources in the subject are adequate and are used well. There has been significant progress in this area since the last inspection. The emphasis on practical work in the school is enhanced by the use of good quality artefacts and equipment. Accommodation has been significantly improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. There is an adequate work surfaces, water and gas supply to enable simple experiments for small groups. The facilities remain on a basic level however and are shared with facilities for design and technology. It is not possible to use both facilities at the same time.

ART

119. Good improvement in the provision for the subject has been made since the last inspection. The very good quality of teaching and the programme of work introduced by the relatively new co-ordinator have resulted in pupils' achievements being very good.

120. It was not possible during the inspection to observe the teaching of art in Key Stage 2. However, from the scrutiny of displays around the building it is clear that pupils achieve well and make good progress. They are very successful, for instance, in their work as they study 'pattern' and in particular, the patterns used in producing wallpapers. Pupils produce their own designs for wallpapers using felt pens. These range from simple 'blobs' and shapes to intricate stars and chequered patterns. One pupil has produced an immaculate drawing of a fuchsia type of flower in various shades of green. Pupils also

access patterns from the Internet and study patterns on screen. There are some excellent

'stained glass windows' on display, and one study of activities when pupils were in the Lake District on a residential visit.

121. Pupils in Key Stage 3 benefit from very good teaching and create some exceptionally high quality two and three-dimensional work. Much of this work is on display around the school. The main entrance to the school is enhanced by an excellent 'modroc' sculpture in the style of Van Gogh showing that pupils have really considered his approach and have applied techniques to produce similar features in the 'modroc'. There is also a paper sculpture of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* on display in the entrance to the school.

122. The very good teaching helps pupils to produce the high quality work of which they are proud. The teacher ensures that all pupils are on task throughout lessons. She gives excellent demonstrations of techniques and processes that serve well to motivate the pupils. One group of pupils for example, worked very well in producing some circular tiles, using white-bodied clay. They worked carefully to produce textures which they would apply to the surface of their tile, decorating it in the style of famous artists.

123. Pupils in Key Stage 4 used thin strawboard to construct a 'maquette' or model of a large clay pot that they were designing. Here, a great deal of careful measuring and geometrical understanding was required in order that they might make sufficient clay slabs from which to construct the pots. Teachers and classroom assistant work extremely well together to ensure that all pupils are successful in their work. Difficult behaviour presented by pupils is never ignored. Teachers challenge the pupils in a non-confrontational manner that enables the pupils to recognise the inappropriateness of their actions. This is done without any disturbance of the lesson and pupils work very well indeed and are pleased with the results.

124. The overall quality of behaviour is good. Pupils respect each other's work and enjoy their lessons. Pupils are working on an art history project for their records of achievement. The pupils in present Year 10 are working towards a newly introduced Certificate of Achievement examination under the relatively new management of the art teacher.

125. The facilities for the teaching of art are very good and are extremely well managed by the co-ordinator. There is a wide variety of materials and equipment available for the pupils. Resources are good and are improving. The main art room, a vast improvement since the last inspection, is well appointed and is sufficiently large to allow the small groups of pupils the space to work without getting in each other's way. Resources are very well managed and are available throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Good improvement has been made in design and technology since the previous inspection. However, this is largely recent and due to the improved design and technology facilities and the appointment of the specialist teacher and co-ordinator. Design and technology has always been consistently taught at Key Stage 2, but has only recently been re-introduced at Key Stages 3 and 4, due to the school's difficulties in appointing a specialist for the secondary phase. The school has been determined to appoint the best possible candidate given the substantial weaknesses in teaching and other areas identified in the last inspection report. This has taken some time, but because of the highly competent co-ordinator in place, the teaching quality has now substantially improved. In addition to this, the facilities have been fully re-furnished and the workshop now provides an excellent learning environment.

127. This lack of continuous provision for design and technology means that pupils' achievement, over time, is unsatisfactory. Many of them have only recently begun to learn design and making techniques, for instance. However, progress is good at Key Stage 2 where activities are well integrated into 'theme' work, making them meaningful and relevant for pupils. Progress is also currently very good for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 over the short period of time since the subject has been re-introduced. Good quality units of work are being developed, based upon an ongoing assessment of pupils' skills. Pupils have responded remarkably well to the introduction of the subject, are extremely motivated and concentrate and behave very well in lessons.

128. At Key Stage 2 pupils make a wide range of products associated with work they are doing in other subjects such as science and history. They learn basic techniques of joining, such as nailing and gluing. In history, they have made fairly 'realistic' swords, using string to combine the card and paper. In science, they have designed a water wheel based on an examination of a similar design and used an ammeter to show the current generated. They use a wide variety of materials, such as wood, card, paper and developing their marking, cutting and joining techniques over the time they are in the key stage. They learn that safety is paramount. Recently, Year 5 and 6 pupils have been taught in the workshop. They have responded remarkably well and abide by the rules of the floor markings; they know that if there is any silliness or immature behaviour in such an environment they will be severely reprimanded or have 'time out' from the lesson. They readily wear goggles (some asking if they should do so for the work they are doing). In designing and producing their coat pegs, they have improved their marking skills and wood shaping skills. In food technology, they understand how food changes when it is cooked and how food can be combined to produce 'stuffed peppers'.

129. The very good progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 is directly related to the high expectations the teacher has of the pupils and the very good way in which the subject is presented and planned for. Although many pupils' skills in these key stages are at a similar level to each other, due to the lack of opportunity they have previously had for learning the subject, the teacher has carefully planned challenging activities, relevant to the age group and interests of pupils. In Key Stage 3 they construct jointed puppets relating the joints to their own movements. They learn to use the pillar drill safely and to mark a centre and drill carefully. Later in the key stage, in food technology, they design a sandwich for the end of term 'Olympics', taking great account of food hygiene issues. They learn the technique of chopping peppers and ways of ensuring that the overall appearance of the sandwich is attractive for the consumer. In Key Stage 4, Year 10 pupils studying for their Certificate of Achievement gain a very good understanding of the key words and use them appropriately. For example, in constructing boxes they understand words such as 'nets', 'scoring', and 'flaps' and use these ideas when producing their interesting designs. Particularly impressive is the way pupils relate their understandings to other work, such as in mathematics for working out area and curvature of shaped objects. In Year 11, the very enthusiastic pupils design CD covers and relate some of their work to their knowledge of IT. One knows how to access websites, for instance using direct addresses and can predict the likely website address for a well-known commercial carmaker. Another uses designs drawn at home (for homework) using a desktop publishing package as a basis for his work.

130. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is good at Key Stage 2 and very good in Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers expect the most from pupils and, in return, pupils try their hardest, showing great determination and motivation for the subject. They are keen to do their best and are pleased with their results. However, younger pupils are sometimes too focussed on the finishing of the product and insufficiently concerned with the quality of the finished product. The work does not always do justice to the quality of the teaching and the

pupils' enthusiasm. The highly skilled co-ordinator teaches the skills and techniques very well and oversees, supports and guides pupils, together with the very competent support assistants, who are learning themselves. Pupils respect that support staff are being trained 'on the job'. Planning is excellent and objectives and key vocabulary made clear to pupils. This is regularly re-enforced through lessons and pupils are gradually associating the techniques in design and technology with this. Although some evaluation does occur and there are very good examples of this (for example, when the oldest pupils are designing and constructing their projects as well as with regard to the final product), more attention could be given to this for younger pupils. In one lesson where the teaching was excellent, Year 11 pupils were totally engrossed in their work and the excellent relationship between the teacher and pupils, the high quality support she was giving, and her relaxed but insistent approach enabled pupils to produce their very best.

131. Resources are very good and although the workshop lacks a computer and network connection, laptops are used from time to time. In addition, a shared study room is connected to the workshop. There is little use of control technology at the present time, but this together with other aspects of design and technology, such as textiles, electronics and pneumatics is planned as the subject develops. Subject development planning, monitoring and review are all excellent.

GEOGRAPHY

132. Geography is taught in Key Stage 2 and 3. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons. Judgements have, therefore, been informed by an analysis of school documentation, teachers' planning, classroom display and pupils' work. Pupils' achievement and progress is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection.

133. Enthusiastic teaching and well-planned activities have enabled pupils at Key Stage 2, to cover a wide range of topics enhanced by local visits. During the inspection, work was proceeding in readiness for a field trip to the Lake District and pupils were studying the differences between urban and rural environments. They were able to increase their knowledge of river features, including the use of transport and to establish differences and similarities between rivers and streams. They learned that there are complex transport networks such as bus, rail and motorway are associated with urban areas such as Rochdale and that in parts of the Lake District there was little public transport.

134. In Key Stage 3, pupils cover a range of topics relevant to prescribed programmes of study. The development of urban areas has been covered in some depth. This work builds on the pupils' study in Key Stage 2, and surveys the growth of population and the spread of industry with the consequent loss of. Pupils have looked at the effects of coastal erosion and the creation and characteristics of farmland, of igneous and sedimentary rock formations. Pupils are able to describe the features of these rocks and to identify and name some examples. Work which pupils completed in earlier years on rivers and streams has been extended in Key Stage 3 and pupils have made satisfactory progress.

135. Teaching is satisfactory in the lessons seen at both key stages. Teachers display a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and this is reflected in their questioning which both challenges pupils and helps them to develop their own knowledge. Learning is linked wherever possible, and particularly in Key Stage 2, to general objectives in literacy; this enhances understanding of the subject and reinforces skills in reading and spelling. Pupils learn the necessary vocabulary for the study of the particular element of geography and also make progress in their ability to use this vocabulary in a variety of contexts.

Teachers plan appropriately and lesson objectives are clearly stated. Support staff make an important contribution to lessons and are used well. This, together with the planning, helps pupils to make more use of their learning opportunities, since they know and understand clearly what work and standards are expected from them. Lessons proceed with suitable pace and variety and thus pupils' interest and concentration is maintained. Behaviour in lessons is generally good; pupils listen carefully to instruction and answer questions thoughtfully. As a result they make satisfactory progress.

136. However, the school's planned work for geography is unsatisfactory overall. There is no policy for delivery of the subject and no overall curriculum planning. Teachers in the primary department plan together and this has resulted in effective long and medium-term planning. However, as yet no clear systems for ensuring that work completed in Key Stage 2 is added to or built on in Key Stage 3. In the secondary department there is no plan to aid pupils' progress in the subject. The co-ordinator is gradually writing and accumulating detailed units of work but these are not yet fully established.

137. The lack of assessment in geography is a weakness. Pupils are not fully assessed in either key stage. Planning at Key Stage 3 has not yet addressed this issue and, as yet, there is no effective measure of the progress pupils within the subject.

138. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has little opportunity to develop the management or the monitoring of the subject and cannot ensure standards are maintained. Informal termly meetings are held with primary teachers but the co-ordinator is unable to scrutinise planning or to ensure that pupils make progress within the subject. Resources, particularly in Key Stage 3, remain poor. Teachers in Key Stage 2, are gradually accumulating a bank of photographs, artefacts and maps which are suitable for the key stage but these are not replicated in Key Stage 3. This is a weakness that has not been fully redressed since the last inspection due to insufficient funds directed towards the subject. The subject has remained a low priority in school improvement planning.

HISTORY

139. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons in history; these were in Key Stage 2 only. The Key Stage 3 teacher (and co-ordinator) was absent during the inspection and it was necessary for the school to re-schedule some of these lessons. Judgements about pupils' progress have, therefore, been informed by an analysis of school documentation, teachers' planning and pupils' work.

140. Pupils' achievement and progress is good in Key Stage 2 and there has been significant progress since the last inspection where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. Pupils were observed working on transport through the ages and pupils were able to demonstrate good progress in their understanding of technological developments following improvements in road and railway building. The gradual disappearance of horses for transport use was compared with the growth in the number and varieties of cars and goods vehicles. Pupils were able to identify periods of change in transport and made good progress in comparing the practicality and the age or modernity of road vehicles by their appearance. Other units covered include the *Ancient Greeks*, particularly in terms of architecture and *Greek Gods*. Pupils have drawn and written about the various architectural styles found on temples and have written imaginative accounts relating to this period. There has been work on the industrialisation of towns and cities and on the *Second World War*. The work has been underpinned and enhanced by regular visits to places of historical importance in the locality and elsewhere such as 'Wigan Pier' and the 'Ellen Road Steam Mill'. Evidence in pupils' books shows good progress in these areas of

work and provides evidence of improving written descriptions with suitable drawings and diagrams. Photographic records establish that pupils were interested and motivated by the experiences in the visits and later in the classroom.

141. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 3. Planning records are sparse for this key stage and it was only possible to identify work on the *Expansion of Industrialisation (1750-1900)*, and on 20th century figures such as Hitler and Martin Luther King. Extensive photocopied material prepared by teachers was identified on *Slavery* but there was little pupil work to accompany it. There was little evidence that progress had been made and achievement was thus unsatisfactory. Recent planning for joint history and drama lessons is good and although pupils are enthusiastic about the lessons there was no written or other evidence to show progress.

142. Teaching is good at Key Stage 2 and this reflects substantial progress since the last inspection. Teachers demonstrate a good level of subject knowledge and apply this knowledge to involve current work on spelling, phonic knowledge and sentence construction that the pupils are covering in literacy. Pupils thus benefited from increased understanding of their history work and are able to generalise some of their reading and spelling work. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed and takes account of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The teachers expect and receive a high standard of pupil commitment and effort and they provide work which challenges and interests their pupils. Pupils are managed well largely through the quality of the learning experiences provided and teachers make good use of time. Lessons are well paced and resources are well produced and of good quality at this key stage. Teachers make good use of support staff who are included in planning discussion and who are able to teach small groups and thus help give the pupils a high degree of individual support. This adds to the pupils' experiences and enables them to make good progress. Teachers use questions effectively to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject by asking pupils to explain their thinking and by giving or asking for alternative points of view or by asking the type of open questions such as "what if...?" which involves pupils in deeper consideration of issues and enables them to make sound progress.

143. Planned work for history, to enable pupils to make progress, is good in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan well together, ensuring there is secure coverage of National Curriculum programmes. While there is little formal assessment of history, pupils' work is monitored as part of their individual education and behavioural plans. Units of work are planned to include relevant visits to places of historical interest and these visits provide pupils with a rich source of understanding and interest of such processes as the growth of factories and steam power in the cotton mills.

144. There is little evidence of curriculum planning at Key Stage 3. A very recent change of direction in the teaching of the subject, as a result of the school's monitoring of the effectiveness of the previous programme, has resulted in a greater depth of planning. This particular method of teaching history, through role-play is well liked by pupils. In previous lessons in Key Stage 3, pupils often worked on photocopied sheets from commercial history schemes. These sheets were often too difficult for the pupils to read; neither were they adapted to take any account of the differing abilities of pupils. Pupils' written work in response was often of poor quality. Pupils found the work hard to understand and the ideas and knowledge involved in the work were often too complex for pupils to appreciate from a mass of printed information. The present system of acting out situations and 'dealing with' real historical problems has created a more relevant and appealing method of learning history for the pupils in this key stage.

145. The management of the subject is weak. There is no policy for the subject. There is no evidence of monitoring of effectiveness of teaching and learning in the subject and there is no evidence from Key Stage 3, either, that assessment takes place or that it is used to inform planning. Resources are satisfactory. There was an effective display about the American Indians in the 'Old West'. This was noteworthy for the quality of photographs and the clear written explanations and captions which accompanied the photographs. Pictures of great chiefs were found alongside pictures of the everyday life of villages and the hunting of the Buffalo, creating an arresting display from which pupils gain knowledge and understanding.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

146. Pupils' achievements over time are unsatisfactory. Although the use of computers is a major feature of the work of the school and pupils have plenty of opportunities to use them, especially in literacy and numeracy and in programmed learning, there is no overall curriculum planning which underpins pupils' learning, although some teachers plan for this individually. At Key Stage 2, although there is no scheme of work as such but each individual teacher plans opportunities so as to build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills and one teacher, in particular, sets regular targets and tasks for pupils to attain the necessary skills. Because of this, and the wealth of opportunity to use computers, they make satisfactory progress. Pupils are largely taught by subject teachers at Key Stage 3, although there is no separate teaching of IT by a specialist teacher. The lack of curriculum planning for IT means that there is no cohesive programme for teachers to follow to help pupils gain the necessary IT skills. Progress at this key stage is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

At Key Stage 4, pupils follow the syllabus for Certificate of Achievement, covering all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study. An examination of their work in this key stage shows that pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievements would be better if they had followed a more planned and systematic programme at Key Stage 3 enabling them to develop and build on prior knowledge, skills and understandings.

147. Apart from Key Stage 4 where good evidence is kept for moderation, the school does not keep records of pupils' IT experiences or assessments. This is a particular weakness and it is hard for the school to provide evidence of pupils' progress in IT. Evidence for inspection judgements at Key Stages 2 and 3 is based on an observation of pupils using IT, discussions with teachers and informal discussion with pupils themselves.

148. In the early part of Key Stage 2 pupils begin to use a mouse, with control, to move a pointer and select objects, such as loading a program or selecting an answer. Their skills in using the computer to play games are reasonably well established; they play these at lunchtime, using a keypad, joystick or using keys on the 'qwerty' keyboard. They become familiar with the layout of the keyboard and are improving their skills in typing such as copying words. Pupils at this key stage are beginning to send email with support and know the basic principles. By Year 5 they have become more confident and they regularly email another school. They access the Internet with relative ease and know how to find an item on a search engine. They design the front cover of a book, importing clip art and using features such as different font size and layout. Pupils have used a programmable device (Roamer) to move it by so many units, building this into a sequence of moves. They are very familiar with keyboard layout and type with confidence, but are not learning to touch type. By Year 6, they have produced geometric shapes by giving the Roamer sequences of carefully planned commands. They are very competent in accessing the Internet at this and can use this for research for other subjects. They also use CDs such as Encarta to access database type information. Most are able to access their own information from the

computer; each has their own email address. However, many are unfamiliar with the structure of directories and, while they can save on a floppy disk, they are unaware where they put their work on the hard drive.

149. During Key Stage 3 pupils' progress slows. They have opportunities to use IT in other subjects, such as art, as well as their programmed learning work for literacy and numeracy. However, the latter only requires basic IT skills, which many pupils gain in Key Stage 2. They are using the Internet for wider range research and collecting data such as pictures for inclusion in their prepared pieces of work on artists such as Van Gogh. Some pupils in the past have used hydraulic and pneumatic equipment in their control work design and technology and IT. However, the limited progress some pupils make in IT at this key stage is linked to the lack of software available in some subjects and the lack of confidence some teachers have in their own skills and the applications of IT in their subjects. Some pupils' skills for example in word processing remain at the same level as in Key Stage 2. This is mainly because they have not been taught more sophisticated skills such as editing text, searching and replacing text and because of the lack of planned exposure to other IT skills and applications.

150. In Key Stage 4, pupils' skills begin to develop again because of the Certificate of Achievement syllabus. The school has put much thought into which board would be the most appropriate and has considered the balance of coursework and examination. There is some good use of peer support, as when a pupil with strong IT skills and competencies helps other pupils with their work - often informally as he is passing them using computers in the corridor; this helps build pupil confidence and is a good role model. Pupils at Key Stage 4 develop competence in a wide range of skills, for instance using spreadsheets to layout data, to sort and solve simple problems. They learn that data can be displayed in different ways and they produce graphs of pupils' favourite games machine, after collecting and tallying the information. Some collect information about second hand cars and develop skills in database work so they can search on three features of the car such as colour, number of doors and make.

151. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the two lessons where there was specific and substantial teaching of IT skills. In Key Stage 4 IT is taught as a separate subject; teaching here is satisfactory. The subject itself, and the use of computers, motivates pupils very well and they learn very effectively. Some teachers' knowledge is very good and some have undertaken courses to develop their own basics IT skills. Others feel they need more training to become competent. Together with the headteacher's expertise, teachers' knowledge is satisfactory overall. Teachers use IT substantially in their lessons (and particularly the Internet for pupils to research as well as a resource for teachers themselves). However, in Key Stage 3 much IT use is to enhance pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills and not always to improve their actual IT skills. There is occasional use of IT for pupils' learning in subjects, such as the real-time webs of Swanage in geography for satellite images. Some teachers do focus on pupils' capability, such as for mathematics in programming a sequence of commands for a Roamer to move, but this is nearly always in Key Stage 2. Teachers use computers little for demonstration although the school has just purchased a digital projector which it intends to use for such purposes.

152. The school is well resourced for hardware, although software for subjects is limited. The subject is identified a priority in the school improvement plan and although there is meant to be a more detailed action plan, this is still only in outline form. The school has improved considerably since the last inspection in its provision and general use of IT. There is a high level of commitment to the subject, although curriculum planning and skills monitoring is still a weakness.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

153. A modern foreign language is not taught at present because of a lack of staff expertise. The school does not meet statutory requirements in its provision of the curriculum because of this. Over the past two years, the governors and senior management team have had a major focus on implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies as well as personal, social and health education and developing staffs' teaching skills in these areas. Little development has taken place in modern foreign language teaching provision but because a teaching vacancy now exists, and the school is now seeking to appoint a specialist foreign language teacher. The school also has plans to use the local education authority adviser for developing the subject. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

MUSIC

154. Pupils' achievements in music remain unsatisfactory overall as those in Years 8 and 9 are not taught music. However, pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. The school has appointed a new, enthusiastic music co-ordinator and improvements in the situation have been good since her recent appointment. The school has introduced music for pupils up to age 12 (Year 7) and made an appropriate decision to develop music for pupils of 13 (Year 8) and 14 (Year 9) as these pupils move through the school.

155. When pupils begin at the school they join in with songs and actions and by the time they are 11 (Year 6) they make good progress. For example, they produce sound effects to accompany hazards experienced in a tour round a *Treasure Island*. By using xylophones, drums, symbols and bells pupils depict meeting a whirlpool, pirates and a skull and cross-bone. They compose their music in pairs showing good imagination and perform it to the class with confidence and obvious enjoyment. They make positive statements about why they like each other's work. By the time they are 12 they continue to make good progress, even though they have not had music lessons until recently. For example, they learn how to play the chords of "C Major", "G7" and "D" on the guitar. They also learn how to play the electronic keyboard following letters and then letters and notes. They complete their own self-assessment of their achievements and show great pleasure and a sense of achievement when they receive a school certificate for keyboard skills. The school has plans to ensure that these pupils will continue to have music lessons until the end of Key Stage 3.

156. Teaching of music at Key Stage 2 and for Year 7 is very good. The teacher has very good relationships with the pupils and manages their behaviour very well; this results in pupils enjoying themselves and learning well. The songs with actions they have to learn are difficult and quite sophisticated and this means they have to concentrate hard in order to sing them correctly. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Frequent changes of activity occur and this means that pupils are clear about what they are learning and their interest is maintained well. The work is explained to the pupils clearly and they are fully involved at all times. For example, pupils take turns to be the conductor, while others follow their rhythm. There is a good balance

between composing, performing and appreciating music. In one lesson the performance might have been easier for pupils to evaluate if a picture, indication or voice-over was used to show which part of the *Treasure Island* went with the different sound effects.

157. The new music co-ordinator has made very good improvements in a short time. For example, a good policy is in place, with clear and wide aims and schemes of work that have been produced for those pupils being taught, are good. The school has been sensitive to the pupils' own stage in development with music and understood that pupils who have not had music in the past cannot be expected to have reached the same level as their peers. The school has good resources and plans to purchase more including information technology resources. The assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in music is unsatisfactory although self-assessment is beginning to be built into lessons. However, there are good plans for a simple and effective way of recording pupils' achievements and progress waiting to be implemented. Not all pupils at Key Stage 3 have their entitlement for music and the subject, therefore, does not meet statutory requirements. This means that the overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. When the school extends music to the end of Key Stage 3 the lack of a specialist music room will become a difficulty.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. The good progress identified at the last inspection has been maintained. Pupils' achievement and their progress are good in each key stage. Pupils are developing good skills in athletics and this is underpinned by the growing use of national award schemes as a measure of success and progress. Lessons observed in Key Stage 2, involved a variety of running, throwing and catching activities where pupils made good progress. Pupils were taught the elements of sprinting and encouraged to improve their sprinting style. Similarly pupils were taught effective methods of over-arm throwing and helped to develop their skill in anticipating and catching a small ball. Pupils in this key stage were also taught how to erect a basic 'A-frame' tent in preparation for outdoor adventurous pursuits. There was good progress seen throughout the lesson and pupils were enabled to erect the tents with growing confidence. Small groups of pupils practised constructing the frame and covering the frame with canvas. They were also able to experiment with the most effective ways of putting in pegs to sustain the structure. Throughout the lesson pupils were encouraged to work in teams and good progress was noted in their ability to support each other and to reason a case for employing the various tactics used to erect the tents.

159. In Key Stage 3, pupils were instructed in the techniques of jumping, such as long-jump, a vertical jump and the 'Hop, step and jump'. Throughout the lesson pupils were encouraged to improve style and performance and to reflect on their own performance and that of others. Significant improvement was observed throughout the session. Pupils practised elements of the jump and were coached in combining the elements into an effective rhythm and thus a more efficient jump. Throughout the year pupils are able to access a wide variety of sports and games and to take part in regular swimming sessions whereby all pupils in Key Stage 2 are enabled to swim at least a few strokes and these skills are further practised in Key Stage 3. Pupils in Key Stage 4, have the opportunity to experience a variety of sports and leisure activities as part of the 'Youth Award Scheme'. Pupils enjoy these experiences which enable them to exercise choice in their leisure pursuits and helps reinforce their interest in physical exercise as they prepare to enter adult life.

160. Teaching is good throughout the school. A physical education specialist, who demonstrates a high level of knowledge and skill, teaches all the lessons. Lessons proceed with pace and rigour and pupils are encouraged to compete against themselves to make progress within the lesson and to improve on their previous performances. Teaching methods are effective. The teacher gives clear instructions and gives a clear understanding of the lesson objectives to pupils before the lesson commences. He is able to analyse styles and mistakes in technique and to explain these points clearly and effectively to pupils. Pupils are able to understand the reasons for the activity and the gains in performance towards which they should strive. They are further given practical coaching and each individual is encouraged to work on his or her own standard of achievement. Pupils' motivation and concentration is effectively maintained and their interest and effort is further stimulated by the teacher's generous and appropriate use of praise and encouragement for each individual effort. Pupils are coached individually in the skills and in this way each pupil is helped to make the optimum progress within the lesson.

161. The school's planning for physical education is a weakness. There is a policy for the subject but it does not address the key stage requirements of the National Curriculum. Suggested activities are merely listed. There is no system of overall or medium-term planning which is needed to ensure coverage of prescribed programmes of study and to avoid undue repetition of activities. There has been little progress in this area since the last inspection with regard to planning and record-keeping. The co-ordinator teaches all lessons, however, and through experience and very good personal knowledge of the pupils, is able to teach effectively on a lesson-by-lesson basis without a written plan.

162. Assessment is becoming a feature of the subject, particularly in athletics. Pupils participate in the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) '5-star' award scheme. Pupils' progress is recorded and assessed by computer and points accumulated count towards award levels. Pupils are motivated to make progress from lesson to lesson and over time and substantial gains have been noted in pupils' levels of performance.

163. The management of the subject is good but could be improved further by the production of a more meaningful policy and curriculum plans to aid continuity and for a logical progression of activities and skill acquisition. Pupils are taught in key stage age groups and thus pupils from 8-11 years and from 11-14 years are taught together. Skilled teaching and a high level of individual help enables pupils to progress at their own rate. In combining several groups the co-ordinator ensures viable numbers for group games.

164. Resources for physical education are satisfactory but the accommodation is poor. There is an adequate supply of small apparatus and the school possesses basic gymnastic equipment such as ropes and a vaulting horse. Facilities for changing and showering are much improved since the last inspection. Facilities in other areas remain poor. There is a serious shortage of suitable outdoor playing areas. Indoor activities take place in the school hall which is also used for recreational activities and which contains several computers, pool tables and table-tennis tables and a variety of large playground toys such as scooters and bicycles. The area available for physical education is very restricted and inconveniently situated. The cramped conditions severely inhibit the use of the hall for physical education and detract from any activity conducted there through the lack of space. The number, size and untidy storage of the recreational equipment also presents a considerable safety hazard.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

165. Personal, social and health education is a strength of the school. Progress in personal, social and health education is very good overall. It is timetabled as a separate lesson for each class but also pervades the whole curriculum and every aspect of the school's work. For example, the breakfast club, breaktimes and lunchtimes are all organised carefully so that pupils learn to mix with each other in social settings.

166. The school carries out a careful and comprehensive assessment of pupils when they arrive in the school and reviews this, three months later. The assessment includes a careful analysis of pupils' academic achievements, response to rules and routines and their behaviour. This means that teachers get to know the pupils' and their needs very quickly and are able to reflect carefully on appropriate targets and programmes. The quality of teaching in personal social and health education is very good overall.

167. Progress in personal, social and health education is very good at Key Stage 2. As pupils progress through the school careful note is taken of the way in which pupils relate to each other and their levels of co-operation, such as how well they share or take turns and work together. Sessions are carefully planned to help the different groups of pupils work together. For example, special games are played to encourage pupils to share and take turns in a setting where the teacher is able to help anyone who struggles with the situation. Careful planning for, and sensitive management of, these sessions as well as of the more specific aspects of personal, social and health education such as consideration of the plight of others contribute to a judgement of very good teaching at this key stage

168. The achievement and progress of pupils in Key Stage 3 is also very good. There are many opportunities for co-operative games when there is no allowance for any 'put downs' or 'sulking'. The teachers are excellent in the way in which they manage these group sessions and support pupils' ability to reflect on what they have been doing or saying during the day. Teachers rely on their good sense of humour and manage to find positive elements in all discussions. This, in turn, helps the pupils to be able to talk freely about their feelings about such things as bullying and fair play. The quality of teaching in these lessons and in personal, social and health education as a whole at this key stage is very good.

169. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have the opportunity for personal and social education through their history and drama lessons. They develop empathy for others and gain a greater understanding of the conditions people lived under and why certain acts in history occurred, as a result. Teachers use humour and praise very skilfully thus helping all pupils to make a good contribution to the lessons and the quality of teaching in these sessions is good.

170. The subject is very well co-ordinated and led and there is a wide range of resources to help pupils learn. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well designed to meet the individual needs of all the pupils, addressing their difficulties and ensuring that there are many opportunities to raise pupils' self esteem. This improves relationships between pupils, but also impacts positively on pupils' personal and social growth and their ability to deal with others and change. The co-ordinator is very active in promoting the self-image of the pupils and giving them strength and skill to cope for themselves. This emphasis is clearly reflected in the growing social awareness and willingness of the pupils to take responsibility for their actions as they progress through the school.

171. A large and very important part of the curriculum focuses on health related issues. These include healthy eating, healthy living, sex education, the dangers of smoking and drug related illnesses. A great deal of planning goes into the personal, social and health education lessons and these are very effectively co-ordinated.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

172. The pupils at each stage make good progress in religious education and there has been good improvement since the last inspection in the provision for the subject. Pupils achieve well because of the good quality of the school's syllabus and schemes of work, which are prepared in line with the local authority's agreed syllabus for religious education, as well as the successful teaching of the subject across the school.

173. In Key Stage 2 pupils study the Islam faith, looking at the five pillars of faith. They have a clear understanding of these pillars as the Qur'an, Zakat, Hajj, Fasting and Salat. Teachers are very skilled at questioning the pupils and ensure that they have learned well and that they have a good knowledge of religions. In one lesson the teacher set an excellent role model as she washed her hands very carefully before handling the Qur'an. When she did so, it was with care and respect, befitting a holy book of religious teaching.

174. The pupils know that the string of 99 beads also represent the 99 different names given to Allah, the God of Islam. Pupils also discuss how the five pillars of faith may affect people's attitudes and behaviour. Very good care is taken to address the vocabulary that accompanies such studies. Pupils quickly learn that the word 'possessions' is the name given to things that we own.

175. Pupils in Key Stage 3 study a module of work on Judaism and in particular investigate the Jewish situation as at the time of the Second World War. They learn about the holocaust and genocide. Teachers have a very calm and understanding approach especially for pupils who have a relatively low ability. Lessons are well planned and during one lesson, all pupils worked extremely hard. They were asked to decide upon the possessions that they would like to take with them if they were asked to leave the premises in 15 minutes. They study the Diary of Anne Frank and the experiences that she had when her family were taken away. Another group studies the story reading of Purim. Pupils colour and make puppet faces to act out the story. The quality of teaching is good overall.

176. Pupils in Key Stage 4 continue their religious education through opportunities in the Youth Award Scheme. The module entitled 'Beliefs and Values' enables them to continue to study religious elements of life. However, during the inspection it was not possible to observe any of this teaching. From scrutiny of pupils' work it is clear that they study, in depth, topics involving the life and work of Martin Luther King and his part in the American Civil Rights Movement. Poverty, abortion, the environment, the arms trade, euthanasia, marriage, capital punishment and drug abuse are all topics that are studied by the pupils and ensure that they have a wide and appropriate knowledge of important issues for today's society.

177. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils respond well to the high expectations of the teachers. Teachers show some excellent questioning techniques that make sure that all pupils have the opportunity to answer questions without worrying about giving a wrong answer. Teachers are very encouraging and help pupils to express their views and grow in their understanding of different faiths and beliefs. As a result of the good teaching pupils learn well and are well behaved, clearly enjoying their work.

178. The subject is well planned and co-ordinated. The schemes of work are produced in line with the local authority agreed syllabus and schemes of work and are made relevant to the special individual needs of the pupils of Brownhill school. However, assessment is limited. Co-ordination is good and ensures that the religious education plays an important part in the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

179. Computers are used well to support the pupils. They access information from the Internet or from the CD-ROM about different topics of discussion. Computers are also used for word-processing some of their written work. Pupils visit the local Anglican Church to study the building during the inspection. They completed very well designed questionnaires during their visit and learned to recognise the different parts of the building including the 'nave', 'chancel' and 'transept'. When in the church they also studied the special memorials which had been placed there. This outing proved to be very successful in developing the knowledge and understanding of all pupils who took part.

180. The school has sufficient teachers to present the subject throughout the school and has also sufficient resources to meet the requirements of the syllabus. There is an adequate supply of appropriate artefacts that are carefully organised and readily available to all staff and pupils. These resources are improving as the co-ordinator manages to build up a wide and appropriate variety. The parents of pupils also provide some resources directly to the staff.