

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ALL SAINTS ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH  
SCHOOL**

Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119797

Headteacher: M Brennan

Reporting inspector: P T Bunyan  
4857

Dates of inspection: 27-30 March 2000

Inspection number: 199128

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Haslingden Road Rawtenstall Lancashire
Postcode:	BB4 6SJ
Telephone number:	01706 213693
Fax number:	01706 831137
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr A Fishwick
Date of previous inspection:	8 December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
P T Bunyan	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
M O'Malley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
S Leyden	Team inspector	SEN SEN assessment	How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils?
J Dunning	Team inspector	Geography Equal opportunities	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
R Vincent		English as an additional language English	
J Dryden	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology	
D A Alder	Team inspector	Science	
D Beaumont	Team inspector	Design and technology	
W Harrison	Team inspector	History	
K Timmons	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
R K Mountford	Team inspector	Art	
C Chambers	Team inspector	Music	
S Bainbridge	Team inspector	Physical education	
D J C Freestone	Team inspector	Community links	

The inspection contractor was:

NEMIC  
Advisory and Inspection Services  
Eastbourne Centre  
Station Road  
Sutton in Ashfield  
Notts  
NG17 5FF

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33 Kingsway  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

All Saints is an 11-16 Catholic Voluntary Aided mixed comprehensive school. There are 534 pupils on roll, which is relatively small for a comprehensive school, with slightly more boys than girls. Pupils enter the school with slightly below average attainment. Some pupils who might be expected to come to All Saints go instead to a local grammar or single-sex girls school. The school draws pupils from quite a distance and the school community as a whole is socially and economically very mixed. Only a small number of pupils enter or leave the school at a time other than the start of Year 7 or the end of Year 11. 19.5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the national average for secondary schools. The proportion has remained around this level for the past three years but was a little lower before that. There are almost no pupils from an ethnic minority background and virtually all pupils have English as their home language. There are 20% of pupils on the register of special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average. Of these, 5.8% have statements of special educational needs, which is well above the national average and above the average in Lancashire.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

GCSE results in the school are at least in line with national averages and in some respects are above them. The proportion of pupils who attain five or more higher grade GCSEs is in line with the national average as is the average number of GCSE points scored by pupils. The proportion of pupils who achieve five or more GCSE grades is well above the national average. It is of note that almost no pupils leave the school without one or more GCSE pass. Most pupils have good attitudes to school they behave well and are concerned about others. They enjoy good relationships with each other and with teachers, who know them well. Teaching is generally good. The curriculum is satisfactory

The leadership of the school, including that of the governors, provides clear direction for improvement and the school has improved since the last inspection. There are however, a number of deficiencies in the way the school works as a whole, the way staff at all levels plan for the required developments and then monitor their performance and that of the pupils. Taking all these factors together the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Costs per pupil are a little above average and pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in their time at All Saints. The school, therefore, gives sound value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school has made significant improvements in GCSE examination results.
- Teaching is good. Most teachers have good levels of subject expertise and manage lessons well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Most pupils have a positive attitude to school and their learning.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- The governing body cares about the school, knows it well and provides good levels of practical support.
- A number of pupils make good use of and benefit well from extra-curricular provision.

#### **What could be improved**

- The links between subject staff and senior managers in order to support individual, subject and whole-school development.
- Development planning and strategic thinking at all levels in the school, particularly in terms of raising levels of achievement further.
- The quality and quantity of monitoring so that priorities for development can be more clearly identified.
- Assessment of pupils so that it is linked more closely with curriculum planning and target setting both for subjects and for pupils.
- Statutory requirements for information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology (D&T) and physical education (PE).

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

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Overall, there has been sound progress in the two and a half years since the last inspection and the school no longer has the serious weaknesses identified in the last report. GCSE results, especially the proportion of pupils obtaining higher grades, have improved. In Key Stage 3 the results fell in 1999 but prior to that had been rising. The quality of teaching has remained good and teachers are now more active in overseeing pupils throughout the school day. Pupils' learning has become more often good because many of the difficulties caused by staff absence have been resolved. The good quality of support for pupils with SEN has been maintained.

There were five key issues identified in the previous inspection. The school has made partial progress in providing ICT. An appropriate course is in place in Key Stage 3 but in Key Stage 4, only for those pupils taking the GCSE course. There has also only been partial progress raising attainment in art because there remains some lack of staff expertise and some lack of provision for three-dimensional work. In modern languages there has been sound progress although some staff still lack language expertise. In D&T, teaching and learning in food is good but attainment in resistant materials remains very low and teaching is unsatisfactory. There has been good progress with reconciliation between senior management and staff. This has clearly been an important and difficult process and has been a major pre-occupation for governors and staff. The issue is largely resolved but has drawn attention away from other important management issues. The overall management of the school has improved but development planning, and monitoring and evaluation of teaching and its outcomes remain weak. Across the whole school, these have not been developed as would be expected in schools today. Issues of health and safety have been dealt with and staff appraisal was under way but has halted because of more widespread trades union disagreement with the process. The significant issues which remain are broadly under the heading of management but it is important that all staff assume full and proper responsibility to ensure that they are improved as a matter of some urgency.

## **STANDARDS**



The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds based on end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results and the average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Key Stage 3 SAT results	C	C	D	D
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	

**Key**

very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Although the results in the Key Stage 3 tests fell in all three core subjects in 1999, the school is on course to rectify this in 2000. Despite the fall in 1999 results in Key Stage 3 have been improving in line with the national trend. GCSE results have improved significantly over recent years and in 1999, the school results exceeded its targets. They are on course to improve on the 1999 results and the school's modest targets in 2000. Inspection evidence found standards to be good in English, science, food technology and office practice. Standards are improving in almost all subjects except in the resistant materials course in design and technology where standards are still well below average. This is also the case in ICT because most pupils in Key Stage 4 do not have a planned programme of teaching. Most pupils make satisfactory and often good progress.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils generally like school, are keen to get on, work well together and are welcoming to visitors.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: most pupils behave well in and out of class. A few pupils exhibit unsatisfactory behaviour but this is generally dealt with well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: the school provides well for pupils' personal development. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good and contribute well to learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory: there is above average unauthorised absence but overall absence is in line with the national average. Absence is weakest in Year 11.

Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are a strength of the school, which encourages and supports learning. The increase in absence in year 11 is a concern.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in English and mathematics is good in both key stages and in English it is often very good. In science it is good in Key Stage 4 and satisfactory in Key Stage 3. Teachers are generally knowledgeable, plan their lessons well, have clear learning outcomes and manage pupils and work skilfully and efficiently. There is a weakness in the consistency of marking work, assessing progress and in making plain to pupils what they need to do to improve. Occasionally, where teacher's subject knowledge is insecure, pupils fail to make sufficient progress. Literacy skills are taught well by some teachers but the absence of a coordinated, whole-school policy means pupils' skills are not systematically developed. This is also true in numeracy although pupils can generally cope with the relatively low demands made of their numeracy skills. Pupils with special needs make steady and often good progress because of the extra support they are given but too often, teachers rely on this support rather than planning work more suited to the pupils' needs. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 92% of lessons and was good or better in 54%. In 8% of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory or very occasionally poor.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: the curriculum is appropriate and there is a reasonable range of options in Key Stage 4. There are weaknesses in provision for, ICT, D&T, PE and PSE.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils with significant SEN and those with statements receive a high level of support and have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: provision for spiritual and social development is good. For moral development it is very good. It is satisfactory for cultural development but there is insufficient planning to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory: within the pastoral system, tutors know their pupils well and successfully oversee their welfare. Systems to ensure care for academic success are insufficiently structured and coordinated across the school.

The curriculum is enriched by the quality of extra-curricular activities, the long standing links with a school in Germany and, in Key Stage 4 courses run by the local college. Work experience and careers education are well organised and valuable. There is insufficient coordination and planning for the development of literacy and numeracy. Statutory requirements for ICT in Key Stage 4 and, because of time constraints, for PE and D&T in

Key Stage 3, are not met. Relationships between tutors and their pupils are good and there are sound structures for monitoring pupils' safety and welfare. There are weaknesses in how the school gathers and uses information to develop academic progress. Links with parents are effective.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: the head teacher and governors provide clear direction for improvement, supported by senior and middle managers. However, there are deficiencies in the way the school works as a whole, plans for improvements and monitors its effectiveness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: the governors are well organised, take their role very seriously and know the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory: there is insufficient systematic monitoring of teaching, learning and progress with planned developments. Scrutiny of examination performance at GCSE is satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: the budget is targeted, carefully managed and spending is closely overseen. Links between finances and development planning are insufficiently precise.

The school has made progress since its last inspection because of the concerted and directed effort of all staff. However, there remain some weaknesses. The school makes sound use of its finances, budgeting is efficient and the school successfully gets value for money. There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers who are well supported by a good range of non-teaching staff. Accommodation is generally adequate and in reasonable condition. Facilities for PE are in need of improvement. There are generally sufficient resources for learning except that there is insufficient easy access to ICT for many subjects and the library requires more non-fiction books.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's ethos is positive and caring of pupils, and reflects Catholic values.</li> <li>• Standards of attainment are good and children make good progress academically and in their personal development and confidence.</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Teaching is good teachers know pupils well as individuals and are always willing to provide extra support.</li> <li>• The school and staff in general are open to parents' concerns and difficulties and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework is sometimes unevenly set and deadlines for completion difficult to manage.</li> <li>• The range of subject options within school and extra-curricular activities is limited.</li> <li>• There are instances of poor pupil behaviour which are generally, but not always, dealt with appropriately.</li> </ul>

takes them seriously.	
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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school keeps parents well informed on pupils' progress.</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

In general inspectors agree with the parents' views of the many positive features which the school and its staff exhibit. Inspectors do not agree that parents are well informed about progress because annual reports to parents do not contain sufficient detail on pupils' attainment and how they could improve. Inspectors found homework to be inconsistently set in some subjects but that pupils, in general, manage this well. The school is small which means that there are difficulties in providing for every pupil's particular choice of subjects in Key Stage 4. The quality of extra-curricular provision is good and the range is satisfactory. Few instances of unsatisfactory behaviour were seen and all were dealt with appropriately.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1 The 1999 Key Stage 3 SAT results were below the national average in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In English they were closer to the average than in the other two subjects. When compared with schools similar to All Saints the results were below average in English and science and well below in mathematics. There had been a fall in the KS3 SAT results since 1998 when they were significantly better, but despite the fall, results overall are rising at a rate broadly in line with that found nationally. In general, girls' attained higher SAT results than boys but this difference is no greater at All Saints than is found nationally. Over the past few years the attainment of boys and girls has fluctuated but in no particular pattern.

2 The GCSE results in 1999 were relatively better than those in Key Stage 3 Overall attainment was in line with the national averages and with the averages for schools similar to All Saints. In some aspects at GCSE the results were above these averages. The percentage of pupils who attained five or more higher grade GCSEs and the average number of GCSE points scored by pupils were both in line with national and similar schools averages. The percentage of pupils who attained 5 or more GCSE passes was significantly above these. It is worthy of note that no girls and almost no boys left the school without several GCSEs. This has been the case for the past few years and is a significant achievement by the school.

3 In 1999 girls attained higher GCSE results than boys, but, as in Key Stage 3, the difference was no greater than that found nationally. The attainment of boys has risen over the past few years so that boys' average GCSE points score is now close to the boys' national average. The improvement in boys GCSE attainment was most marked in English, in both language and literature.

4 In general, attainment at GCSE rose significantly between 1998 and 1999. This was most marked in the proportion of higher grades achieved and the average points score achieved. Prior to 1998 the rise had been more steady, from a low point in 1997.

5 Results in GCSE English were well above the national average in both language and literature. In mathematics results were around the national average although slightly fewer than average pupils attained higher grades. Results were well above average in double award science and around the average in single award science, with girls, in general, attaining slightly better than boys. In science all the pupils in the year group obtained a GCSE.

6 GCSE results were well above the national average in the food design and technology course. Results were around average in single award science, history, art and music. In mathematics and geography they were a little below average and they were below average in French and German. Results in the resistant materials design and technology course were well below average. For the small number of pupils who took statistics the results were above average.

7 The school exceeded its targets for GCSE in 1999, particularly for the average points scored by pupils. The targets for 2000 have been agreed with the Local Education Authority but appear modest and represent a small reduction in attainment compared with

the 1999 results. The school recognises this and believes that since the 2000 targets were set in December 1998, improvements in practice and in pupils' attainment mean that the results in 2000 will be higher than those in 1999. The targets for 2001 are slightly more ambitious but realistic, given the attainment of this group of pupils in the 1999 Key Stage 3 SATs.

8 Observations of lessons and pupils' work during the inspection show that standards being achieved are broadly in line with national expectations in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Standards in English are around national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 and above them at the end of Key Stage 4. Most pupils speak and listen well, they are particularly good at listening sensitively and critically to each other. Most enjoy reading and make good use of the library to support their reading for pleasure. Writing is less well developed because there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to engage with challenging extended writing. In mathematics standards are a little below national expectations in Key Stage 3 but are better than those revealed in the 1999 SATs. At the end of Key Stage 4 standards are just below national expectations. Pupils can calculate appropriately, explain their methods and use their knowledge to tackle mathematics investigations, and solve problems. In science standards are slightly above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 and in line at the end of Key Stage 4. Most pupils can carry out scientific investigations well including planning and ensuring a fair test. They handle equipment well and safely. Their science knowledge is mostly reasonable and often good, but not always developed as effectively as possible through appropriate practical work.

9 Standards are around national expectations in Key Stage 3 in all other subjects except ICT, design and technology and music. Standards in both ICT and music have improved significantly. This would be expected to continue, as the teachers and the courses become more settled.

10 At the end of Key Stage 4 standards are in line with national expectations in history, modern languages, art, PE and music. They are a little below average in geography and in ICT for those pupils who take the GCSE. For all other pupils standards in ICT are poor because there is no planned programme of teaching. Standards in the food design and technology course continue to be above average but they are well below average in the resistant materials course. Pupils taking work-related courses provided at the local college are achieving standards in line with course expectations in trowel trades and health and social care, and above expectations in brush trades and office practice.

11 Standards have risen in ICT, art and modern languages in response to issues raised in the last inspection. In the resistant materials design and technology course standards have not improved despite a clear requirement that they should.

12 Literacy skills are variable. Pupils read well because there are plentiful opportunities in all subjects especially in English, but with good support in some other subjects such as history. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are generally reasonable but they vary considerably in different subjects. Pupils speak more confidently in geography and music than, for example, in mathematics. Writing is generally weaker than the other literacy skills. Too often pupils are given low-level writing tasks requiring substantial amounts of copying or filling in blank spaces with single words. In some subjects writing is more systematically developed and higher and some middle-attaining pupils produce good work. Many other pupils are, however, impeded by problems with spelling, sentence construction, punctuation and general expression. Pupils' numeracy skills are sufficiently developed for them to cope with the demands of work in other subjects. However, the demands made on these skills are often low. In ICT pupils have

satisfactory key board skills and can present information using word processing and desktop publishing. Most can use spreadsheets and data bases but the skills of measuring and of control are weak because provision for these is not systematically planned.

13 Throughout the school, pupils' skills in design and planning are well developed for example in science, food technology, PE and art. Most pupils speak their chosen foreign language fluently and confidently. They observe each other's performances well in PE. Reasoning and explanation is well developed in history and geography, but in geography pupils are not as able to conduct enquiry and research as they are in science.

14 Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is a little below the national average. When they leave at 16 their attainment is generally around the national average and in some respects a little above. This means that many pupils achieve well during their time at the school. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress in both key stages and do well at GCSE in relation to prior attainment. Virtually all these pupils obtain one or more GCSEs.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15 The standards in attitudes, values and personal development are high. The school has addressed the reservations noted at the last inspection.

16 Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. They are welcoming to visitors and keen to discuss what they are doing. The great majority enjoy school and a good number are keen to take part in all the school has to offer. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. There are a small number of pupils who need constant attention from the teachers or classroom assistants, particularly in Year 8. However, the majority are well motivated, willing to learn and apply themselves to the task in hand. They enjoy what they do and they are willing to take an active part in their learning.

17 Overall, pupils' behaviour in class is good and this has a positive impact on their learning. In a small minority of classes behaviour deteriorates when the work does not interest the pupils. The last inspection noted reservations concerning behaviour outside class. This has been addressed. There was very little poor behaviour seen during the inspection. Discussions with staff and pupils confirmed that the great majority of pupils are well behaved and wherever there is unacceptable behaviour it is quickly and effectively dealt with by the teachers and classroom assistants. Movement around the school is orderly which is notable because corridors are comparatively narrow and very congested at lesson changeover times.

18 The school has reduced its rate of permanent exclusions and there was only one last year. There were 48 fixed-period exclusions last year, which is high, compared to other secondary schools of a similar size. However, the majority of exclusions were for short periods and all were for good reasons, in order to ensure the security of other pupils and maintain acceptable standards of behaviour. The school is committed to reducing the rate of exclusions and has taken positive steps towards this. There is little bullying, sexist or racist behaviour and the very few incidents of bullying, which occur, are dealt with quickly and effectively.

19 Pupils' relationships with each other, with their teachers and other adults in the school are very good and this has a significant positive impact on their learning. Pupils willingly work in pairs and small groups and, when given the opportunity, they readily cooperate, collaborate and compete in a mature and sensible way.

20 Pupils respect the feelings of others and understand the impact of their own actions. For example, in PE, pupils review the performance of others by identifying what is good and why, they evaluate less effective performances constructively and sensitively. In English, pupils listen attentively to each others contributions. They are confident to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule.

21 Pupils with SEN are fully integrated in lessons and in the life of the school. They are keen to take part in class discussions and show increasing confidence themselves as learners. They are treated with respect and enjoy being members of the school community.

22 The majority of pupils respond well to the opportunities for taking initiative and responsibility, such as becoming house captains or form representatives and helping in the library. A small number of Year 11 pupils do not respond well to the new school initiative in encouraging all older pupils to take prefect responsibilities and the school plans to review this. A good number of older pupils help the younger pupils with reading and this has been very successful. The school could still do more to make use of pupils' responsible attitudes by finding other opportunities to put them into practice, including giving them more responsibility and opportunities to show initiative in lessons.

23 Attendance is satisfactory, and the school has maintained the standards reported in the last inspection. The attendance last year was 91%, which matches the average of secondary schools in England. The rate of unauthorised absence last year was 1.9%, which is above the national average of 1.1%. There is a minority of pupils whose attendance is poor, particularly in Year 11 and Year 9 and some absence appears to be condoned by parents. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection but too many pupils still arrive late to school in the morning.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

24 Teaching is good overall in both Key Stages 3 and 4. It is satisfactory or better in the great majority of lessons in both key stages and in over half it is good or very good. Teaching is particularly good in English, history, PE and in food technology where the teachers' expertise and enthusiasm for their subject, the careful planning of activities and skilful management of time and resources, ensure that all pupils are able to take a full part and are keen to do well.

25 Overall, teachers' knowledge of their subject is good. They plan their lessons well, setting clear objectives for what they want pupils to learn and these are made clear to pupils at the start of lessons. There is a strong sense of purpose in most lessons which helps pupils engage in the learning activities right from the start. Pupils know what is expected of them and what they need to do. The teaching of personal and social education is less secure and more variable because some teachers are not familiar with the subject content and are less confident in managing discussions which deal with personal matters. The great majority of lessons begin promptly and little time is wasted either at the start or at the end of each session. Most lessons proceed at a good pace, although in resistant materials and in some lessons in art and ICT, the pace is too leisurely so pupils achieve less than they should.

26 In many lessons teachers are skilful in using questions to explore pupils' knowledge and understanding and to encourage them to think more widely. Where such techniques are used effectively, pupils are challenged to provide more than factual answers and to support their views with evidence and reasoned argument. For example, pupils' thinking is



extended and deepened by discussions in English and history where they examine the causes and consequences of different actions, or in mathematics where pupils are invited to create hypotheses or explain mathematical processes. In these lessons pupils' interest and engagement with the learning is increased and they provide perceptive and insightful responses. In some lessons questioning is used less effectively because teachers do not require pupils to go beyond the factual information or to think about how they could apply their knowledge in new contexts. This limits pupils' understanding of the subject and their ability to use their learning flexibly.

27 Teachers plan a variety of activities for each lesson and this helps pupils maintain their interest and reinforces the learning. Whole-class teaching is effectively balanced with individual work and opportunities for working in groups. Lively and enthusiastic teaching in some lessons in French, English, PE and music are especially successful in engaging pupils' interest and giving them confidence in their ability to succeed. Where pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, they respond in a mature and sensitive way, as for example, in English lessons where pupils take turns to speak to the class about a book they have read or in food technology where pupils are given opportunities to engage in group work and collective decision-making. Lessons which are mainly teacher directed or which are based on completing set tasks, pupils' knowledge and understanding are not developed as effectively.

28 The management of pupils and relationships within the class are very good in all but a very small minority of lessons. Teachers know the pupils well, and set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and their response to their work. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning they concentrate well and are keen to participate in tasks and in class discussion. They respond well to the variety of activities, showing interest and enthusiasm. They listen carefully to each other in discussions, treat each other's views with respect and cooperate effectively in group work. However, the organisation of practical subjects in Year 8 results in one class of pupils who do not respond well to the lessons and who therefore do not make as much progress as they should.

29 The skills of reading, speaking and listening are generally well taught, particularly by the English staff but other teachers also make a significant contribution. Writing is less well taught and at times underdeveloped because of the low level of writing tasks used. Some departments, for example history, have produced a language policy and are making a positive contribution to improving pupils' reading and writing. However, a lack of planned numeracy development is compensated for by the low-level demand for numeracy skills across the school. The mathematics teachers make a good contribution to pupils' numeracy skills and this could more effectively be utilised and built upon throughout the school.

In both key stages pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in all lessons and make steady progress. Pupils with more significant learning difficulties and those with statements receive a high level of support in lessons where they need most help. The additional support is generally well used and helps pupils keep on task and follow the lesson activities. In lessons where teachers plan and use differentiated tasks and materials pupils with special educational needs are able to complete tasks independently, or with little support. However, in the majority of lessons there is insufficient planning for differentiation and this leads to an over-reliance on support staff to ensure pupils are able to complete the tasks.

30 Pupils with special educational needs make steady and often good progress in lessons where they are withdrawn for additional support. This is because SEN staff are experienced and skilled in teaching basic literacy and numeracy, materials and strategies are well matched to pupils' needs and to their individual education plan targets, and

teachers plan a variety of activities to sustain the pupils' interest. Good use is made of ICT to reinforce literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils gain confidence themselves as learners and made steady progress in overcoming their learning difficulties.

31 Teachers' assessment and marking of pupils' work is inconsistent as there is no whole-school approach to underpin individual teachers' practice. Work is marked on a regular basis but marking is not widely used to indicate to pupils how they could improve what they do. There are some good examples in history, food technology and music, and in geography teachers provide useful feedback on projects and fieldwork. Elsewhere, more consistent approaches are being developed through the use of pupil profiles but these are at an early stage and are not yet being systematically used to inform teacher's planning. Homework is set on a regular basis and, in some subjects, is being effectively used to consolidate and deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

32 The majority of pupils learn well and make satisfactory and often good progress. Most develop their knowledge and understanding well because, in lessons they are generally clear about what they are meant to learn and generally very willing to work quickly and hard. In some lessons less demanding work or a lack of urgency sometimes results in unsatisfactory pupils' responses and therefore to insufficient progress being made. The great majority of pupils are interested in their work, concentrate in lessons and want to learn. Although they are generally clear about how well they are doing they are given much less guidance on what they need to do to improve. Most pupils are confident they can seek such guidance but it ought to be more routinely given and helpfully detailed, especially in written comments and reports.

33 The quality of teaching and relationships in lessons has been maintained since the last inspection. The issue raised in the last report regarding the need for greater consistency in the use of assessment and marking has not yet been addressed.

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

34 The curriculum is generally broad and balanced but has some weaknesses. Since the last inspection the Key Stage 4 curriculum has been broadened by introducing physical education and statistics into the GCSE options for pupils. In Key Stage 3, provision for ICT has improved but, because there is no planned programme for ICT for all pupils in Key Stage 4, the subject does not meet statutory requirements. More generally, opportunities to use ICT are not planned and where they are sometimes limited access to equipment means that these plans are not fully implemented. In Key Stage 3 there is insufficient time available for PE, and for D&T, where the large class sizes further reduce the time available for individuals. The school week is organised into fifty, 30-minute periods with most lessons being taught in doubles. This has resulted in a more appropriate length of lesson and is an improvement since the last inspection.

35 In Key Stage 3, the curriculum includes all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. In Key Stage 4 all pupils have access to a basic curriculum of six subjects with the choice of two options. They have satisfactory guidance on the appropriateness of their choices and parents are included in these discussions. All pupils undertake useful work experience, which is well organised through Trident, and a number of pupils take work-related learning courses at a local college. Pupils consider both these opportunities to be very worthwhile. The work experience organised for a small group of pupils in Germany is good. An effective careers education programme is provided for

pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 and includes taught lessons as well as more general access to the careers library.

36 Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. Arrangements for additional support in withdrawal are carefully planned to ensure minimum disruption to pupils' learning in other subjects. The paired reading initiative provides a useful additional source of support for pupils who need to develop their reading skills. The opportunity to spend more time on pre-vocational courses at the local college provides a valuable extension to the curriculum for a small group of pupils with special educational needs in Year 10, who have been disapplied from part of the National Curriculum.

37 The school has not yet established a coherent strategy for the improvement of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The English department has begun to address literacy across the curriculum and core skills groups have been established in Years 8 and 9 in order to provide more focused work on literacy. Across the school as a whole there is as yet no programme for the planned development of literacy skills with contributions which all staff could make, clearly identified. Neither is there as yet a strategy to build as effectively as possible on literacy teaching in the primary feeder schools. Similarly, there is as yet no whole-school planning for the further development of numeracy skills.

38 Since the last inspection the school has extended the range of extra-curricular activities and provision is now good. There are a number of sporting activities and a variety of clubs, including chess, drama, astronomy and ICT, some of which are well attended. These are run at lunchtimes, before and after school which makes it possible for all pupils to attend if they choose. A number of departments provide useful and valued revision and homework sessions at lunchtime and after school to help raise achievement. The Italian GCSE class, financed by the Italian Consulate and run before and after school, provides a valuable extra opportunity for a few pupils. A large number of pupils take part in drama performances run by RAYS, a group which is not organised by the school but uses the school premises.

39 The school has a clear equal opportunities policy, is particularly aware of gender issues and takes care to ensure that pupils generally have equal access to the full curriculum. In most subjects pupils are taught in sets of similar ability and all sets have access to the same learning opportunities.

40 Personal and social education (PSE) is taught in a single period of 30 minutes each week. Although on occasions this can be extended to 60 minutes, the time is generally too short for adequate discussion of the topics which need to be covered. This lack of time, exacerbated by the variation of teaching, leads to some inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' experiences of PSE. There is an appropriate PSE programme which is due to be reviewed in the light of new national requirements.

41 The school has strong links to the Catholic community, makes effective use of some local resources such as the Crag Rats, a theatre company which contributes to careers education, other particular members of the community who contribute to PSE and the surroundings in general for geography fieldwork.

42 The school has a good relationship with the local college which provides the work-related learning courses. There are good links with the feeder primary schools on pastoral and general transfer issues but curriculum links, particularly in the core subjects and the use of attainment information, are insufficiently developed.

43 Since the last inspection the school has maintained and improved the provision for pupils' personal development. The school's mission is a clear statement of its intention to provide a distinctive Christian education.

44 Provision for spiritual development is good. Daily prayer, monthly mass, regular opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation, the Year 10 retreats at Castlerigg Manor and other regular celebrations promote the distinctive Catholic ethos within the school. There are close links with the parishes, trips to Lourdes and regular visits and discussions with the local clergy. Along with the chapel there is much sign and symbol to acknowledge the Christian mission of the school. Assemblies readily promote spiritual development through reflection, prayer and themes such as creation, faith and salvation. However, there is no record of assemblies, which will allow the school to monitor coverage and share best practice.

45 Some subjects provide good opportunities for spiritual development, notably in religious education, the study of food in design and technology, history, music and English. Purposeful reflection is a regular feature in English, where the pupils are encouraged to consider the roots of human nature through poetry and prose, and ask "what does this mean for me?" Across the school as a whole, planning for spiritual development is insufficiently coordinated.

46 Provision for moral development is very good. The school promotes moral values through its mission and its code of conduct. These values and the school ethos set high expectations and the pupils respond well. Adults set a very good example to pupils. Pupils are regularly reminded of their moral obligation to support each other and to consider the needs of those less fortunate than themselves through regular fund-raising and prayer. The PSE programme helps the pupils to consider moral standards by discussing such issues as the abuse of alcohol and the misuse of drugs, the responsibilities of parenthood and the need to respect others. Together, religious studies and the PSE programme provide a moral framework for sex education. English, food technology, religious education and history make a particularly good contribution to moral development.

47 Provision for social development is good. There is a good sense of community within the school. The visiting priests provide good role models for citizenship within the local Catholic community. The house system has been introduced since the last inspection, and this has begun to provide opportunities for collaboration, competition, and the further development of community spirit. The school is keen to recognise achievement and build confidence and does so through house points, commendations, certificates and assemblies. There are very good relationships within school and pupils regularly work effectively in pairs and small groups in class. The PSE programme makes a sound contribution to social development through the study of topics such as friendship, equal opportunities and citizenship. Work experience, the Young Enterprise Scheme and the Compact project provide good opportunities for the older pupils to take responsibility for themselves.

48 The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. There is now a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activity including sport, along with visits to the theatre, art galleries and places of interest. The study of world music, literature in English, research on different cultures in art and visits to France and Germany all make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. However, overall there is insufficient provision to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

49 The school has effective procedures for monitoring the safety and welfare of pupils. The governors have agreed a health and safety policy based on local guidance but this needs further refinement to provide details specific to the school. There are satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the environment is kept safe, clean and free from hazards and that pupils move safely on corridors and stairways. The school has effectively dealt with the shortcomings in health and safety that were identified in the last inspection report. All staff have received training in first aid and first aid and medical resources are available in the appropriate places. Child protection procedures are followed in accordance with local requirement and confidential information is securely filed.

50 The pastoral system ensures that pupils are well known to their teachers and that their well-being can be checked on a daily basis. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils are confident that adults in the school will respond to any request for help or support. Parents are confident that staff know their children well and are committed to caring for their welfare. The personal and social education programme provides opportunities for pupils to consider issues relating to their health and personal development but the short time that is given to the subject limits the potential for exploring important topics in sufficient depth.

51 The school's arrangements for promoting good behaviour amongst pupils, both in lessons and around the school have significantly improved since the last inspection, when behaviour and the supervision of pupils outside of lessons was criticised. There are effective systems for rewarding good work, behaviour and attendance, which are valued by pupils and these have been strengthened by the introduction of the award of house points. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to participate in Compact for which certificates are awarded on the completion of personal challenges, community service and work experience. This is successful in encouraging pupils to maintain high standards of work and behaviour. There is increased supervision around the school at all times. There is a more systematic approach to sanctions based on graded levels of reprimand and detention which are understood by staff and pupils. Recording procedures have been developed to monitor behaviour more closely at whole-school level which enable the type and pattern of incidents to be more systematically analysed. However, a whole-school behaviour policy has not yet been finalised and the school should now complete this.

52 Assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance is not sufficiently developed across the school as a whole. Various systems are in place in different departments to record pupils' attainments during the year and at the end of each key stage but these are not systematically used to inform the school's or teachers' planning. In some subjects, practice is good and teachers and pupils are clear about not only what they have achieved but what pupils need to do to improve their work. In a number of departments, pupil profiles are being developed to show more clearly how pupils are making progress in gaining subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding. Procedures are being trialled to track pupils' progress across all their subjects but these are at a very early stage and there is a lack of clarity about how the information should be used.

53 The school has not yet established a whole-school policy on assessment and marking to underpin practice in departments or by individual teachers and, as a result, assessment and marking across the school are inconsistent. Whilst comment and oral feedback are given to pupils in lessons, in the majority of subjects, particularly in Key Stage 3, pupils are not given sufficient written guidance on how they can improve their work. Homework diaries are not systematically used by pupils to record their homework, and the monitoring of the diaries by tutors and by parents, is inconsistent. Parents value the termly

reports on their children's progress but the annual report does not provide the necessary detail about progress, subject-specific strengths and weaknesses and what the pupils need to do to improve their work.

54 The school is committed to raising achievement and pupils are encouraged to work hard and set high standards for their work. There are effective arrangements for preparation for college and work through the careers guidance programme. The school has focused particular attention on efforts to increase the number of A\*-C passes at GCSE. However, target setting with pupils and for the school as a whole is in its infancy.

55 The role of the heads of lower and upper school and of tutors in monitoring pupils' academic progress is unclear as there are no written guidelines to establish expectations or procedures. The weekly form period provides opportunities for general discussion and oversight and for dealing with matters as they arise but the use of the time is at the discretion of tutors and, as such, its effectiveness and contribution to pupils' development cannot readily be monitored or evaluated. A Record of Achievement which is compiled by pupils in Years 10 and 11 provides them with a useful document to support their applications to college or for work. It is less clear how Records of Achievement are used in Key Stage 3 to support pupils' self-assessment and progress.

56 The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring attendance. Registers are taken at the start of morning and afternoon sessions and attendance is checked at the start of lessons. Tutors follow up absences of more than three days. The school works effectively with the education welfare officer to follow up cases of particularly poor attendance. However, there is insufficient systematic work done to identify and address the occasional absence of pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory.

57 The school takes good care of pupils who are at stage 3 to 5 of the Code of Practice. Their needs are clearly identified and recorded on their individual education plans (IEPs) which are disseminated to all staff. Provision is made according to the needs identified in pupils' statements. Specific disability-related provision is arranged and effectively deployed and skilled support results in these pupils making very good progress across the curriculum. Additional support is efficiently organised and effectively deployed taking account of the pupils' needs and their views. All pupils with special educational needs have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and also have access to additional arrangements to meet individual needs.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

58 Parents are pleased with the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves. Overall the school's links with parents are effective, and the involvement of parents has a satisfactory impact on the work of the school.

59 Parents are kept effectively informed about what is going on in school. The prospectus and the governors' report give parents a satisfactory summary of the school's provision, expectations and achievements. The school calendar is a useful source of information and parents are kept properly informed about day-to-day activities. The school is committed to improving the quality of information for parents and has recently introduced a newsletter. Parents are able to discuss their children's progress at the consultation evening for each year group. Commendations and letters of concern keep parents informed on particular achievements and weaknesses and parents can request an interim report at any time. However, there are shortcomings in reports on progress and the use of homework diaries.

60 The SEN staff work closely with parents of pupils with more significant special education needs and with those who have special needs statements. There are sound arrangements for keeping parents informed. They are invited to meetings to review their child's progress and to contribute to planning for the child's needs. Arrangements for involving parents of pupils at stage 2 of the Code of Practice are not satisfactory as parents are not routinely consulted or involved in planning and reviewing their child's individual education plan.

61 The links with parents make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Many parents attend the information evenings for Year 9 options, Year 10 coursework and Year 11 exam preparation. There is good support from parents at drama productions and concerts. Parents join their children on visits and trips and host guests for exchange visits. There is a small but active Parent Teacher Association which organises events and raises funds. The school regularly seeks parents' views through questionnaires at consultation evenings and is generally quick to respond to concerns. Problems are followed up with home visits if necessary.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

62 Leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. The head teacher and governors are clear about the school's required provision for development and these are generally well understood by all staff. The recent focus on raising attainment at GCSE provides some evidence of the success with which this clarity has been translated into action.

63 The school has well-documented and understood aims and values which guide much of its work. There is a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity. Relationships among pupils, and between pupils and staff are good. Relationships with parents are sound and often good. At the time of the last inspection, relationships among staff were unsatisfactory but they are now at least sound. They have improved considerably, because both staff and governors have worked hard at them. The creation of the extended senior management team has also contributed well to this improvement.

64 Across all staff there is a genuine shared commitment to improve standards. Following on improvements at GCSE, evidence from the inspection suggests that last year's fall in results in the Key Stage 3 tests will be reversed in 2000. These improvements have been brought about because of better working relationships among staff, the better implementation of the high standards which most teachers set in their teaching and classrooms, and a general focusing of skilled teaching.

65 There is a lack of co-ordinated and detailed planning for developments at all levels in the school. The school development plan has appropriate targets but lacks detail of how much time and resources will be required to bring them about and how the success of developments can be judged in terms of outcomes for pupils. Department development plans are little more than bids for funding. They also lack the details described above although they do in general follow the brief school guidance. In order for the school to manage its required developments and priorities the whole-school development plan must be more detailed and its priorities must be reflected in the development plans produced by subjects and departments, where the action to bring about the changes required will mainly be implemented. The issue of weak development planning was raised in the last inspection and must now be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

66 Senior staff are generally clear about their responsibilities and work. Most departments are well managed and led and delegation at this level is largely effective. This is not the case in ICT and music where relatively new and inexperienced specialist teachers need more management support from senior staff. There is also inadequate leadership in design and technology because there is no person designated as the manager. The school's management of work-related learning is also unsatisfactory because there is no single senior member of staff responsible for its coordination and oversight. The pastoral managers understand their tasks but are not in clear agreement with senior staff about the fullness of their roles. The extended senior management team fulfils its role well, in enabling more staff to discuss whole-school issues and acting as a conduit for ideas and debate between the senior managers and the rest of the staff. However, across the school, there is a lack of clarity about line management links between subjects and the senior management team (SMT). There is a lack of clarity about who the links should be between and also the purpose for such links in supporting, monitoring and enabling routine and planned discussions to take place. There needs to be a whole-school review of these management links so that all staff can have access to, share in, and have some influence over whole-school strategic thinking and planning.

67 The school allows departments to work with considerable autonomy in order to make best use of their strengths. However, this means that some practices are insufficiently coordinated across the school by well-understood policies which define practice. The school's aims and values are well documented but there is a lack of a whole-school policy on, for example, setting of homework and marking of work in general. There is no clear strategy for the implementation of literacy, numeracy and ICT across all subjects. Work-related learning is valuable and valued but is not supported by a rationale for which pupils should take it up or for which school subjects should be dropped to accommodate it. In contrast, there is a well-understood and effective school approach to lesson planning.

68 Special needs is given a high priority in the school and senior managers and staff are committed to developing an inclusive approach. The school's arrangements for making provision for pupils with significant special educational needs at stages 3-5 of the Code of Practice are well organised and managed. The special needs coordinator (SENCO) provides effective support and leadership for staff in relation to pupils at stages 3-5 of the Code and systematic oversight of these pupils' needs and progress. There are appropriate arrangements for coordinating and planning developments through regular meetings with staff who hold responsibilities for pupils with special educational needs. However, the current division of responsibilities for different stages of the Code of Practice creates inconsistencies in the school's approach to individual education plans, the involvement of parents and in support and advice to staff.

69 The governors take their role very seriously and provide good support for the school. They are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and its priorities for development, although are not clear about the details of the development plan. A number of governors have worked hard with staff over the past couple of years to support the reconciliation between staff which was so necessary and which has largely been achieved. Many governors, including the chair and vice-chair, spend much time in school, observing the children and working with staff, particularly senior staff.

70 The governing body has appropriately constituted committees that oversee the major work of the school, including its budget, which is generally well managed. Governors are well aware of the need to use funds wisely and of the need to bring in extra funds to support the desired developments of the buildings and site in general. Governors regularly



receive and debate reports from the head teacher and subject heads and have supported the head in resolving some difficult staffing issues. The governors have not fully fulfilled their statutory duties in that statutory requirements for design and technology and PE are not fully met in Key Stage 3 and those for ICT are not met in Key Stage 4.

71 The school has systems to monitor GCSE results and to take appropriate actions. This includes quite rigorous monitoring of attainment and progress within Key Stage 4 which leads to extra support for, and mentoring of, identified pupils. Standardised literacy tests in Year 7 are used in many subjects to group pupils and to help predict their likely eventual examination success. However, in general, assessment information available from Key Stage 2 is insufficiently used to support teaching in the core subjects

72 Across the school, pupils' progress and their attitudes are monitored regularly with collated information fed back to all teachers and some pupils and their parents in order to praise or to require improvement. However, there is no planned and systematic follow up of this information to identify actions taken or their effects. There are planned discussions between SMT and heads of subject over exam results but these have been intermittent of late and do not lead to written notes of outcomes, developments needed or targets to be achieved. Some departments have set themselves targets but this is ad hoc.

73 The school has a good understanding of the quality of teaching. There is some planned observation of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work but this limited to one or two departments, such as mathematics and humanities. There is no planned programme, except for newly qualified teachers, whereby senior managers systematically review the quality of teaching in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and staff development needs. Although a number of middle managers are beginning to monitor teaching and learning, some remain a little reluctant to carry out this important management function.

74 There is appropriate induction of new staff, including newly qualified teachers into the school. However, once they become established, oversight by senior managers is reduced. Appraisal, which would have at least partly filled this gap, began with the senior managers but then halted in the school because of a more widespread trade union disagreement with the process.

75 The school has not developed adequate structures and systems to monitor its work, plan for developments and review progress with them. There is no programme for senior staff to review with departments and subjects the progress with their individual development plans. This means there is no rigorous review of standards in general or progress with developments, which can systematically feed into the creation of new development plans at any level in the school. There is willingness among many staff to do this but there is limited experience or, for some, culture of doing so.

76 The school has embraced new technologies to some extent and the office is appropriately computerised. However, more use could be made of ICT to help monitor and review attendance, and in the general monitoring of pupils' progress in their subjects. The school is not yet making much use of e-mail and the internet, although many teachers and pupils are competent in the use of ICT and these facilities. The use of a laptop computer and electronic screen in science is an exciting development which could be more widely disseminated within the school.

77 The school makes sound use of finances to support pupils. There is careful budget management. The bursar is very efficient and spending decisions are made and overseen by the head teacher and governors. The bursar ensures that once decisions are made,

best value is secured in purchasing resources or services. The most recent audit report praised the school's accounting systems, and the school has acted upon its few recommendations. Specific grants are used appropriately. For example, there has been a grant to fund the college provision of work-related learning courses. These are valuable and well used, and the school has planned for the continuation of necessary funding when the grant ceases at the end of this year. A weakness in financial planning has been in the costing of developments in the school's development plan so that funds can be specifically set aside to ensure developments.

78 Overall in the school there are sufficient, appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. Support for pupils and teachers including that provided by administrative, technician and care-taking staff is generally good. There remain some weaknesses in specialist teacher knowledge in modern languages and art and the lack of a technician to support design and technology is hampering pupils' progress. Issues of staff absence reported in the last inspection have largely been resolved.

79 The buildings provide adequate, if at times cramped, accommodation. They are generally well maintained and the governors have a programme for redecoration and refurbishment. The buildings are difficult to maintain in good condition although the health and safety hazards and general drab appearance reported in the last inspection are no longer evident. Facilities for PE including the gymnasium and the poor drainage of the outdoor surfaces remain an issue to be tackled.

80 Resources are generally adequate to support teaching and learning. ICT resources, although much better than they were, are generally not adequate for teachers in most subjects to make planned and routine use of them either to teach ICT skills or to support learning in the subject. The library is attractive and well maintained and has a good stock of fiction. However, there is too little non-fiction to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently or to develop the skills to do so, in all subjects.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

81 The governing body should include the following key issues in its post-inspection action plan. They are listed in order of importance.

82 In order to build on the progress made since the last inspection and continue to raise standards in the school, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

#### **Improve the coherence of management as whole across the school by:**

- ? establishing clearer line management links between the SMT and all subject heads, which includes a clear description of the purpose of the links and how they will be maintained and builds on the processes already in place with the extended SMT (paragraphs 63, 66, 72);
- ? establishing similar clarity about links between the SMT and the pastoral team (paragraph 66);
- ? ensuring that whole-school policies and documentation establish clearly the

practices and priorities which the school requires (paragraph 67).

**Improve development planning across the school by:**

- ? ensuring that all staff understand the need for development planning, which is based on clear identification of strengths and weaknesses (paragraphs 65, 88, 101, 104,m 116, 121);
- ? ensuring that development plans include sufficient detail of the time and other costs associated with each priority and that success criteria can be judged in terms of outcomes for pupils (paragraphs 65, 101, 104, 116, 121, 135);
- ? ensuring that subject development plans are closely linked to the whole-school plan in order to translate school priorities into co-ordinated action across the school (paragraphs 65, 88, 121).

**Improve monitoring and evaluation across the school by:**

- ? ensuring all staff understand the need for monitoring and engage in it (paragraphs 72, 75, 116);
- ? ensuring that all senior and middle managers are clear about what they should monitor, how and when this should be done and to whom outcomes should be reported (paragraphs 73, 75, 116, 128, 133, 153);
- ? ensuring that outcomes of monitoring inform developments at individual, department and whole-school levels (paragraph 75).

**Improve the use of pupils' assessments by:**

- ? ensuring outcomes are collated as appropriate at subject and whole-school level, are shared widely and their use followed up in order to support subject planning and target setting with individual pupils (paragraphs 31, 52, 53, 110, 121, 141);
- ? ensuring that routine marking of pupils' work includes clearer and more systematic advice on how they should improve (paragraphs 31, 33, 53, 101, 110, 141);
- ? establishing closer links between the RoA programme and monitoring of pupils' academic progress, in order to inform both individual and whole-school target setting (paragraph 55).

**Ensure that statutory requirements are fully met in ICT, PE and design and technology.**

**The following issues are of lesser importance but should also be considered by the school:**

- ? providing more time and greater coherence in the teaching of the PSE programme (paragraphs 25, 40, 50);
- ? ensuring that annual reports to parents include details of what pupils know and can do and what they need to do to improve (paragraphs 53, 59);
- ? ensuring a coherent approach to developing literacy, numeracy and ICT across the school (paragraphs 10, 12, 24, 34, 37, 97, 135);
- ? improving curriculum liaison with Key Stage 2, particularly in the core subjects (paragraphs 37, 42, 71);
- ? acquiring more books for the library to support independent learning in all subjects (paragraph 80);
- ? ensuring that all pupils with SEN who have IEPs are closely involved with the setting and reviewing of their targets (paragraphs 60, 68, 90, 93).

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Community links**

83 The school makes a satisfactory range of work-related courses available to pupils which are delivered through the local college of further education. As part of the Year 10 option selection process, pupils can elect to participate in trowel trade, brush trade, office practice or health and care courses. The school uses the programme for pupils of below average attainment. In addition, for a small group of pupils in Year 10 the National Curriculum has been disapplied, so they can spend 20% of their curriculum time on work-related learning. The college provides certification of trowel and brush trades, where pupils work towards elements or units of the National Vocational Qualification level 1. In health and care, pupils work towards elements and units of the GNVQ Foundation course. Pupils taking office practice gain nationally accredited certificates in text processing and computer literacy.

84 In addition to college courses, the school provides two weeks of work experience for Year 10 pupils and all pupils take part in a Compact scheme. Work experience provision is good and is certificated by the Trident organisation. It makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development but has no specific links to the school curriculum. Pupils on work-related courses select work placements directly relevant to their college studies. Pupils consider the placements are worthwhile and speak very positively of their experiences. They see the placements as potentially leading to employment. The Compact scheme is good and has improved pupils' attendance and behaviour in Years 10 and 11. Some pupils participate in a Young Enterprise scheme in competition with other local schools.

85 The quality of learning on all college-taught courses is satisfactory and in office practice is good. Pupils' portfolios provide clear evidence of the practical skills acquired. Completed vocational workbooks show that knowledge and understanding is at a satisfactory standard. Where office practice is good, portfolios contain examples of activities completed to a high standard with good objective comments written by the teacher.

86 Standards of attainment in all work-related learning courses are satisfactory and good in brush trades and office practice. Formal assessments are carried out regularly with written feedback to pupils so that their achievement can be improved.

87 The range of learning opportunities provided by the college for pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss choices and visit the college before making a final decision. Pupils on the trowel-trade course do not have sufficient curriculum time allocated to achieve the initial course assessments. A key skills course taught by the school is unsatisfactory as it is not directly linked to the national key skill standards. The school does not formally review pupils' work-related learning programme during tutorial sessions. Overall monitoring of pupil progress is satisfactory. Liaison with parents is satisfactory and the college contributes a written report at the end of Year 10.

88 Management of work-related learning courses is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of regular contact with other schools in the consortium and no one member of senior management has responsibility for the work-related learning project. Provision is satisfactory but has not been brought together in the whole-school work-related learning policy and there is no development plan against which to monitor and evaluate the programme offered. Procedures for disapplying the National Curriculum under Section 363 of the Education Act (1996) are improved. There is no policy or rationale for the taught key skills course, nor for selecting school subjects pupils will drop so that work related courses can be selected. Since the last inspection there has been little change to the range of courses offered.

### **Assessment of special educational needs**

89 The school has included 105 pupils (20%) on the special needs register. A high proportion of these have been identified as having specific learning difficulties relating to literacy. 31 pupils have a statement of special educational needs and a further 30 have been placed at stage 3 of the SEN Code of Practice. The number and proportion of pupils with statements is higher than average for the LEA and much higher than for the county as a whole. This is partly due to Lancashire's approach to statementing which has led to a high statementing rate in relation to national trends. Only one of the 31 statements was initiated by the school. The rest were initiated and completed in the primary schools.

90 The school's assessment arrangements for pupils with SEN are sound and include an appropriate range of tests. There are satisfactory systems for collating information about potential learning difficulties. This includes primary school data, CATs scores, reading and spelling scores and regular teacher assessments and reports. Teachers identify pupils who may need additional help in lessons and who have difficulties with reading, writing or number as well as pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour. Where appropriate, parents are informed and the pupils' name is entered on the school's SEN register. Staff responsible for special needs provision meet on a regular basis to review pupils' progress and to decide on the appropriate level of support.

91 Individual education plans (IEPs) are set out for pupils at stages 2 to 6 of the Code. Targets for pupils with more significant needs are clearly stated and well focused on identified needs. For pupils with statements targets are closely linked to needs identified in the statement. However, pupils on stage 2 of the Code are not routinely involved in setting their own targets. This limits the potential for success and does not encourage pupils to develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning.

92 There are appropriate arrangements for informing staff about the pupils' difficulties and needs. Pupils' progress is continuously reviewed, through weekly meetings between support assistants and support teachers, informal discussion with all staff and regular meetings between SEN department staff. IEP reviews and annual reviews for pupils with statements are held in accordance with requirements.

93 Arrangements for communicating with parents of pupils at stage 2 of the Code of Practice are unsatisfactory as parents are not routinely involved in planning and reviewing their child's individual education plan. Arrangements for communicating with parents of pupils with more significant special needs who have been placed at stages 3 to 5 of the Code are appropriate and are in accordance with regulations.

94 The school makes appropriate use of external agencies, and seeks advice where necessary about individual children's needs and where there may be a need for modification to the support arrangements.

95 The school's arrangements for identifying and assessing pupils learning difficulties and special educational needs are sound overall, though there is a need to involve pupils and parents more closely in the setting up and in reviewing individual education plans.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	158
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	16	35	38	6	2	-

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	534
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	104

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	31
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	86

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.98
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.96
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	57	49	106

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	27	25
	Girls	38	27	23
	Total	68	54	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (62)	49 (61)	44 (63)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	12 (29)	25 (28)	16 (27)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	31	28	27
	Girls	38	30	21
	Total	69	58	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	63 (59)	53 (66)	44 (25)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (34)	20 (29)	21 (5)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	43	47	90

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	17	41	41
	Girls	23	47	47
	Total	40	88	88
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	44 (36.1)	98 (87.6)	98 (100)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	37 (31.6)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	29.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	176

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.9
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.1
Key Stage 4	21.6

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	48	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	1154025
Total expenditure	1179011
Expenditure per pupil	2307
Balance brought forward from previous year	60970
Balance carried forward to next year	35984

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	534
Number of questionnaires returned	110

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	50	5	1	-
My child is making good progress in school.	45	50	4	-	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	59	7	5	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	55	13	4	1
The teaching is good.	36	58	3	-	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	50	7	-	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	45	4	1	-
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	1	-	3
The school works closely with parents.	30	58	5	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	34	51	5	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	57	3	-	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	51	8	6	11

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

### **ENGLISH**

96 Since the previous inspection report there has been little change in the pattern of results in the Key Stage 3 English tests. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 and above in 1999 was in line with national averages, but the percentage achieving level 6 and above was significantly lower. Thus, the average points score was below the national average, although comparable with that in mathematics and science at the school. The attainment of boys and girls was broadly similar. Compared with similar schools, attainment at level 5 and above matched expectations, but was well below expectations at level 6 and above. In Key Stage 4, the story is very different. There has been a dramatic improvement in achievement in GCSE English since the previous inspection, from 47% to 67% of pupils gaining grades A\*-C, and a welcomed improvement in GCSE English Literature from 53% to 62% of pupils gaining the higher grades. The percentage of pupils entered for the GCSE exam is significantly higher than nationally and the 1999 English results were well above the national average. There has been a marked improvement in boys' achievement in both English and English literature, that in English being the more impressive, from 33% to 56% of boys achieving grades A\*-C. Achievement in English in Key Stage 4 is much higher than in the other core subjects in the school.

97 The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is an outstanding aspect of teaching in Key Stage 3. The combination of readings, improvisations, questioning and evaluation of each other's contributions on the part of pupils produces impressive examples of oracy, a process which is carefully organised and structured by teachers. Drama techniques are skilfully woven into this teaching and the positive quality of response from the pupils indicates how much they would benefit from timetabled drama lessons. From the beginning of Year 7, pupils are trained explicitly and very successfully in the skills of listening, an approach which develops qualities of tolerance, courtesy and sensitivity towards the views of others to an unusual degree. Pupils rise enthusiastically to the challenge of taking responsibility for their own learning. Teachers link this development with the encouragement of wider reading, which makes good use of the fiction resources in the school library. Pupils of all ages talk articulately, critically and with enjoyment about the books which they are reading. Writing skills are less well developed in Key Stage 3, however, with too few opportunities provided for extended writing. The teaching of writing skills is at times very good, with highly focused and detailed attention to the craft of writing. For example, whole-class guided writing was used to enable a Year 9 class of more able pupils to produce the opening of a ghost story, with very close attention paid to how language is used to create effects. This is not systematically planned into schemes of work, however, which means there is not a consistent and sustained development of pupils' writing so there is not a consistent and sustained development through the key stage, in particular, the conventions of formal standard English.

98 In Key Stage 4, there is a very marked increase in the level of challenge and expectations, owing to the demands of the GCSE examination syllabus. From this point pupils are expected to engage with texts at far greater length and in far greater detail, a challenge to which the pupils rise with great enthusiasm. Written tasks are considerably more extensive and there are more of them. Pupils write in a lively, engaged fashion and the close linkage of oral work with reading in Key Stage 3 means that by Key Stage 4 pupils are confident in using a clear personal voice to explore and discuss texts. The informality of the department's schemes of work does not sufficiently allow for the structuring, development and consolidation of pupils' progress. This also means that

information technology remains insufficiently integrated into planning, as required in the previous inspection report. The progress of lower attainers in Key Stage 4 has been greatly improved through the department's determination to provide specialist teaching for these pupils.

99 Teaching is always good and often very good. It is never unsatisfactory. Time management is excellent. Lessons begin promptly and punctually, with pupils ready and prepared to learn very quickly. The pace and briskness of all lessons reflects very skilled teaching, which is also manifest in teachers' ability to pitch explanations and points at just the right level to make new concepts accessible for all. Questioning is frequently used to take pupils' understanding in new directions and to extend their thinking. The resulting dialogue is a crucial departmental strategy for involving pupils in their own learning. This is also very evident in the use of group work. Through thoughtful management and training on the part of teachers, pupils of all ages work together very effectively in groups, in a spirit of genuine collaboration. Inclusiveness is central to the department's philosophy. Thus, in a Year 11 class of low attainers, the teacher cleverly supported the pupils in their writing task on a poem by setting it in the form of a prayer, a form familiar to all the pupils in their reading, writing and speaking.

100 A particular mark of the success of the department's approaches is the quality of response frequently offered by boys, responses which are sensitive, thoughtful and always considerate. Teachers themselves model these qualities and insist at all times on courtesy and good behaviour, so that pupils feel themselves to be in a safe and secure environment. Thus, Year 10 pupils working on Michel Roberts' story 'Your Shoes' for assessment purposes, were prepared to explore and discuss deeply personal views about parents, in very open manner. At the same time, skilful teaching kept the responses firmly rooted to the text, to the significance of individual words and phrases and to what could be deduced and inferred from them. In work in role, boys of all ages and abilities effortlessly situate themselves in a girl's persona and vice versa.

101 There is strong and clear direction from the head of department and the pupils benefit greatly from the collegiate, harmonious ethos which he cultivates. Steps have been taken to target under-attaining pupils throughout Key Stage 3, through the use of the literacy hour format and through specific language work, for a regular one hour each week. As yet, however, the department does not have established systems for the formal monitoring and tracking of pupils through Year 7 and Year 8, nor a consistent marking policy that is rigorous and linked to a coherent assessment programme. This also means that the basis on which teachers report to parents is shaky. The previous inspection report indicated the need for a structured development plan, but this is still to happen. The present school format does not help the department to identify success criteria or how they impact on pupils' achievement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102 Standards in mathematics are just below national expectations in both key stages. In the 1999 Key Stage 3 national tests results fell significantly and were below national expectations. However, from observation of Year 9 classes and analysis of pupils' work during the inspection standards have improved and are again just below national expectations. Standards of attainment in Years 7 and 8 are lower than they should be in some areas of mathematics because the schemes of work do not take sufficient account of pupils attainment on entry. GCSE results in 1999 were just below the national average with 42% of pupils gaining grades A\*-C compared with 45.6 nationally. However, the average points score was the same as the national average and pupils attain well in mathematics at

GCSE in the school when compared to their attainment in other subjects. Standards in the GCSE statistics option groups are good. Pupils numeracy skills are sufficiently developed for them to cope with the requirements of their work in other subjects, though the numeracy skills required across the curriculum are low level.

103 By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils can calculate appropriately, explain the methods they have used and give reasons for their answers. Nearly all pupils can solve simple equations algebraically higher attainers are developing good algebraic skills. They know and can use the properties of angles and two-dimensional shapes. Pupils understand and can use simple probabilities and can use their mathematics to produce good quality responses to planned investigations. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' algebraic skills have improved further. Higher attaining pupils solve linear inequalities confidently, express terms of sequences algebraically and use these skills to solve problems. Pupils produce coursework tasks of a good standard overall.

104 Good progress has been made on the issues raised in the last inspection. Leadership of the department is good. The head of department has introduced an effective system of monitoring the quality of teaching in mathematics, has seen every member of the department teaching and has given feedback to them. He has identified where there are weaknesses in teaching and is following these up to make the necessary improvements. At present the department's schemes of work offer insufficient guidance on the key learning objectives and linked teaching strategies for each unit of work. A good start has been made on developing strategies to improve pupils' numeracy skills, especially for low attaining pupils. This has involved members of the department in introducing and giving an emphasis to activities which specifically develop pupils' numeracy skills. Development planning has been introduced as part of a whole-school approach. However, in its present form, its purpose is to gain funds for resources rather than being a tool to identify what needs to be done, by whom and when to raise pupils' levels of attainment in specific areas of mathematics. The one area where improvement has not been maintained is the use of ICT to enhance pupils learning of mathematics. The computers in the department have not been useable for the last 18 months despite the best efforts of the head of mathematics to get the funds for either their repair or replacement.

105 Teaching of mathematics is good it is a strength of the department and supports pupils' mathematical learning. Nearly all teachers have good subject knowledge they plan their lessons well and have high expectations. Pupils nearly always respond well to the teaching of mathematics in the school. They behave well, show interest in their work, sustain concentration and, when the opportunity arises, support each other well. Pupils' good response to the usually good teaching means that they make good progress in their mathematical learning in most lessons. A particular strength of teaching in the department is teachers' use of questions to develop pupils understanding. This also maintains a good pace and level of challenge to mathematics lessons. In a Year 11 top set lesson, the teacher used questioning well to get the lesson off to a brisk start. Pupils were actively involved from the beginning and responded positively to a series of short questions to ensure that everyone had understood the previous work on using simple inequalities to identify regions. This was then extended by the teacher, during the rest of the lesson to more complex inequalities. With a Year 9, low attaining set, the teacher kept the pace of the lesson going by calling pupils together to discuss the work they had been doing on sequences. Her use of questions helped pupils report back to the rest of the class what they had done to complete a sequence to a given rule. In the few lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, expectations of what pupils could do were too low and the pace of lessons was too leisurely. Mathematics teachers make good use of homework. Work is marked accurately though not many of the teachers' comments give specific advice about

what exactly needs to be done to improve pupils' mathematical understanding or skills. The high level of commitment of the mathematics staff, led by the head of department, is evident in the Saturday morning GCSE revision classes that have been run for a number of years.

## SCIENCE

106 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was above national expectations in 1997 and 1998 but below in 1999. For the last two years boys have not performed as well as girls. In GCSE examinations the department's results have improved markedly over the last three years. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in double award science was well above national averages. The girls performed marginally better than the boys. The results partly reflect the fact that a bigger proportion of more able pupils take this course at the school than is the case nationally. However those pupils who take the single award course in science also do well compared with their other subjects. In 1999 no pupil failed to attain a GCSE pass in science, a notable achievement.

107 During Key Stage 3, pupils' standard of work is slightly above national expectations. Pupils make good progress in their ability to plan and carry out practical investigations in using related specialised terminology. They apply their understanding of the concepts of fair tests and variables to the process. Knowledge of facts and basic scientific skills are sound. Pupils respond well to pieces of work requiring extended study and which require them to use their own initiative, such as a project on famous scientists. By Year 9 most pupils can interpret a cooling curve and are familiar with the ideas of the particulate theory of matter. There is no significant difference between the standards of boys and girls.

108 In Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are satisfactory in Year 10 and good in Year 11. Pupils in Year 10 are insecure in their knowledge of some basic scientific ideas from their Key Stage 3 work, including the reactivity series of chemical elements, digestion and electrical current. There is need to analyse further what pupils can do at the end of Key Stage 3 so that it is taken into account in Key Stage 4.

109 Pupils of all ages respond well to their science lessons. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and pupils cooperate well with each other when engaged in group work. Behaviour deteriorates when work is not well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils' relationships with each other and with teachers are good. They handle books and equipment with care.

110 Teaching is generally satisfactory and is often good. In Key Stage 3 it is satisfactory overall and is good in over one third of lessons. In Key Stage 4 teaching is good. Teachers know their subject well. In many lessons careful thought is given as to how best to illustrate a point to enhance pupils' understanding. For example, in a lesson on the digestive system a loose ball of string representing the human intestines was unravelled to demonstrate their true length. An interactive white board enabled previously prepared slides to be used to great effect in a lesson on astronomy. In some lessons though, inadequate time is given to developing difficult concepts, time is spent instead on unchallenging practical work which does not directly help pupils and results in insecure knowledge and understanding. Teachers use questioning well to engage pupils at the start of lessons and to reinforce what has been learned previously. Less effective is the use of questions to stimulate pupils' thinking about what they have learned so they can apply it to a new situation. Assessment is rarely used to inform planning and marking seldom shows pupils what they should do to improve their work. Homework is set frequently, but is not sufficiently challenging. Support staff assist pupils with special educational needs well.

They work actively and pupils benefit from their help.

111 All science lessons take place in laboratories and pupils' learning benefits from this as well as from the work of a committed science technician. Although schemes of work have been produced to suggest classroom activities and homework in all topics, there is no planning to provide for the fact that pupils within a class have widely differing abilities and aptitudes.

112 The department has initiated a useful topic in Year 7 in which pupils are taught how to use information technology for logging data collected during practical work. However, it is too early to judge its success. A cognitive development programme has been adopted, which includes development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and this is already showing benefits in terms of improving pupils' scientific vocabulary. The department needs to review the use of practical work to ensure it enables the development of knowledge and skills. In addition, as a matter of urgency, the department should improve the use of assessment in planning and in feedback to pupils.

## **ART**

113 By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally. Pupils mostly make satisfactory progress in art and attainment in Key Stage 3 has improved since the last inspection. In the 1999 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades was below national expectation but the proportion gaining an A\*-G grade was above. Since the previous inspection GCSE higher grade results have fluctuated. In 1997 they were in line with the national average, 1998 significantly higher and in 1999 they were below. The general trend across all grades is, however, upward.

114 In Key Stage 3 learning and attainment is strongest in investigating and making (AT1) when pupils are using pencil and coloured pencils. Progress is best when pupils work from observation, then develop their ideas to produce abstract designs in colour. They understand the process and how it can be applied and use their imagination to produce a finished piece of work. This is continued in Key Stage 4. For example, in painting, some Year 10 pupils show increasing awareness and enjoyment in the use and appreciation of colour, influenced by their study of the work of Kandinsky. Towards the end of Year 11 some pupils working with drawing and mixed media, use their own experiences to create visual images, which show a personal response to the questions posed. In both key stages pupils are confident using graphics as a significant focus for their work. They are less secure in three-dimensional work and painting. Insufficient use is made of painting as a medium to express ideas in a visual and tactile way and three-dimensional work is in need of further development. The few imaginative models produced in Year 7 as part of the shoe project are a sound basis on which to build. In Key Stage 4 three-dimensional work is weak, in part due to the lack of a foundation in Key Stage 3. Knowledge and understanding (AT2) in its broadest sense is sufficiently developed in Key Stage 3 to enrich practical art, design and craft work, provide a firm base for Key Stage 4 and offer opportunities for supporting development of literacy.

115 Teaching is mostly satisfactory. The classroom is well organised and good relationships between teachers and pupils helps to keep them on task and encourages good behaviour. Lessons are well planned and introduced, and involve quiet, supportive management of pupils balanced with appropriate advice. The pace of some lessons is too leisurely and there is a need to systematically encourage pupils' independent learning. Teachers' expectations are mostly sound and differentiation, which is mainly by outcome

and teacher intervention, is mostly effective. The needs of most pupils with special educational needs are met. Homework is linked to sketch books in Key Stage 3 with pupils working through a list of topics related to class work. In Key Stage 4 homework is integral to course work demands. In both cases this is generally satisfactory.

116 Leadership and management of this small department are sound. Many pupils enjoy working in the art room because teachers give clear parameters for standards of work and behaviour. The curriculum for art is broadly satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and assessment procedures are manageable but the end of Key Stage 3 report does not comply with national requirements. Progress on the points raised in the last inspection is, on balance, just satisfactory. There is a need to draw up a clear development plan giving priorities, timelines, criteria for success and strategies for monitoring effectiveness. This should include how the work of the area is to be monitored and evaluated.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117 Standards at GCSE level are below the national average overall but have improved year on year over the last three years. Girls attain higher standards than boys, a gap which reflects that found nationally. However, boys' attainment in food technology in the 1999 examination was similar to that of girls. Standards in food technology have improved rapidly and are now above the national average. In the resistant materials courses, the improvement in standards is minimal and remains well below the national average for A\* - C grades. High standards in food technology are achieved because pupils have a very strong background of knowledge, skills and understanding developed through very good teaching in Year 10 and a carefully planned programme of development work in Year 11. Project design folders are of a high standard. In resistant materials the development of design ideas and practical skills is weak. Project folders are not developed systematically and there is considerable variation in approach between groups. Pupils do not get sufficient guidance on how to improve through regular formative assessments on dates that are pre-set and rigorously applied.

118 In Key Stage 3 standards overall are below the national expectation. Teacher assessments indicate standards that are in line with the national average at level 5+ but well below those nationally at level 6+. Standards are much higher in work with food than work in other aspects of technology. Classroom observation and scrutiny of pupils' work does not confirm these levels of achievement. Standards are limited because late arrival of pupils reduces available time and in resistant materials a focus on working with pupils individually means that many pupils are given little attention and direction. In Year 9 standards are compromised through a lack of continuity and only one timetable period for the subject. Consequently staff cannot adequately deliver the required National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with their ability.

119 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good and often very good in food technology but unsatisfactory in the workshop-based courses. Lesson planning, organisation and delivery, coupled with good subject knowledge, is a strength in food technology. For example, a Year 8 lesson planned in conjunction with the RE Curriculum, enabled pupils to learn not only the practical skills of making unleavened bread, but also the spiritual and symbolic values of the Jewish religion. This work was also organised to involve group working and collective decision making. In the workshop-based courses, learning objectives are unclear and not understood, assessment is not used effectively to plan or to inject pace into lessons and teaching uses only one strategy, that of supporting pupils individually. Consequently time is not used effectively, progress in lessons is limited,



and pupils become far too dependent on the teacher.

120 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are generally good. Pupils work with increasing levels of independence within the structured setting in food technology. When given the opportunity, pupils can express a view and demonstrate growing adult values about issues such as nutrition and the use of resources by a wasteful society. Where attitudes are poor, this arises from a lack of challenge and stimulus in lessons, which builds up over time.

121 Leadership and management and progress since the last inspection continue to be unsatisfactory. The subject as a whole lacks a sense of direction and priorities for development. There is no subject manager and line management links with the senior management team are poor. There is no regular monitoring of the work within the subject or of the quality of teaching and learning. Subject development plans are ineffective and have no link with a school development plan. There is no system of target setting for the subject or for pupils. Consequently almost all the issues identified in the previous report remain. Standards have improved, especially in food technology. This aspect of the subject is well led and effectively managed. Schemes of work in food technology are of high quality but in resistant materials they continue to be weak and the use of information technology has not been adequately planned into schemes of work or introduced into courses.

122 In order to improve standards further, the department should improve teaching and learning in resistant materials, develop continuity and progression in schemes of work, address the leadership and management of the department, provide adequate time and improve group sizes in Key Stage 3. Information technology should also be used more as a vehicle for teaching and learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

123 In Key Stage 4, standards of attainment are improving. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades has improved over the last three years and is now slightly below the national average. The department has set target which shows further improvement for this year. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*-G grades has fallen slightly and is just below the national average. In lessons most pupils display a satisfactory level of geographical knowledge about places, human and physical features. Pupils' written work contains examples of good quality, detailed work on topics such as settlement and glaciation. The quality of the fieldwork produced by some higher-attaining pupils is very good. The ability of pupils to provide clear geographical explanations of features and processes is variable and some lower-attaining pupils do not have sufficient grasp of key geographical concepts.

124 At the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations and above this when pupils have the opportunity to engage in geographical enquiry and develop their geographical understanding as well as increase their knowledge. There are examples of good quality work on the local area, Italy, Kenya and environmental issues. The level of pupils' geographical knowledge is good but their ability to provide clear explanations of human and physical processes is less well developed. Higher-attaining pupils have produced some well-planned enquiries on Kenya which they have also successfully evaluated.

125 The behaviour of pupils is good in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Most pupils are able to maintain their concentration throughout lessons and make positive contributions through

their answers to questions. Pupils show interest in and have an enthusiasm for their work particularly when they are able to take an active part in lessons.

126 Since the last inspection there standards of attainment have improved in Key Stage 4 and further improvement is shown in the target set for this year. The change in the length of lessons has had a beneficial effect on pupils' levels of concentration and pace of work. The introduction of more fieldwork and geographical enquiries into the curriculum has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Also, assessment and marking are now more effective in supporting pupils' progress.

127 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory and in some lessons it is good. It is the good teaching that impacts most positively on pupils' learning by not only helping them to increase their geographical knowledge but also to develop their geographical skills and understanding. In these lessons teachers ask challenging questions well to get pupils to think more deeply and in consequence make good progress. There are weaknesses in those lessons which are too directed by the teacher with few opportunities for pupils to discuss and ask questions and where work is unchallenging. In some lessons insufficient attention is given to developing the literacy skills of pupils and there is too frequent use of unchallenging worksheets. This limits the progress that some pupils are able to make.

128 There is a strong commitment to improving standards of attainment of all pupils and the department is putting a number of strategies in place to achieve this. This includes lunchtime homework club and revision sessions. The department continues to develop approaches to teaching but there is still insufficient use of information technology. The regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not yet in place but the department is improving the tracking of pupils' progress.

## HISTORY

129 By the end of Key Stage 3 standards in history are in line with national expectations. From the time they enter the school pupils acquire sound historical skills. Oral and listening skills are being developed well, in line with the department's policy on language and emphasis on improving standards of literacy. Pupils use factual knowledge and understanding of the history of Britain and the wider world to describe past societies and periods, making links between features within and across different periods. During the inspection there was a particular focus on different interpretations of history. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, analysed characteristics of famous leaders and considered, for example, the influence of propaganda upon judgements. Some could explain how and why different historical interpretations had been produced. This reflects an improvement upon the 1999 teacher assessment results which were lower than in 1998 and below the national average.

130 The sound development of historical skills in Key Stage 3 is continued into Key Stage 4. GCSE results for 1999 were in line with national averages whereas during the previous three years they were below. The rate of improvement for those achieving A\*-C and A\*-G grades is greater than that nationally but the 1999 examination group was very small. Girls achieve higher results than boys, reflecting the national picture but boys' results are improving. Only three GCSE lessons could be observed during the inspection but in addition to this, pupils' work and assessments were scrutinised. Attainment at the end of the key stage is in line with expectations, with a strong emphasis on challenge, including for those with special educational needs and the more able.

131 The last inspection report was generally positive about history and the majority of

areas for development have been addressed. All elements of the syllabus are now taught. Setting by ability in years eight to eleven has been introduced to deal with the variations in performance within mixed-ability groups. Pupils' work is closely monitored and sets reviewed. It is too early to judge the overall impact of these arrangements though pupil profiles show clear progression and improving standards. Targets to improve learning are now set in negotiation with pupils. The system allows under achievement to be identified quickly so that appropriate improvement strategies can be put in place.

132 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Teachers' planning shows clear aims and learning objectives, which are explained to pupils, enabling them to engage in lessons right from the beginning. Very good subject knowledge is combined with brisk pace and a variety of teaching techniques, including paired work, group work, use of video and IT, and class discussion. A strength of the teaching is skilful questioning by teachers. An emphasis on 'why?' questions, rather than just factual knowledge develops pupils' ideas, increases understanding and elicits insightful responses. Well-thought-out differentiated work ensures that pupils of all abilities make at least sound progress. Effective strategies are in place for managing behaviour based on mutual respect and cooperation. Excellent displays, especially in the history room, create a positive, stimulating learning environment. The majority of lessons conclude with opportunities to reflect on progress made but this is an area of teaching and learning which could be strengthened further. Pupils have a positive, enthusiastic approach towards the subject and the growing number opting to study history at GCSE level is growing. Pupils are well behaved and keen to participate in lessons. They sustain concentration and work hard at tasks set. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils.

133 The requirements for National Curriculum history are being met but schemes of work need to be reviewed in order to reflect any changes. The development of ICT needs to be built into planning, showing clearly how ICT skills will be linked to learning objectives for history. Resources for learning are adequate overall though the quantity of history books for Key Stage 3 and in the library is very low and access to ICT inadequate. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective assessment and marking systems are in place and at present under review. Increasingly, assessment and planning is linked to National Curriculum levels and target setting. The head of department has a clear vision and sense of direction for the subject. Her main focus, reflected in the department's development plan, is to raise standards and already there are indications that this is happening. Some monitoring and evaluation has taken place but as yet has not included lesson observation. Appropriate opportunities are offered for professional development so that the head of department is aware of current initiatives in history. This is an improving department with the capacity for greater improvement.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

134 Pupils standards of attainment in information and communications technology are below national expectations in both key stages. In Key Stage 3, standards have improved from being poor at the last inspection. Standards are highest in the use of ICT to present information. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can present information using word-processing and desk-top publishing software. Keyboard skills have improved and are satisfactory. Pupils can set up and use both databases and spreadsheets to handle information. Standards are lowest in the use of ICT to measure or control events, because there is insufficient planned provision in these areas for all pupils. In Key Stage 4, standards are just below what one would expect in the GCSE option course in information

technology. A lack of coherent provision for those not taking an examination results in standards being well below national expectations for all other pupils.

135 Improvement since the last inspection in ICT has been just satisfactory and has led to a slight improvement in standards in for all pupils in Key Stage 3. The number and quality of computers has been increased, a suitably qualified ICT teacher has been appointed, all pupils in Key Stage 3 now study ICT for an hour a week and a GCSE option course in information technology is offered to pupils in Key Stage 4. Some use is being made of ICT across the curriculum. Nevertheless, significant areas remain to be tackled effectively if the school is to raise standards further, as it must. All pupils in Key Stage 4 do not experience a planned ICT course, though the school has clear plans for autumn 2000 to remedy this. Whilst some use is made of ICT in some subjects by some teachers, the overall use of ICT across the curriculum is still low and what does occur is not planned into schemes of work. During the inspection good use of ICT was seen in science and history. Coordination of ICT remains unsatisfactory and development planning is focused on increasing resources rather than establishing clear priorities for raising the levels of all pupils' attainment in ICT.

136 Teaching in ICT is just satisfactory in both key stages and this results in pupils making satisfactory progress overall in their learning. Lessons are planned and teacher explanations are clear. In a Year 8 lesson, the teacher used his subject knowledge well to give a good explanation to pupils of the structure of a database and used questioning effectively to help pupils understand what a primary key was. Pupils' behaviour in ICT lessons is satisfactory. Teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory because expectations, challenge and the pace of lessons are too low. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were using ICT to control the switching on and off of a fan. They spent the lesson typing in the procedures they had been given, which offered little challenge and, because some pupils did this quickly they were left at times with nothing to do.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

137 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is in line with expectations in both French and German. In the upper sets pupils can use a range of tenses. In Year 8, for example, pupils can handle the perfect tense in German and can manipulate the language to apply learnt language to new situations in both speech and writing. All pupils have sound listening skills. When, for example, French or German is used confidently by the teacher, pupils respond well. They can speak both French and German confidently.

138 The results at GCSE in 1999 were below national averages in both French and German. However, there has been significant improvement since the last inspection and in French in 1999 the percentage of boys achieving grades A\*-C was only very slightly below national averages. In class in Key Stage 4 in both French and German, pupils' attainment is generally in line with national expectations and in the upper sets is above them. Pupils can for example speak confidently and express opinions about leisure activities. A group studying German as their second language was able to understand a text about drugs and were able to engage in the kind of discussion expected at the beginning of an advanced-level course.

139 Since the last inspection results at GCSE in both French and German have improved.

Progress in Key Stage 3 is good and pupils can now use tenses confidently by Year 9. Progress in Year 10 is good, pupils have learned to work independently and can take responsibility for their own learning. The number taking a second foreign language is still

small though options for September 2000 show an increase in the likely take-up. Information technology is not yet fully integrated into the curriculum as there is no planned use of the school's facilities. The non-specialist teachers in Key Stage 3 have not yet received any additional training in French and German, they have good teaching skills but their effectiveness is restricted by a lack of confidence and fluency in the foreign languages.

140 Overall teaching is good. In French and German it is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 because in Key Stage 3, two teachers have limited subject expertise. In Key Stages 3 and 4, and in both languages, teachers prepare their lessons well and use a good range of strategies to maintain pupils' interest and to ensure effective learning takes place. Pupils make good progress because teachers are enthusiastic and well organised. When the teachers speak French and German in lessons pupils respond well with a good level of understanding. Pupils are well managed. Lessons have a brisk start and the pace is good. No time is wasted. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and pupils support each other well in group and pair work. The good behaviour of pupils has a positive effect on their learning. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress which is improved when a support teacher is present.

141 The department is soundly managed, staff work well with each other and resources are shared equitably. Assessment and monitoring of pupils need to be further developed. A good start has been made by the use of pupils' test scores at 11 to predict their likely GCSE results and to set targets for them. Assessment of pupils' work in class and at home is not consistent or diagnostic enough to give them clear guidelines about they need to do to improve.

## **MUSIC**

142 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is slightly below national expectations, but this is partly as a result of the interrupted teaching that prevailed before the current, stable situation. In particular, higher-attaining pupils are under achieving in all Key Stage 3 lessons because differentiation is insufficiently developed. Year 9 pupils are able to listen to examples of bhangra as part of a world music topic and use musical vocabulary and knowledge to describe the characteristics. Year 7 pupils are conversant with pitch and rhythm but this is not yet secure for all abilities in the age group. Again, this is a result of the weak differentiation.

143 Standards of attainment at GCSE for the small number of candidates are in line with national expectations. All GCSE pupils are making good progress. They are confident when composing and use their performing skills effectively in the classroom. Differentiation in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory.

144 Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. A lively, vivacious and enthusiastic approach is combined with good subject knowledge to produce a teaching style that is effective. Pupils' learning benefits from the well-directed teaching and is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Effective use is made of assessment information to inform teaching and the recently-developed scheme of work contributes positively to overall learning. Learning objectives are clear and in the best lessons observed are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. There is a good behaviour policy that has recently been introduced. It is working well and expectations of behaviour are clear to all. The old homework policy is unsatisfactory and implementing a new one has already been identified as a priority in the department development plan.

145 Since the last inspection the number and range of extra-curricular music opportunities has increased substantially. There is a good programme of activities, which offers traditional ensembles as well as rock and pop opportunities. Fifty pupils are receiving additional instrumental tuition. Other areas of improvement since the last inspection include the good work taking place on long-term planning and the monitoring of teaching as a result of the music teacher being newly qualified. However, there has been no progress in relation to the improvement of information and communication technology in music. The under resourcing noted at the last inspection continues and is unsatisfactory.

146 Whilst accommodation for music is generally good, there are unsatisfactory teaching areas for instrumental lessons. Currently, instrumental lessons take place in a room next to the classroom. The lack of soundproofing results in considerable disruption to teaching and pupils are unable to hear the teacher or each other.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

147 In Key Stage 4 standards in physical education have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards in Key Stage 3 are not as high but pupils' ability to evaluate their own and others' performance has been significantly improved. Teaching has improved in Key Stage 4 and planning has been developed in Key Stage 3. Although some accommodation issues have been improved there are still some outstanding problems with facilities.

148 Overall, standards are in line with the national expectations in both key stages. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 9 they are able to practise, adapt and improve routines in dance and gymnastics and play with some consistency and accuracy in games. In Year 9, boys achieve well in football. For example they are able to plan their own tactics at free kicks and discuss what made their attempts successful or not. All pupils in Key Stage 3 can assess their strengths or limitations and are able to observe others, giving constructive suggestions for how to improve. In gymnastics and dance the pupils are able to perform sequences using a variety of movements but the quality of their performance lacks good control, body shape, extension and changes of speed.

149 During Key Stage 4 pupils continued to develop their games and athletic skills to improve their own performance. Most pupils are developing a range of shots in badminton and play with increasing accuracy. Their ability to evaluate and analyse the strengths or areas for improvement are well developed. The pupils who are following GCSE course in Year 10 are making good progress at improving their own performances.

150 There is a good programme of sports clubs and inter-school matches, which enables some pupils to achieve high standards. The pupils participate regularly and with much enthusiasm.

151 The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Teachers know their subject well and this leads the pupils to make good progress in the range of activities taught. Teachers expect pupils to behave well, participate in all lessons and work hard to improve. They organise their lessons effectively so that pupils know what they are doing and can set up their own equipment and tasks quickly. The teachers give responsibility to the pupils for assessing their progress and pupils react positively to the encouragement they receive both from teachers and other pupils. Good relationships are a strong feature. These are based on firm but fair discipline and the teachers' enthusiasm for pupils to succeed.

152 The pupils respond very positively to the good teaching and participate with enthusiasm. The behaviour of pupils is very good in lessons and many are learning how to play fairly with others. They are capable of sustaining physical effort such as in the athletics session in GCSE where they worked very hard over an extended period. Pupils enjoy taking lead roles such as warming up exercises or team coordinator in football and some pupils are extending this role in the club sessions by coaching younger pupils.

153 The subject is well managed. There is a very positive climate for learning created by the teachers who have high expectations of performance. The department has worked hard to improve their teaching of pupil self-evaluation, to produce schemes of work for Key Stage 3 and to introduce a GCSE course. They are clear about their priorities but as yet these are not developed into clear targets which will improve standards. The head of department gives good support to non-specialists and informally checks planning and teaching but there is no systematic approach to monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching or standards of work.

154 The PE programme gives all pupils the opportunity to progress and those pupil who have particular difficulties receive additional help or adapted tasks. The newly introduced GCSE provision is good and offers pupils the opportunity to study to a higher level. Talented pupils also have the opportunity to succeed in school teams and local competitions.

155 The time available during Key Stage 3 is insufficient and below the national average for this key stage. It does not enable the school to fully deliver the statutory requirements. There is no planned time to teach a striking and fielding game. The current Year 7 and 8 programme has insufficient time overall for developing good performances in gymnastics, dance and athletics.

156 The school playing fields remain an issue for improvement. The drainage is poor and facilities for athletics are inadequate. The gymnasium requires floor and ceiling maintenance.