

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLLINGWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Cornfield Street, Milnrow, Rochdale

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105853

Headteacher: Dr P Mortimer

Reporting inspector: C Hackworth
3951

Dates of inspection: 25/09/00 – 29/09/00

Inspection number: 223856

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: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cornfield Street
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Parker

Date of previous inspection: 05/12/1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr M Speirs 1327	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr M W Griffiths 4313	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
Mr G Rawlins 27577	Team inspector	SEN	How well are pupils or students taught? How well does the school care for its pupils or students?
Mr P Jarrett 3992	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
Mr R Heath 1262	Team inspector	Maths Information Technology	
Mr P Bunyan 4857	Team inspector	Science	
Mr T Slack 2079	Team inspector	Design & technology	
Mr T M James 1523	Team inspector	History Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hollingworth High School is a large 11-16 mixed comprehensive school with 1131 pupils on roll and with slightly more girls than boys. The school draws its pupils from seven main feeder primary schools although, in total, pupils come from over 30 primary schools. Pupils come from the immediate local communities of Milnrow and Newhey as well as Littleborough, Smallbridge and Oldham. The school roll has increased by 167 pupils since the last inspection in 1994. Hollingworth is popular and over subscribed with waiting lists currently in years 7 to 9. Over the past few years, attainment on entry has been improving and is now average. The school, along with other secondary schools in Rochdale, will be introducing the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative from January 2001. 22.6 percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above the national average. 6 percent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds of which 4.2 percent of pupils speak English as an additional language and none are at an early stage of language acquisition. 18.1 percent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average. Of these 1.3 percent have statements of special educational needs which is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hollingworth is an improving school with many strengths and the capacity and creativity to be a very good school. Good teaching, together with leadership and management which has concentrated on improving standards since the last inspection have moved the school to a position where its overall effectiveness is broadly typical of secondary schools. Although standards attained in 1999 were below the national average in comparison with all schools, they were above the average for similar schools. The standard of work seen during the inspection indicate that the majority of subjects have improved so that standards are broadly in line with national expectations. The school is an orderly community with a distinctive and welcoming ethos in which pupils and staff are committed to shared values and aims. The leadership and management of the school, including that of the governors, have moved the school forward well, although some of the key issues from the previous inspection are yet to be fully met. The vision for the future is potentially powerful and will be achieved with the continuing development of teaching and learning. Costs per pupil are average and pupils make appropriate progress whilst at Hollingworth. The school, therefore, gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has made significant improvements in GCSE examination results.
- Teaching is good. Basic skills are generally taught effectively and lessons are managed well.
- Effective monitoring and analysis of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Most pupils have a positive attitude to school and their learning. Behaviour is very good.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.

What could be improved

- Clarity about the role and expectations of middle managers.
- Teaching which enables pupils to know what to learn and how to improve.
- Attainment and progress of pupils during Years 7 and 8.
- Spiritual development and the multicultural aspect of cultural development.
- Statutory requirement for Religious Education (RE) in Key Stage 4.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Attainment has improved continuously since the last inspection in 1994 to the extent that the proportion of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes, or GNVQ equivalent, at both grades A*-C and A*-G is now close to the national average. The overall quality of teaching has also improved together with parents' confidence.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Of the eight key issues identified in the previous inspection, satisfactory progress has been made in five with three still remaining to be fully completed. Attendance is now at national expectations, although the resolve of the school and parents needs to be sustained, especially with regard to Years 10 and 11. Good management has led to improvements in the learning process, the pastoral system and the corporate ethos. The pupil:teacher ratio has improved together with classroom and technician support. "Flexi-time" has altered and the modified arrangements are working effectively. They are having a positive impact on standards. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved. The fabric of the building has greatly improved with, most recently, the addition of a learning resource centre and a sports hall. The requirement to extend the range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities has yet to be implemented across all departments. Despite some development of middle managers, there is still room for improvement. The statutory requirements are yet to be fully met for religious education in Key Stage 4 and collective worship. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
End of Key Stage 3 tests	C	D	D	B	well above average A Above average B average C Below average D Well below average E
GCSE examinations	C	D	D	B	

Standards in Key Stages 3 and 4 are below national average, however the results for both key stages compare well with those of similar schools. Key Stage 3 results in science are in line with national expectations. In mathematics they are below average, although the results for 2000 have improved and are likely to be in line with national expectations. The English results are below average. The results for English, mathematics and science over the past three years have been improving in line with national trends. The rate of improvement in GCSE results over the past six years is below the national trend, nevertheless GCSE results have improved significantly over recent years and the proportions of pupils achieving A*-C and A*-G are now close to the national average. In 1999, the school achieved its A*-C target of 43% and its A*-G target of 95%. Inspection evidence during the week found Key Stage 4 standards to be good in art, drama, modern foreign languages and geography. Standards of work in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Standards are improving in all subjects although they are below national expectations in design and technology and music, English in Key Stage 3 and religious education in Key Stage 4. Pupils make appropriate progress across both key stages although the rate of work in Years 7 and 8 is slower and does not move pupils forward fast enough. In Key Stage 4 the needs of higher attaining pupils are yet to be fully met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils are keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils behave well in and outside lessons. The number of pupils permanently excluded is very low.
Personal development and relationships	Good: pupils relate well to each other, they identify with the school and take personal responsibility for each other's wellbeing.
Attendance	Satisfactory: attendance is at national average. Pupils are generally punctual to school and to lessons.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour encourage and support their learning. This is a strength of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching at Hollingworth is good with evidence of good teaching in all curriculum areas. It was good or better in 63% of lessons of which 18% was very good. In only a few lessons was teaching unsatisfactory. Teaching in mathematics is good in both key stages. In English, teaching is satisfactory and often good being generally better in Key Stage 4. Teaching is satisfactory in science, often good and sometimes very good. History teaching is a strength of the school. Pupils identified as having particular special educational needs are well supported so they make good progress. However, the needs of pupils of different abilities are yet to be fully met. The good subject knowledge that teachers display, the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and the high standards of behaviour they demand result in pupils working productively and making good progress in their lessons. Teachers' expectations, the level of challenge they set, teaching methods they select and the use of time and assessment, are relatively less well developed so pupils do not always think or learn for themselves or know how they can improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the curriculum motivates all pupils to learn and achieve.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: excellent relationships are established with pupils. Staff have very good expertise and pupils make satisfactory progress overall.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory: the small number of pupils involved receive appropriate support from staff to enable them to access the full curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory: the provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, although the multicultural dimension is underdeveloped. Provision for spiritual development continues to be limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: pupils are well known to staff. Systems to monitor academic and personal development are well organised and promoted. The monitoring of pupils' behaviour is very good. The school is a safe environment, but responsibility for and monitoring of health and safety lacks clarity.

The curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular activities. Work experience and careers education and guidance are well organised and effective. However, there is insufficient coordination of the personal and social education provision and its delivery is inconsistent. The requirements for religious education in Key Stage 4 are not met fully. Information and communication technology developments across the curriculum have begun but further development is needed for it to help pupils with their learning across all subjects. There is insufficient time for physical education in Key Stage 3, which limits opportunities for learning and has a negative influence on standards. The carousel arrangement for design and technology in Years 7 and 8 is an improvement on previous practice but nevertheless, the present arrangements need further examination. Links with parents are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the leadership and direction of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are particularly good. They are supported by an effective senior team. The leadership and management of departments is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good: the governors are well organised and have worked hard to secure the success of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: there is effective analysis of assessment and attendance data. The school has begun to monitor and evaluate teaching and plans are in place for this to develop further.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: the budget is planned over a number of years. It is targeted and managed very carefully with spending closely monitored. There are very good arrangements for financial control and the principles of best value are applied very well.

The headteacher and senior managers with governors have created and secured a

commitment to improvement for the school which is shared by staff. The headteacher has been very successful in securing additional resources which have been well used. The school is very well regarded by pupils and parents. Most subjects are well managed, with particular strengths in history and art, although there is a need to define more clearly the role and responsibilities of subject managers and the expectations of them.

The school has sufficient, suitably well-qualified staff to teach the curriculum and an effective team of support staff. The accommodation has improved greatly since the last inspection. The building is clean and is maintained well. Resources for learning are appropriate for the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are improving • Teachers know their pupils well, they care and support them with considerable commitment. • Pupils' attitudes and values are generally good, school is a place where learning comes first. • The improvements in accommodation • Induction of Year 7 pupils into routines of the school • The school prepares pupils well for continuing education and working life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistency with which homework is set. • The range of activities outside lessons. • Working more closely with parents

The inspection team agrees with the matters that please parents. The arrangements for homework are appropriate with the demands on pupils increasing as they progress through the school. Homework is well monitored by tutors with parents confirming that work is completed although there is no overall management of the amount of homework given at any one time. Extra-curricular activities are good in sports and music, there is good provision at lunch time to extend the range of curriculum opportunities. However, the inspection team agrees the range of clubs and societies could be improved. Tutors provide a good link with parents and generally the more substantial concerns of parents are responded to well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Overall, the Key Stage 3 results in 1999 were below the national average although the results compare well with those of similar schools. The results for science are the strongest of the core subjects, they are in line with national averages and well above the average for similar schools. The results for mathematics and English are below the national average although they are above and in line respectively with similar schools. Taking the three core subjects together, over the three years from 1996 to 1999, pupils at Hollingworth are making the equivalent of one term less progress than expected. Girls performed better than boys in 1999, but the pattern of attainment for boys and girls varied in previous years. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum point scores for all core subjects is broadly in line with national trends. Standards in Key Stage 3 in 1999 are at appropriate levels in history, art, modern foreign languages and religious education (RE). Pupils do not do as well in design and technology (D&T), geography, music and physical education (PE) and standards are well below in information technology (ICT).

2 Overall, the Key Stage 4 results in 1999 were close to the national average in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE A*-C and A*-G grades or GNVQ equivalent. These results are above average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining 5 or more GCSE passes at A*-C has improved by 14% since the last inspection, despite girls not doing as well as boys over the past few years. The average total GCSE/GNVQ point score per pupil over the past five years was below the national trend.

3 Standards in English have improved since the previous inspection with a steady increase in the percentage of pupils achieving grade C or above in GCSE. GCSE results in both English and English Literature are close to the national average. The proportion of pupils entered for English Literature is above average. There has been a significant increase in the results of boys. Progress in Key Stage 3 is less consistent reflecting the lower priority given to this age range. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils who achieved grades A*-C matched the national average. Very few pupils achieved the highest grades but a larger than average proportion achieved a grade in the range A*-G. Boys' attainments are significantly better than those of the girls, contrary to the national trend. The results over recent years have improved steadily. Science results have shown steady improvement and are around the national average although few pupils achieve the highest grades.

4 Standards in Key Stage 4 in art are significantly above the national average and are also above the national average in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. Standards achieved in history are in line with national averages. Standards achieved in design and technology, geography, music, modern foreign languages and religious education are below the national average.

5 The school has set targets for GCSE results for the past four years. Governors are actively involved using clear analysis of assessment information. In 1999 the school achieved its five or more A*-C target of 43% and its five or more A*-G target of 95%. The average points score per pupil target was 37. The school achieved 33. The provisional results for 2000 indicate that the school achieved the targets set. The targets for current pupils are sufficiently challenging given their lower than average starting point on entry to the school. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school currently is now average and it will be important for the school to increase the challenge of targets for both key stages to reflect this changing pattern of ability.

6 Observations of lessons and pupils' work during the inspection show that standards being achieved in Key Stages 3 and 4 are in general either being sustained or are improving from 1999 results. The overall quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, particularly in terms of the teaching of basic skills and the successful management of behaviour which has improved relationships and learning. Standards are now near to national expectations and the school is well placed to move forward to higher standards through the further development of teaching.

7 In English standards in Key Stage 3 are still unsatisfactory with the higher-attaining pupils sometimes under-challenged. In Key Stage 4 standards observed are at the national average with the lower-attaining pupils making good progress. In mathematics in Key Stage 3, two thirds of pupils are at or a little above the expected minimum level. The results for 2000 indicate that the attainment of boys has increased significantly and girls did equally well. This has been achieved by changing the scheme of work and methods of teaching. In Key Stage 4, standards continue to be in line with national expectations. To improve further, more attention needs to be given to developing investigative activities. The standards in lessons for science are at the nationally expected level in both key stages. However, higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 are not as secure or confident in their knowledge as expected. In design and technology standards continue to be below average, but are rising. This represents good progress as pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are well below average. Standards in geography, information technology and modern foreign languages have improved and are now satisfactory or better. Art continues to be a strength of the school with high standards achieved. The standards achieved in history have been sustained. Standards observed in music continue to be below national expectations, but are improving especially in Key Stage 4. Standards in religious education are at the national average in Key Stage 3, but continue to be unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 due to inadequate provision. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily as a result of appropriate teaching and the good relationships established. Pupils who are gifted and talented make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in some areas such as sport and mathematics because of effective teaching which provides good demonstration techniques leading to the increasing acquisition of knowledge and skills. The school has yet to establish a coherent approach for these pupils.

8 On entry, many pupils struggle with aspects of basic literacy, especially writing. However, the school has introduced a number of initiatives to raise standards and these are beginning to have a positive impact. Most pupils listen carefully to teachers and respond appropriately to their questions. They speak confidently and well, although there are too few opportunities to speak at length, except in subjects like drama. Pupils enjoy writing but their work sometimes lacks technical accuracy. They find it easier to write in predominantly narrative forms and this sometimes holds back their work in subjects across the curriculum. There are limited opportunities for pupils to write at length or for a range of purposes across the curriculum. Pupils mostly read aloud well with fair understanding and the higher-attaining pupils read with good expression.

9 The overall standard of numeracy is good enough to support the learning required in mathematics and other subjects. Little information technology within subjects was seen during the inspection but pupils' earlier work and teachers' planning indicates some effective uses in modern foreign languages, design and technology, geography, science and GNVQ leisure and tourism. However, progress is being limited by difficulties accessing computers.

10 Pupils make appropriate progress across both key stages in relation to their attainment on entry. This is a considerable achievement given that pupils at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 in 1999 were below average on entry when they entered the school in Year 7. Despite the rate of progress of pupils within Key Stage 3 being satisfactory overall, the

rate of progress in Years 7 and 8 is slower and does not move pupils forward fast enough due to lack of continuity from Year 6 to 7. The needs of higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 are yet to be fully met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 This area is a strength of the school. Pupils' attitudes to the school are positive. Good teaching encourages high standards of behaviour, work and learning. The pupils are generally interested in doing their best. Extra-curricular activities, particularly at lunchtimes, in music and sport are well supported and have a positive impact on attitudes and attainment.

12 Pupils' arrival, departure and movement around the school is orderly and very good. Effective teaching methods have led to good behaviour in lessons, with pupils following expected codes of behaviour. The strong pastoral system emphasising positive features has led to an ordered, disciplined community. Exclusions are low.

13 Relationships throughout the school are good and this helps to ensure that the atmosphere is friendly and positive where pupils respect each others feelings, values and beliefs. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility as prefects or library monitors for example, and to contribute to Year Councils and the School Council.

14 The average attendance rate is improving. For the 1999/2000 school year it was 91.2%, which is better than the national average for this type of school. Nevertheless, the resolve of the school and parents needs to be sustained, especially with regard to Years 10 and 11 where attendance is either at or below the expected levels. Unauthorised absence for the 1999/2000 school year is in line with the national average. Pupils' punctuality throughout the day is good, except when lessons immediately follow one another with no break.

15 Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes and they have very good relationships with staff. They are fully integrated in the life of the school. In the classroom they are enthusiastic and responsible learners. It is clear that they enjoy school and this leads to increasing confidence as they get older.

16 Pupils' attitudes to the school, the positive ethos, increasing attendance level and very good behaviour have a positive effect on their attainment and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17 The overall quality of teaching at the school is good with no significant differences between the two key stages. In Key Stage 3, 97% of teaching is satisfactory or better and in 63% of lessons it is good or better. A similar picture emerges in Key Stage 4, where 98% is satisfactory or better and in 65% of lessons it is good or better. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

18 Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved significantly, reflecting some of the changes taking place at the school. The main improvements have been in Key Stage 4 which is considerably better than in the previous inspection and the increased amount of good and very good teaching in both key stages. Despite these improvements only a very small amount of teaching is excellent.

19 The school has undertaken a self-evaluation course to improve further on the quality of teaching. This approach is not being used consistently to improve practice. As a result it is yet to impact fully on teaching. It is now the school's task to use self-evaluation and

performance management to improve the percentage of very good and excellent teaching.

20 Overall teaching is very good in history and good in mathematics, D&T, ICT, art, PE and geography in both key stages. In English, science, modern foreign languages, RE and music the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is spread across several departments.

21 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is always at least satisfactory. Teaching of discrete groups of pupils with special educational needs is good. Where support is available, it is effectively used to meet the needs of the pupils as identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).

22 Teachers have good and often very good command of their subject. In many subjects, teachers share this with the pupils and give effective demonstrations of skills and techniques. For example in PE clear teaching points and demonstrations help pupils to improve their performance. In science, the teachers give accurate explanations and use appropriate scientific language. Science teachers are knowledgeable about examination requirements and this is used to good effect to sharpen pupils' test performances.

23 In virtually all lessons, teachers manage pupils very successfully so that pupils develop positive attitudes to work. Relationships are good and teachers know their pupils well. Teachers expect good behaviour and high standards and this means most pupils readily involve themselves in lessons, work at the pace set by the teacher and approach the work with a high degree of confidence. In mathematics lessons pupils have the assurance to provide an alternative approach to that being developed by the teacher. Year 7 pupils in history are able to engage in a quick question and answer session based on a search for evidence. This group of pupils, very new to the school, are able to work at a good pace and all feel able to contribute.

24 In some subjects, teachers use time and resources well. This results in well-paced lessons with timely interventions by the teacher to improve knowledge and develop understanding. In science, this approach is illustrated by the sharp responses required for questions and time-limited tasks, challenging pupils do their best. However, approaches like these are not consistent across all subjects and some areas, mathematics and D&T in particular, would benefit from the use of timed targets to increase the challenge to pupils.

25 Lesson planning is satisfactory across most subjects. Generally these plans include a variety of teaching methods, a balance of activities and effective linkage between the tasks. Teachers often use effective questioning techniques to establish pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. In PE the planning is evident when explanation and demonstration quickly lead into activity and in geography, staff provide clear directions based on the objectives of the lesson. Similarly, in art lessons, the pupils understand the learning intentions and so make good progress.

26 Whilst the majority of teaching is satisfactory or better, sometimes important weaknesses impede pupils' learning. The most important of these is the lack of clarity about what has to be learned. In too many lessons pupils are told what they are going to do rather than what they are to learn. This situation is compounded by the absence of a reminder towards the end of the lesson when learning can be reviewed and the next steps identified. As a result, pupils and teachers focus on completing activities rather than improving skills or increasing understanding. This often restricts the range of activities going on and can lead to over-direction by the teacher. Also, higher-attaining pupils in some subjects do not have enough opportunity to engage in independent research or group work, to extend their thinking. The lack of focus on learning activities means that there is inconsistency in provision for pupils of different abilities. At times this results in a mismatch in the pupils'

ability and the level of challenge of a task, for example, in English, mathematics and science.

27 The other significant area of weakness concerns one aspect of assessment. In most classrooms teachers spend time checking understanding, either individually or as a class through question and answer strategies. However, marking of work is inconsistent and, as a result, is unhelpful to the pupils. It largely consists of encouraging comments with grades for effort. Comments are insufficiently focused on how well pupils have achieved and what they have to do next, to improve. This is particularly prevalent in Key Stage 3 where the pupils' knowledge about the relative quality of their work is restricted by unsatisfactory information.

28 Homework is set regularly and is used to consolidate or extend learning in a number of subjects, especially in Key Stage 4. For example, in art, using a personal sketch book for homework informs and underpins preparation and research and is integral to the development of pupils' ideas. In other areas, homework patterns are more irregular because they involve completing tasks not finished in classroom. This arrangement, together with the absence of a homework timetable in certain years inhibits progress and learning.

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

29 The school has a clear statement of curriculum policy within its prospectus and is striving to meet with the aims it has set itself. The quality and range of the curriculum in both key stages is good and this represents good progress since the last inspection. The curriculum is structured creatively to encourage all pupils to progress successfully towards suitable post-16 opportunities. This is largely successful. Pupils' development of higher-order learning skills, for example, independent learning, investigations, paired and group work is not consistently applied throughout the curriculum. However, there are some good examples of such learning opportunities in science, history, D&T, music and PE.

30 The curriculum for Key Stage 3 provides a broad range of worthwhile activities. Requirements for teaching the National Curriculum and RE according to the locally agreed syllabus are met. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is extended by a discrete literacy element in Year 7 and drama in Year 8. Further reading development for Year 7 successfully takes place in two form periods each week. Aspects of personal and social education (PSE) are provided for in a range of well-planned and appropriate activities taking place within the form period time twice weekly. Some careers education and guidance (CEG) is appropriately and effectively placed within the PSE programme with support for some decision making elements and personal development occurring in RE. All pupils experience both French and German in Year 7 and then select one or other of them to pursue in Years 8 and 9. Additionally a number of higher-attaining Year 9 pupils have a period of modern foreign language extension work after school on two days each week to prepare them for the possibility of the selection of two languages in Key Stage 4. ICT development is only partly covered by discrete teaching time. The strategy that some elements of ICT should be taught in subjects across the curriculum is unsuccessful because planning is inconsistent because of difficulties of access to hardware and software.

31 The Key Stage 4 curriculum is also broad, balanced and relevant and is given more time on two days a week over and above that available for the great majority of Key Stage 3 pupils. Requirements for teaching the National Curriculum are met but those for the teaching of RE fall some way short of meeting the locally agreed syllabus.

32 The creative system of using an additional period for Key Stage 4 at the end of the day on Mondays and Tuesdays is both an effective and efficient way of providing for pupils' different needs based on their levels of prior attainment and their perceived academic potential. For many pupils this provides an enrichment to their curriculum through an additional GCSE course. Many average or lower prior attainers are guided into extension time where they can either reinforce or develop work in subjects they already study in their chosen options or follow one of the non GCSE courses in first aid or a youth award scheme. A group of lower prior attaining pupils have additional learning support in key skills at this time when they are not following the combined science option. These pupils are entered for a reduced number of GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. Through the options scheme and post-school time the curriculum is extended to include business studies, child development, dance, drama, ICT media studies, sociology, Spanish, statistics and a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in leisure and tourism.

33 The provision for the development of ICT skills within subjects across the curriculum for all pupils is unsatisfactory for the same reasons as in Key Stage 3. Many pupils extend their English studies through taking the literature course and examination. Over ninety five percent of pupils in Years 10 and 11 obtained their first choices in their options at the end of Year 9. With the exception of the top four mathematics sets in Year 10 all pupils in Key Stage 4 have a period of PSRE each week, when an identified team of teachers deliver a range of topics related to personal and social development including health, sex and drug education. The provision for sex and drug education is satisfactory. The pupils in the top four mathematics sets take a GCSE short course in RE. Within form period time in Key Stage 4 pupils engage effectively in careers education and guidance related to work experience, taken in the autumn term of Year 11 and preparation for external examinations through the application of study skills. They also receive sound support and information relating to them moving on to post- 16 opportunities on leaving Hollingworth and compile their records of achievement. The school still does not comply fully with requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

34 Timetable arrangements are on a weekly basis with the Key Stage 3 curriculum time of 23 hours and 20 minutes, being below the recommended time of 24 hours. However, the Key Stage 4 curriculum time exceeds the nationally recommended time. At the time of the last inspection the amount of time given to PE in Key Stage 3 was judged to be insufficient and to be impacting negatively on standards and this is still the case. The carousel arrangement for design and technology in Years 7 and 8 did, at the time of the last inspection, exist throughout Key Stage 3 and whilst the present arrangements are better suited to more effective progression and continuity they are not good enough. Banding arrangements take place within mathematics in Years 7 and pupils are also set within bands in Year 8. In Year 9 banding and setting arrangements take place in all three core subjects with the consequence that the groups of lower-attaining pupils receive additional learning support through the relative group sizes being smaller. Conversely the groups with higher-attaining pupils are by comparison very large. This arrangement prevails through to the end of Key Stage 4. These arrangements are successful where teaching takes account of the different abilities of pupils within classes.

35 The school offers good provision for pupils requiring learning support. Within the early years of their stay at the school the provision is focused on a mixture of withdrawal and support. Both are effective processes and aid progress. Through its creative curriculum structure, pupils with low levels of prior attainment can be guided and supported to take a smaller range of courses to GCSE, GNVQ and or non examination level work. Homework support is available after school in Year 7 as it is also in Years 10 and 11. A range of strategies are available within the curriculum, within extension time and in PSE to further support low prior attaining pupils towards the successful conclusion of their statutory

education and movement on to the next stage, be it education, training or employment.

36 Satisfactory arrangements are in place to support the teaching of literacy skills. The development of pupils' literacy skills has been a school priority in recent years. A policy is in place and makes clear the school's intention to build on the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in place at primary school level. Within the literacy period in Year 7, PSE lessons and in English and humanities subjects, a planned approach to literacy development is having a positive effect on standards. Across other curriculum areas there is evidence of key technical words being made explicit so pupils learn them. For example, in art key works are identified in each unit, displayed on the walls and presented with visual images that explain their meaning.

37 Satisfactory arrangements are in place to support the teaching of numeracy skills. Mathematics teachers are tackling with enthusiasm the national initiative to extend the primary numeracy strategy into secondary schools. A well-coordinated approach, with detailed methods of tracking pupils' progress, is already established for those in Year 7. Frequent tests of pupils' knowledge of basic number facts and the development of methods of mental calculation are included in lessons for each year group.

38 The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities in addition to a number of non-examination activities within the timetable at the end of the school day on Mondays and Tuesdays. At lunchtimes, a number of departments offer additional opportunities for pupils to "drop in". A wide range of both musical and sporting activities take place both at lunch time and after school although access to activities linked to hobbies is more limited. Pupils also have the opportunity of music tuition given by visiting teachers and on occasions leave form tutor time to take this up. Each year, residential opportunities are given to all Year 7 so that they experience an educational outdoor experience. Pupils talk excitedly about the experience and how it has contributed to their overall confidence and progress at school. Other trips include physical education visits to the French Alps for winter sports activities and day and exchange trips to France and Germany run by the modern foreign languages department. Many pupils speak well of these experiences as do parents. There is no overt school policy regarding the place of trips and visits within curriculum provision and in geography and history there is evidence to suggest that the lack of provision for pupils to engage in out-of-school experiences has a negative effect upon attainment and progress. Successful music and drama performances take place frequently and contribute positively to the school's wider community.

39 A comprehensive programme of personal and social education is well planned for and is delivered through the twice-weekly form PSE period for the whole school supplemented by the PSRE period which the greater majority of Key Stage 4 pupils receive. The respective heads of year have oversight of the form period and work hard and often effectively to ensure that pupils receive a consistent and coherent programme. Despite the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision through the use of evaluation sheets and scrutiny of pupils' planners there is an inconsistency of delivery by form tutors. This results in the rate of learning varying too much. Year teams are most successful when they work together to agree teaching and learning strategies. The timetable time in Key Stage 4 is generally used effectively. However, the RE content and delivery within the PSRE does not meet with the agreed syllabus. Those pupils who take a short course in religious education GCSE instead of the PSRE are denied important aspects of PSE which are relevant to their personal, social and developmental needs. The school is addressing the need for developing a citizenship aspect appropriately and is on course for it to be part of its curriculum in 2001. Careers education and guidance and its core elements related to decision making and knowing oneself are often disjointed from the main PSE provision. It is evident that the overall provision for pupils' social and personal development lacks

coherence in its delivery and management.

40 A strong feature of the school is its provision for pupils to experience moral and social development opportunities. The school generates a strong sense of positive values and attitudes and a sense of fairness and respect for people and property. Thus the school is graffiti free although accumulations of litter is a continuous issue. Pupils understand and appreciate the school's clear rationale for rewards and sanctions. Good working relationships are apparent both within and outside classrooms and pupils of different ethnicity, ability and gender work effectively together. Where there are opportunities to develop responsibility as prefects, as members of school council or when working in pairs or groups or on independent study in a number of subject areas pupils show very good social skills. The PSE programme is particularly positive in its contribution to these aspects of school life as are year assemblies.

41 As at the time of the last inspection, the planned opportunities for spiritual development are underdeveloped. This aspect is however a strength in religious education where work on world religions are a positive feature within the curriculum. However, overall provision for spiritual development throughout the school continues to be unsatisfactory. Aspects of cultural development are successfully provided for in history, design and technology, geography and in art. The development of pupils' own cultural traditions is satisfactory, but their knowledge and experience of other cultural traditions is less well developed although there are good examples of practice, for example, in history where pupils study 20th Century India.

42 Careers education and guidance is good because the partnership between the careers' teacher and the local careers office is a productive one. As a consequence the school's pupils are supported effectively throughout their decision making related to option choices, work experience and post-16 opportunities. Pupils value the support the careers teacher, form tutors and the careers officer give. Pupils have access to a good careers library and CD-ROM facilities in the learning resource area. The work experience for Year 11 is well planned and form tutors are enabled to support pupils well through the discussions and questions highlighted in the supportive pupil planners. Visits by staff from the range of post-16 colleges enable pupils to be generally well informed about the range of post-16 vocational and academic courses on offer. Already a number of pupils in Year 10 and 11 are linked into the local sixth form college via the internet for enrichment support in chemistry, mathematics and modern foreign languages. The provision for work-related learning is at present underdeveloped. There has been some extended work experience for a number of lower-attaining pupils in previous years but there is none at present.

43 The school has good liaison arrangements with its main contributory primary schools on pastoral and general transfer issues. All potential eleven-year old pupils visit the school for a day in October prior to entry. This is a positive and helpful experience valued by the pupils and acknowledged as such by many parents. However, because there is less liaison about specific subjects and what has been taught and learned, teachers do not have enough specific knowledge about what pupils know and understand and are therefore not well placed to plan work which continues to help pupils make progress.

44 The curriculum generally caters for all pupils providing many learning opportunities. It has a range of strategies in place to ensure this is so. However, the school has no arrangements for monitoring the relative performances in attainment and progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds but does so, for gender and ability. The practice should be developed in order to review and evaluate how the school manages the learning for the range of different groups and as to how it might improve its working methods for them. Most young people are enabled to move on successfully to opportunities for adult development on leaving.

45 Since the last inspection the key issue relating to the additional curriculum time for Years 10 and 11 twice a week has been dealt with effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46 Teachers at the school know their pupils well, individually and are aware of their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. Relationships that have been established between staff and pupils are good. Strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviour such as bullying have developed well. As a result pupils feel that they work in a safe and secure environment. Attendance is closely monitored by the school, and the education welfare officer follows up persistent absentees. Parents have supported the school in improving attendance, with the help of clear guidance from the school. There is a reward system for good attendance. The school has strict control on the authorisation of absence. Attendance procedures meet statutory requirements with registers completed at the start of morning and afternoon sessions. Attendance is recorded and checked at the start of every lesson, a total of six times a day, which eliminates internal truancy. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

47 Systems for encouraging and rewarding good behaviour are very good. In recent years the school has developed a structure, involving year heads and progress co-ordinators, that effectively promotes positive attitudes to school. Examples of the strategies which contribute well to this are the league tables, the merit book and the involvement of parents. These systems are kept under informal review and are frequently modified to ensure improvement. The league table process was altered to provide motivation for both boys and girls and letters home have been rewritten to give parents even more information. Excellent performance is rewarded through green slips, awards, certificates and through recognition in assemblies.

48 Support for pupils as they transfer to Hollingworth is efficient. The arrangements include visits to the primary school by the head of year and Year 6 pupils are invited to the secondary school to take part in lessons. This induction system is reinforced by the fact that the Year 7 team of tutors remains constant. As a result they have built up considerable expertise in handling transfer issues. Liaison is particularly effective for SEN pupils, but pupils too frequently repeat work already covered in the primary school and this hinders progress in the early years of Key Stage 3.

49 The school cares well for the pupils who are on the Code of Practice register for special educational needs. Their needs are clearly identified and recorded on their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Helpful information concerning test results, reading ages and suggested learning strategies is given to staff by the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Provision for the pupils is well matched to the needs identified in the pupils' statements. The school makes effective use of external support to ensure pupils receive appropriate teaching. At times, however, changes at LEA level have made accessing expertise difficult. Whilst the IEPs are comprehensive, including many essential details, their targets lack focus. They are too general and frequently refer to what the teacher is doing, not what the pupils should learn or develop. As a result effective monitoring of progress is hampered.

50 The school's systems for guiding and assessing pupils' progress and attainment are satisfactory. Pupils and parents receive a report each year detailing attainment. In Key Stage 4, predictions are given to indicate pupils' likely success in GCSE examinations. In addition, the Year 10 and 11 pupils are interviewed on at least three occasions. These interviews are based on their personal development and academic record. The interviews

help to provide continuing support in the months approaching the examinations. Reports in Key Stage 3 are changing to include information about key skills and subject details about National Curriculum levels. This is a welcome development as the current reports in Key Stage 3, lack the specific detail to be effective.

51 A member of the senior management team coordinates the collation and analysis of all performance data. These are fed appropriately to all heads of department, heads of year and progress coordinators and they help to identify issues about pupils' performance and departmental provision. Ambitious examination performance targets are agreed with staff and more latterly with governors, who have an effective overview of the process. This structured approach is good and has contributed to raising of standards.

52 The ongoing information provided to pupils about the levels they are achieving and the progress they are making is inconsistent. In lessons pupils are only occasionally told what they are going to learn and follow-up to review learning at the end of the lesson, is also intermittent therefore pupils learning is not maximised. Marking in books, whilst encouraging, rarely indicates next steps or gives information to illustrate the standard at which the pupil is working.

53 The daily planner and the personal organiser are well used by the pupils. Details of homework and other school-related matters are recorded appropriately by the pupils. They make an effective contribution to the pupils' personal development.

54 Effective procedures are in place for supporting pupils' educational and vocational guidance at the ends of both key stages. In Year 9 there is an options evenings which helps the pupils to identify which courses they should pursue. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to follow a more limited range of subjects. A range of work-related opportunities is available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 to assist in career planning.

55 Although the overall percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is low, the spread varies across all years. In the current Year 7, 19% of pupils are from ethnic minorities. At present these pupils do not require support for learning English as an additional language (EAL). Nevertheless, the school does not have a secure line management structure for EAL provision. This means that the needs of ethnic minority pupils are not formally monitored through the school's management structure.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56 Parents are positive about the school and attendance at parent meetings is good. Parents confirmed that their children like school and make good progress. They find behaviour and teaching good and are pleased that the school expects pupils to work hard to achieve their best. Parents feel that the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible and are comfortable about approaching school with questions or problems. Some parents do not think that the school works closely enough with parents, though the school has held several meetings including a presentation of the strategic vision for the school.

57 Annual reports to parents are not of a consistently high standard and often do not give enough clarity for parents about how well pupils achieve and make progress. However, improvements have been made to Year 7 reports and further improvements are planned. Target-setting interviews for Year 10 and 11 pupils are increasingly attended by parents. These are valued by parents and enable them to have a good insight into the challenges

and opportunities facing their sons and daughters.

58 The reputation of the school with parents and in the local community has improved significantly over the past few years so it is increasingly popular. Communication with parents could be still further improved but the overall partnership with parents is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59 The headteacher and governing body have, over the past six years, sustained a period of continuous improvement. They have moved the school forward from a position where standards were unsatisfactory to a secure position, where standards are moving to be in line with national expectations or better. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have very successfully analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have made timely interventions to bring about improvements in standards and key aspects of the school such as teaching, pastoral care and accommodation.

60 In January 1999 the school reviewed its progress and set a new and ambitious strategic intent for the next ten years. This builds on the good foundations established over the past years. The strategic intent was incorporated into the school development plan for 1999-2002.

61 The school aims are clear and well-structured and came about with the active involvement of pupils. They emphasise good relationships and equality of opportunity, and are well reflected in the life of the school. A recent review involving staff, pupils and parents led to the addition of a section on the contribution to be made by parents and pupils. This additional section is valued by pupils and parents as it ensures expectations are clear. There is a policy which gives a rationale for the curriculum, although, there is no statement indicating how the school will ensure the aims for pupils are fulfilled nor a short, memorable phrase which captures the aims.

62 The organisation of the senior management of the school is changing in order to respond to national initiatives, in particular, the introduction of performance management. Last year, the senior management team comprised the head and deputy headteacher together with four senior teachers. The curriculum was managed by five Curriculum Area Managers (CAMs) together with heads of subject. The CAMs met together as well as meeting on an individual basis with their curriculum team together with linked heads of subjects. A new structure is to be established for January 2001 which provides for a Leadership Team comprising the head, deputy headteacher, together with four assistant headteachers. All members of the Leadership Team will have responsibility for specific aspects of the school together with line responsibility for subject areas.

63 The headteacher, senior managers and governors have created and secured a commitment to improving the school. Change has been managed through enabling individuals and teams to develop their talents and skills together with more resources directly linked to the needs of pupils. The headteacher has been very successful in securing additional resources for the school and, with senior managers, has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has been achieved by detailed analysis of assessment information and, more recently, through classroom observation of teaching, together with close links with individual departments and concentration on appropriate improvement targets. Priority has been given to improving results for 16-year-old pupils. Staff have demonstrated a determination to raise standards for this age group. However, expectations are not yet high enough for pupils in Years 7 and 8. This is an area of need the school is beginning to tackle.

64 Heads of department have generally been successful in bringing about improvement in standards and teaching. Overall the management and leadership of subjects of the curriculum is good with some examples of very effective practice in history and art. There has been considerable delegation of responsibility, which is supported by an effective development planning process, which is reviewed on an annual basis. On occasions communication fails to reinforce matters which have been consulted about and decisions which have been reached. Consequently, the 'big picture' becomes unclear and the school priorities and long term thinking are not sustained. Job descriptions for middle managers do not have sufficient definition, for example, the core purpose and key areas of leadership are not described effectively.

65 The school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides caring, committed and highly effective leadership. Good liaison occurs between the SENCO, the members of middle and senior-management teams and external agencies. Support and leadership for those staff involved in special needs provision is well established. However, the team's effectiveness is hindered by the limited time available. The team is small and its flexibility constrained by the amount of part-time support available. This was commented on in the previous inspection. Similarly, the limited accommodation was noted in the last inspection report and this still remains as an issue. It is well used and efficiently resourced, but is too cramped to support learning effectively.

66 The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities successfully and provides very good direction to ensure improvement. The governors are very well organised and have worked hard to secure the success of the school. They contribute extensively to full and committee meetings and the appointment of new staff. Through the provision of regular reports from the headteacher, the analysis of assessment data together with first-hand experience gained by individual links with departments and aspects of the school, governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the challenges it faces. With the headteacher, the governors work well to support the strategic priorities for improvement. Governors have made effective use of examination results to review progress and to set statutory targets for Key Stage 4. However, lack of clarity about other expected benefits for pupils and the absence of quality criteria, for example in respect of teaching, limit the capacity of the governors to evaluate the impact of improvement.

67 The school has used the analysis of assessment data to work with departments to rectify weaknesses in standards and undertake improvement strategies which, over time, have had a positive impact on attainment and progress of pupils. A thorough procedure has been devised for the analysis of assessment information for results in Key Stages 3 and 4. This is complemented by departments providing assessment information linked to the regular review of pupils' work. Results at the end of the year together with progress throughout the key stage are used together with an analysis of the performance of boys and girls. The school has also invested in standardised tests and computer analysis, to assess the achievement of pupils across subjects. It also assesses performance across classes. The school makes good use of the Performance and Assessment Data (PANDA) reports and chooses to combine the free school meals table which applies to the school with the earlier table in order to provide more challenging data when analysing the school's performance. The school is beginning to make effective use of the Autumn Package, which accompanies the PANDA.

68 The headteacher and senior managers have recently undertaken classroom observation of all teachers. This has been supported by 17 teachers attending a self-evaluation course which includes using criteria to assess the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. At the beginning of the current term, all teachers took part in a training programme about classroom observation and resources are now available to release middle

managers to observe lessons. The operation of performance management will enable the further development of teaching and learning to take place.

69 A structure has been established for monitoring and evaluation, which will be developing further as the leadership team and performance management come into place during the current year. These changes provide an opportunity to consider further the relationship between the role of the leadership team and middle managers and the links with performance management and school self-evaluation. In addition, the support for and the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, will need to be made explicit rather than implicit within all aspects of the new structure.

70 The programme of support for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is very good. Staff visit the school in preparation for their new appointment and on arrival receive a discrete induction programme to the school. There are regular meetings with the coordinator of the programme and the head of department takes on the role of mentor. The additional time provided has been used very effectively. The review of progress and the observation of teaching are well done. Priorities are identified at the beginning of the year linked to each teacher's 'Career Entry Profile'. The impact of the programme is very positive. The NQTs confirmed that they had been effectively introduced into the teaching profession and that the areas identified for development had improved. The induction of staff new to the school is effective, but arrangements for the support of staff assuming new responsibilities is less structured and less effective. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training in partnership with two local institutions of higher education.

71 The school is in a period of transition regarding the arrangements for appraisal. Appropriate appraisal arrangements were in place but these have been replaced with the introduction of performance management which becomes operational in October 2000 following consultation with staff and governors. The policy makes good provision for all staff to agree and review priorities and individual performance objectives together with guidance about monitoring progress and reviewing performance including the observation of lessons. Financial resources have been set aside to support the staff development needs resulting from the implementation of performance management policy. It will be important to ensure that the performance management process makes appropriate provision for the professional development of staff linked both to individual objectives and the wider needs associated with the priorities for improvement together with current and future roles of responsibilities. Effective arrangements are in place for the governing body to appraise the head and deputy headteacher.

72 The school was recognised as an Investor in People organisation in July 1998. Whilst this national standard has enabled the school to introduce appropriate systems to support development for all staff, its full potential has yet to be realised. There is an evaluation of training activities but there is no agreed procedure to review later to see if the training undertaken leads to improvement in practice and results in long-term benefits for pupils.

73 The school has been very effective in setting and achieving improvement priorities over recent years and the school has established good strategies to do so. To continue progress, particularly in terms of raising standards, work will need to concentrate on improving further the quality of teaching and learning.

74 The school makes very good strategic use of its resources, linking its spending to its priorities. The school development plan includes a projected annual income and expenditure for a period of three years. The quality of financial management and the

acquisition of additional resources have added considerably to the quality of education provided and resulted in the raising of standards over the past few years.

75 Financial control and administration are very good. Very careful management of the budget and regular feedback about expenditure patterns to the headteacher, governors and middle managers ensures that budgets are well managed and their impact maximised. The latest auditor's report is being responded to in full by the school, with recommendations to meet each item raised. The school makes good use of new technologies to support its work. The use of the computer-based registration system has had a very positive impact on attendance to lessons and punctuality. All staff have access to the internet and an internal e-mail system and the school is beginning to use information technology across the school to analyse assessment data.

76 The school has, through a variety of entrepreneurial activities, increased the resources available to the school. Many of the resources have been used to improve the accommodation, for example, making provision for a learning resource centre and a sports hall and improving the environment in classrooms and around the school. The improvement in standards and reputation of the school has led to the school increasing in size which, in turn, has brought about an increase in teaching staff from 46 at the time of the previous inspection to the equivalent of 63 in September 2000. This expansion has enabled the school to extend its curriculum provision, which has led to a positive impact on standards.

77 The school has applied the principles of best value very well to maximise the school's use of resources. It has made very good use of benchmark tables comparing the average costs of secondary schools. When the effect of capital expenditure is taken into account, the overall expenditure is about average for secondary schools. The school has sub-contracted community education to a local college which is a good example of the challenge principle. Competition has been encouraged through competitive tendering which has secured good value for money. Consultation has taken place on major spending decisions such as the building of the sports hall.

78 The school has sufficient, suitably well-qualified and experienced staff to teach the curriculum offered. This is reflected in the improvement of teaching since the last inspection and the raising of standards. An advanced-skills teacher was appointed in September 2000 and plans are underway to use his expertise within the school. There is a good level of provision for support staff which reflects the priority given to this aspect of the school. These staff are well led and managed and provide an effective and welcoming service to the school. There is provision for an annual review and professional development for support staff, together with regular daily contact to ensure clarity about responsibilities and to resolve operational difficulties. Staff working with pupils with special educational needs are well supported and effective making a positive impact on pupils' progress.

79 The accommodation has improved very much since the last inspection. Looking to the future, aspects of the school still need attention such as the facilities for music. The building is clean and maintained well. Learning resources are generally adequate although there is a shortage of books in the learning resource centre. This limits independent study. Pupils undertake a range of residential trips. These are valued by pupils and parents, but the lack of provision for field work in geography in Key Stage 3 has a detrimental impact on standards achieved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

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 effectiveness of middle managers by:

- ensuring that the core purpose and key areas of subject leadership are defined further, communicated clearly and supported through continuing professional development and effective liaison with the leadership team (paragraphs 64, 69, 71, 110, 132, 153 and 157).

Improve the impact of teaching on learning by:

- ensuring that within all lessons the learning intentions are clear to pupils, that the methods used match the learning required and the needs of all pupils in lessons are met* (paragraphs 26, 52, 88, 96, 99, 108, 121, 149 and 162);
- enabling pupils to know more clearly how well they have done and how they can improve (paragraphs 27, 108 and 156);
- ensuring that teachers use methods which enable pupils to think and learn for themselves (paragraphs 26, 89, 100 and 108).

Improve standards of Year 7 and 8 pupils by:

- ensuring curriculum continuity from Year 6 to 7; (paragraphs 10, 63, 88 and 95);
- maximising the potential of the national literacy and numeracy strategy; (paragraphs 36, 37, 86 and 90);

Improve the spiritual and multicultural understanding and development of pupils by:

- ensuring a planned approach through lessons, the personal development of pupils and assemblies. (paragraphs 41, 90, 127 and 148).

Ensure the statutory requirements are fully met in religious education* (paragraphs 31, 39, 159 and 163).

* A continuing priority from the previous inspection

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

- Improve the curriculum coherence of personal, social and health education (PSHE), careers education and guidance and citizenship provision by drawing together the management and teaching of the different elements ensuring all pupils have access to a full programme of consistent quality. (paragraph 39);
- Acquire more books and materials for the learning resource centre to support independent learning in all subjects; (paragraphs 79 and 85);
- Improve access and use of information and communication technology to support teaching and pupils' learning across the curriculum. (paragraphs 30, 33, 106, 115, 131, 141 and 146).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	193
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	18	44	34	2	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1131	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	239	

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	29	

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	71

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	87	117	204

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	35	42	39
	Girls	84	71	61
	Total	119	113	100
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (57)	55 (56)	49 (62)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18(26)	28 (32)	19 (27)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	42	39	33
	Girls	85	72	54
	Total	127	111	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	63 (52)	54 (53)	42 (60)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (20)	29 (26)	16 (26)
	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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	1999	82	83	165

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	39	74	78
	Girls	32	75	78
	Total	71	149	156
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	43 (36.1)	90 (89.9)	95 (95.6)
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (89.8)	95.8 (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	33 (32.1)
	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	57
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	3
White	1057
Any other minority ethnic group	8

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	40	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	63
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	335

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	
Key Stage 3	26.5
Key Stage 4	20

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2922549
Total expenditure	3187358
Expenditure per pupil	3007
Balance brought forward from previous year	747982
Balance carried forward to next year	483173

These figures include capital expenditure on the sports hall

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1131
Number of questionnaires returned	453

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	52	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	45	46	4	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	48	6	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	11	3	5
The teaching is good.	42	50	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	41	8	1	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	34	4	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	28	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	48	11	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	51	41	2	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	48	3	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	42	9	2	18

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

ENGLISH

81 Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 3 are below average and at the end of Key Stage 4 are close to the national average. Although the standards of English on entry have risen to around average levels of attainment, many pupils still struggle with basic literacy when they arrive in the school and the attainment of boys on entry is considerably lower than that of girls. Nevertheless most pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 3, although standards at the end of this period are still slightly below national average. At the end of Key Stage 3, girls still perform significantly better than boys in English. Progress for all pupils, and especially boys is more marked in Key Stage 4. GCSE results in both English and English Literature for 1999 were close to the national average. Evidence from lesson observation and work scrutiny shows that lower-attaining pupils make good progress, especially in Key Stage 4, while higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 are sometimes under-challenged in English. Standards of writing are not as strong overall as reading, speaking and listening. Standards of drama in Key Stage 4 are above average and progress is good for all pupils in this subject.

82 Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils enjoy writing and are able to write confidently and at length, especially narrative pieces. Their ability to organise other kinds of text is more limited. Higher-attaining pupils are able to make good use of different types of sentences to create impact and show good control of atmosphere and tension in personal and fictional writing. Standards of spelling are average overall but better than punctuation, where sentence construction remains weak for many pupils. Handwriting and presentation are good. Most pupils write with less confidence in non-narrative forms, for example, when arguing a point of view. Few pupils within the key stage re-draft their work well or proof-read carefully enough. By the end of Year 9, pupils can write clearly about literary texts using details and references to support a point of view. They understand how successful writers employ a range of strategies to create effects and they show some ability to apply these strategies within their own writing. Most pupils read aloud fluently and with understanding, although not always with enough expression. All pupils listen carefully during lessons and respond appropriately. In discussion, pupils answer questions clearly and, when required, they can elaborate and justify their answer. Pupils work reasonably well in small groups, when instructions are clear and tasks appropriate.

83 By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils write confidently in a wider range of settings and can vary vocabulary to suit audience and purpose. They are able to write accurately and draw on different features of vocabulary and textual organisation, although quality sometimes still suffers from a lack of accurate proof-reading. Pupils understand how writers achieve different effects and higher-attaining pupils respond sensitively to a range of challenging texts, both fiction and non-fiction. For instance, they are able to compare the ways in which different writers achieve effects in difficult contemporary poetry. Higher-attaining pupils use imaginative vocabulary and varied sentences to achieve quite mature effects in narrative writing. Non-narrative writing is now well planned and coherent, presenting clear ideas and arguments. Throughout the key stage lower-attaining pupils write with enjoyment and to engage the interest of the reader, although punctuation is rarely varied for effect and vocabulary is limited. Most pupils now read confidently and are able to access information for research, using books and computers. All pupils continue to answer questions with confidence, although many rely on aspects of non-standard English both in speech and writing.

84 In drama, pupils show the ability to speak confidently and at length and to improvise fluently around difficult topics. In role play, they show that they can adopt more formal

language structures to suit the occasion. For instance, a Year 10 drama group of mixed ability improvised confidently, without preparation, on a range of situations presented by their teacher, revealing considerable maturity and sensitivity in their responses towards each other.

85 Standards have improved since the previous inspection with a steady increase in the percentage of pupils achieving grade C or above in English at GCSE. English Literature standards have also improved although the results last year were not as good as previously. The improvement of boys in Key Stage 4 has been quite marked in recent years. Progress in Key Stage 3 is less consistent. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection with a decline in the percentage of lessons rated unsatisfactory. Progress for pupils who struggle with literacy has been good and the school has a coherent strategy for raising standards across the curriculum. The previous inspection criticised the lack of a proper library. This is now much improved. A re-furnished library and resource centre was established in 1999 and this now includes a good number of computers and provides a bright and stimulating environment for pupils to access texts. The book stock is, however, inadequate, and the library remains under used during lessons. Less progress has been made against two less significant weaknesses identified in the previous report: adopting activities to the longer length of lesson and the need for closer co-operation between English and drama.

86 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good or better in around 4 in every 10 lessons. Teaching is generally more effective at Key Stage 4 where lessons are more clearly focused and the level of challenge is higher. The best lessons in Key Stage 3 are those where teachers have considered the importance of planning a range of activities and maintaining pace. These effectively incorporate features from the primary Literacy Hour and build on skills that pupils have already acquired. Most teachers are especially successful with pupils in lower sets, where behaviour and attitudes are very good. Teaching of drama in Key Stage 4 is very good.

87 All teachers form very good relationships with pupils, including those with low levels of literacy and this motivates pupils and enables them to try to develop their work without fear of failure. Teachers manage lessons well and high expectations of pupils' behaviour mean that pupils stay on task and contribute to discussions. Teachers often present their material in a lively and enthusiastic way, which inspires pupils and engages their interest, leading to valuable oral work and improved insight into what they are reading or viewing. For example, the teacher's enthusiasm for ideas in [Steinbeck's](#) novel "The Pearl", detailed knowledge of the text, enabled a below-average ability class to understand its relevance to their own lives. Teachers make frequent checks to determine whether pupils understand the work and adapt it where appropriate to ensure that pupils continue to learn. In good lessons, the teacher's subject expertise is employed to help pupils make sense of challenging material. In a Year 10 media studies lesson, the teacher was able to help pupils understand the difficult concepts of connotation and denotation in their study of the opening of the film "Frankenstein", through the use of clear explanations and references to familiar contexts within the pupils' experiences. In a Year 9 lesson on the novel "Adrian Mole", the teacher asked pupils the potentially difficult question of how the writer creates humour. The teacher's use of extracts from the book, together with good pace in the lesson, adequate time for individual work and a clear plenary session to review learning, showed how it is possible to challenge higher-attaining pupils while extending the progress of all within the class.

88 The department has the capacity to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 3, and especially in the light of positive pupil attitudes and good classroom relationships. Some lessons at present lack focus because teachers have planned them

from activities rather than from clear learning objectives. Some teachers fail to challenge higher-attaining pupils, providing activities that do not build on work they have previously covered in primary schools. Teachers do not always make the best use of the lengthy time available in lessons and consequently the pace of learning slackens and pupils' progress diminishes.

89 Pupils' attitudes towards English are positive and most pupils enjoy the subject. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils show respect for each other. In Key Stage 3, pupils are expected to sit in mixed-gender pairings and this is successful, contributing to a calm working atmosphere. When given the opportunity, they work well in small groups and collaborate effectively. Pupils are able to reflect on what they do and the impact on others, for instance in a Year 10 lesson on the playscript "Kes" with a lower-attaining group, where pupils considered the effect of bullying on other people. There are limited opportunities for pupils to show initiative largely because lessons are often tightly controlled by teachers.

90 The department is well managed. The head of department is knowledgeable, aware of recent developments in English and literacy and has already initiated a debate about the future of English within the school. The team works well together. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the department has the capacity to succeed in raising standards further. The curriculum in English is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is, however, a lack of emphasis in Key Stage 3 on texts from other cultures, drama in English lessons, and non-literary and media texts. Recent work has concentrated on Key Stage 4 and implementing new GCSE syllabuses. Practice here is now reasonably well established. Discussions have begun to take place about the possible impact of the National Literacy Strategy in primary schools on secondary practice. The challenge for the department is to build on existing strengths, share good practice within the classroom more effectively and re-fashion the Key Stage 3 curriculum in order to raise standards. This should involve changes to the Key Stage 3 scheme of work in order to ensure greater consistency across the department and the setting of higher improvement targets for reading, writing and speaking and listening. Teachers' plans should specify what is to be learned and contain sufficient detail to enable the head of department to use them for monitoring purposes. More attention should be given to monitoring teaching, especially through lesson observation, in order to raise the quality throughout the department to that of the best.

MATHEMATICS

91 Standards in Key Stage 3 are below national average and in Key Stage 4 are in line with national averages in 1999. In Key Stage 3, although the average National Curriculum points achieved by all pupils were below average compared with all schools they were above average when compared with those of schools in similar social circumstances. The results in previous years have, overall, shown an upward trend but have always remained below the national average. During this period, boys' attainments were below those of the girls and steadily declined. By changing the scheme of work and methods of teaching the results in 2000 are significantly higher, boys and girls did equally well and it is likely that these results will be in line with national expectations.

92 The proportion of pupils who achieved grades A*-C in the GCSE examination in 1999 matched the national average. Very few pupils achieved the highest grades but a larger than average proportion achieved a grade in the range A*-G. Boys' attainments were significantly better than those of the girls, contrary to the national picture. The results over recent years have improved steadily. When compared with schools in similar social circumstances, the results are well above average. Pupils achieve well in mathematics compared with most other subjects.

93 Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 3, the standard of work of about two thirds of pupils is at, or a little above, the expected minimum level. Relatively few pupils achieve beyond the minimum level and of those who don't achieve it, many have low attainment. Most pupils in Year 9 work at a steady pace in lessons and, with help, make satisfactory progress towards completing successfully the work expected of them. The attainment of many pupils, however, is limited by poor recall of previously learned skills and techniques and by insufficient understanding of earlier work. Pupils' ready recall of number facts and their mental and written methods of calculation are improving significantly. For example, a set of lower-attaining pupils in Year 9 enjoyed the 'Countdown' puzzle which their teacher used to start the lesson. They developed several ways of combining a set of numbers to achieve the given total. The ensuing discussion of the different methods pupils had found improved their confidence in both handling numbers and explaining their ideas to others. They went on to discuss and develop with increased confidence and enthusiasm a method for long division of three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers.

94 Pupils in the top sets make sound and occasionally good progress in response to the good teaching they receive, and reach the expected standard and frequently higher in the routine skills of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data handling. For example, they accurately solve linear equations and confidently manipulate algebraic expressions, using clear and well-understood methods. The work is occasionally extended beyond the routine level to more challenging investigations and problems. For example, a top set of pupils in Year 9 used calculators to find a solution to an equation by repeatedly refining their estimate of an answer, until they reached the required degree of accuracy. In response to the very good teaching, pupils quickly understood the process and worked with interest and accuracy to complete the tasks set for them.

95 Pupils generally get off to a good start in Year 7. They consolidate much of what they learned at primary school and go on to extend their skills and knowledge of numbers. They begin elementary algebra, improve their knowledge of the properties of common shapes and of standard units of measurement, and represent data by a wider range of graphs. Occasionally, however, higher-attaining, and sometimes average-attaining, pupils already have a firm knowledge of the subject matter and become bored as, for instance, in a lesson on symmetry about a line. Pupils in Year 8 make steady, systematic progress and generally acquire a suitable range of skills and techniques in, for example, number where they learn, for instance, to use a calculator sensibly to find squares and square roots of numbers to specified degrees of accuracy. In contrast, not only low attaining pupils but also many of those in the middle sets, need considerable practice to build their confidence in using everyday mathematics such as finding journey times from train and bus timetables.

96 By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is average overall. Those in the top set gain a firm understanding of how to simplify quite complex algebraic expressions using the laws of index notation. They have a good working knowledge of trigonometry, geometry, statistics and probability and use the skills they learn in these aspects of mathematics to solve problems involving distance, speed and compass directions of ships at sea. For more of these pupils to have a better chance of achieving the highest grades at GCSE, however, some opportunities are missed for pupils to use and apply mathematics in everyday contexts and more frequent opportunities should be created for them to do extended investigations of mathematical situations. Attainment in the next two sets in particular is too low. Much of their work is pitched at too low a level and at a slow pace, so insufficient pupils can be entered for the higher or intermediate tiers at GCSE. The majority of pupils are entered for the foundation tier and learn well many of the basic skills and techniques of the subject. Too many of these pupils, however, lack confidence in applying familiar knowledge to unfamiliar situations. They have little sense of urgency or

determination to make better progress and gain a firmer understanding of the subject. In consequence their attainment in the GCSE examination is below what it could be. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well taught in small groups and make good progress during lessons acquiring the skill to make sensible approximations of numbers, for example, estimating the value of 62 multiplied by 49 divided by 32.

97 Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good overall. A significant proportion of pupils make a very good response to the teaching they receive and most are co-operative in undertaking tasks. They are willing to answer questions and respond well to encouragement especially when asked to explain their thinking. They work hard and productively at practising routine skills and procedures. Almost all pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly and logically, using correct mathematical symbols and terminology.

98 Behaviour in lessons is very good. Classrooms are orderly and teachers' vigilance is effective in controlling pupils' behaviour. Pupils respect their teachers and respond positively to admonition. They form constructive relationships with their teachers and peers, and enjoy their lessons. Pupils frequently help one another to clarify misunderstandings.

99 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory in both key stages. Overall, about three lessons in five are good or very good, in about equal proportions and two in five are sound. The weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection report have been rectified. Teachers are well qualified and have a good balance of experience among them. Their subject knowledge, planning and expectation of what pupils can do are generally well matched to the needs of pupils. These factors enable teachers to provide many good opportunities for pupils' learning. Occasionally, however, their methods of solving particular kinds of problems are unnecessarily complicated and hence are not easily understood by pupils. For example, a class of pupils in Year 11, in what was otherwise a good lesson, found the simplification of an algebraic expression, using the laws of index notation, more complicated than need be. Teachers should share more frequently their successful methods of teaching particular topics. Equally, lesson plans sometimes lack specific definition of what pupils are to learn, and so they begin lessons unsure of what is expected of them.

100 Methods of teaching include many clear demonstrations and explanations of mathematical skills and techniques. Good questioning develop well pupils' understanding and confidence. In a significant proportion of the teaching, however, pupils are not sufficiently invited to participate actively in discussion, using correct terminology, as a means of learning. In such lessons, teachers' questioning does not push pupils enough to think things through for themselves and to articulate their ideas in order to achieve full understanding. For example, too many opportunities are missed which enable pupils to learn effectively through discussion of their methods of mental calculation or to explain the reasoning behind the answers they offer. Too often teachers are too eager to tell pupils what to do or, by closed questions, lead pupils to the right answer without them having to think about it. This high dependence on the teacher partly accounts for pupils not achieving their potential in examinations.

101 Teachers structure lessons so that skills and routines are practised effectively, with short discussions that revive pupils' motivation. The pace of such lessons could be quickened by setting pupils timed targets. Practical work is used well as a means of understanding ideas, especially in geometry and probability. For example, a set of pupils began to understand the difference between theoretical and expected probabilities by rolling dice and noting how frequently a given event occurred. The use of computers to enhance learning in mathematics is insufficient. Pupils do, however, learn to use spreadsheets and

devise sets of instructions to control the movements of a screen object during ICT lessons. Solving mathematical problems in everyday situations, and investigations of mathematical situations are included in the programme of work but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to improve their confidence in presenting extended mathematical reasoning.

102 Many lessons have a carefully-planned sequence of activities that develops pupils' confidence and mastery of appropriate skills. This and the vigilance, patience and care that teachers put into the development of good relationships with their pupils provide a good climate for learning. However, the progress of lessons is too often unhurried and could be increased. Occasionally an additional teacher provides good and effective support to pupils' learning. Teaching resources are used well. During lessons, teachers make good, on-going assessment of pupils' understanding. Many misunderstandings are quickly clarified with individual pupils. Formal written assessments are made regularly. The marking of pupils' work is regular, brief, encouraging, and at times challenging. Comments are frequently added, but this is not consistent across the subject. Homework is set regularly. Usually it consolidates pupils learning.

103 Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the provision of homework and support for pupils with special educational needs. Use of computers has developed, but further improvement is still required. The subject is well organised and enthusiastically led by the acting subject manager. There is a shared commitment to improvement and teachers have the capacity to move the department to the next stage of development.

SCIENCE

104 Standards in science at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4 are in line with national averages and well above those of schools similar to Hollingworth High. In 1999 the Key Stage 3 SAT results were close to the national average having fallen from the year before. GCSE results were around the national average, continuing a trend of steady improvement, but few pupils achieved the highest grades. In 2000 the Key Stage 3 results improved, recouping the fall of the previous year. Boys achieved higher than girls in the 1999 GCSE results whereas in the same year in Key Stage 3, boys achieved well below girls. The department monitors the achievement of boys and girls but there is no pattern over time to the differences between them.

105 In Key Stage 3 lessons pupils generally achieve nationally expected standards. Many are familiar with chemical symbols and understand their use. Higher-attaining pupils can also explain patterns derived from the periodic table of elements. Most pupils have a good understanding of the principles of photosynthesis although few are able to explain this accurately and in detail. Almost all pupils handle practical equipment safely, with care and appropriate accuracy. In Key Stage 4 most pupils improve their ability to conduct a scientific investigation because this is clearly defined in the GCSE course. In Key Stage 3 the structure for teaching investigations is less apparent and pupils make less progress in this aspect. In Key Stage 4, although pupils' attainment is generally around nationally expected levels, the highest attaining pupils are not as secure or confident in their knowledge as expected. For example, few of them can give appropriate explanations of electric current and potential difference. Some do not use scientific terms well when trying to explain their understanding of acids and alkalis. Conversely, many pupils in middle and lower sets can explain with accuracy and understanding much of the work covered, because teachers use activities which are well matched to their pupils.

106 The department has made sound and sometimes good progress since the previous inspection. Attainment in both Key Stage 3 and 4 has risen. Teaching has improved and

there is no evidence of the lack of pace previously reported. There is now an effective assessment and recording system, no shortage of textbooks and adequate curriculum time in Key Stage 4. There are no longer safety issues in science lessons. The department has yet to develop fully the potential of ICT and now that the computer suite is more reliable needs to pursue increasing the use of ICT in science lessons. Also the staff need to continue to review the use made of the school library.

107 Teaching is generally satisfactory and often good or very good. There is slightly more good and better teaching in Key Stage 3 where the structure of the course allows teachers more flexibility. There are many strengths in the teaching of science. Teachers are enthusiastic and know their subject well so that explanations are accurate, easily understood and often enjoyable. Teachers' familiarity with the requirements of the SATs or GCSE examinations is used well to focus pupils on the essential. Work is well prepared and lessons run at a good pace with good use made of short, timed tasks to keep up momentum. Teachers often demand quick and accurate responses to questions and, in the best lessons, inaccurate or unscientific answers are quickly returned with a demand for a second try. All teachers have firm class control, expect pupils to behave well and to do their best. All the teachers evidently care about pupils' success and are active in lessons checking progress and offering help.

108 Although lessons are characterised by these features, teachers generally make insufficient use of learning objectives to help pupils recognise what is to be learned and to summarise at the end of lessons. Written work is frequently and regularly marked but generally gives too little guidance to pupils on how to improve. At times teachers do not plan enough variation in tasks to ensure that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level. Lessons offer too little opportunity for pupils to take enough responsibility for their learning although they do take responsibility for completing tasks well. Thus, for example, in a practical activity on digestion, the pupils knew the activity and its outcome before they began. They completed the task well and evidently enjoyed it. However, asking them to suggest alternative plans for the activity would have maintained the enjoyment, challenged the pupils understanding and led to greater learning. The department should take steps to deal with all these points so pupils are given more guidance on how to learn and more opportunities to reinforce learning in lessons.

109 Pupils have positive attitudes to science and behave well in lessons. The great majority are attentive to teachers' explanations and instructions and work carefully and with good pace. They concentrate well in lessons working to complete tasks accurately, and are often quick to respond to questions. Almost all pupils enjoy practical work, which they carry out carefully and with good regard to health and safety considerations. They work well in pairs or small groups, discussing the work and helping each other. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are a little more excited by their science but in no lesson in either key stage were pupils' behaviour or attitude less than satisfactory.

110 The science curriculum meets national curriculum and GCSE requirements. The assessment programme is thorough, accurate and frequent. However, too little use is made of the results of assessment to support pupils' learning by diagnosing weaknesses, establishing remedial action and offering targets for improvement. Under the guidance of the head of science teachers and technicians work well as a team to promote enjoyment of, and achievement in, science. The department has an annual plan for development but it lacks enough detail of the criteria by which success is to be judged, and the coherence of some of the steps which need to be taken. The staff do a detailed and thorough analysis of examination results but other monitoring in the department is informal and unsystematic. A clearer programme for monitoring would enable all the teachers to have a more considered view of the department's strengths and weaknesses.

ART

111 Standards in Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. In Key Stage 4 standards are above expectation with outstanding GCSE results in 1999 and 2000. These reflect the good use made of access to the department outside normal curriculum time and good use of the optional extension period in Key Stage 4. The use of sketchbooks is strengthening research skills for boys and girls in Key Stage 3, and preparation studies, well established in Key Stage 4, are increasingly helping pupils to explore their ideas effectively before producing their final piece of work. Of work seen during the inspection, two-dimensional work relating to art and textiles, using mixed media, is above average with some good work relating to artists. In Key Stage 4 pupils' sensitive use of media and the elements of art produces some very strong images. In both key stages working from first-hand experience needs strengthening. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the way teachers intervene.

112 The quality of teaching in art is good and occasionally very good leading to effective learning. Teachers know their subject well and have high expectations. This means that teachers are confident in their lesson introductions, demonstrations and intervention which encourages pupils to experiment and explore ideas with increasing confidence, particularly in Key Stage 4. Planning is good and care is taken to ensure pupils understand what is required. Good classroom management and relationships together with positive comments keep pupils on task and ensure a brisk pace to most lessons. Homework, using sketchbooks which underpins pupils' preparation and research, is used effectively to support work at school. However, sometimes, considerable teacher input in providing source materials reduces opportunities to show initiative and reinforce independent learning.

113 Pupils in both key stages enjoy their art and textiles lessons and attitudes and behaviour are good with many pupils taking pride in their achievements, particularly in Key Stage 4. The teaching and learning environment, with displays of work encourages positive attitudes. Most pupils work independently, particularly in Key Stage 4 and they concentrate well and persevere when completing work. For example, one boy in Year 11 has made good progress and is able to show preparation work including drawings, colour studies and details of insects, some of which have been researched on the Internet. The final large study shows good use of colour, pattern and shape in developing a composition based on butterflies. He is rightly pleased with his work and is keen to show how much improvement has been made since the beginning of the course. Pupils generally show good responsibility for their working space, and have due regard for safety. Relationships are good.

114 The art and design curriculum, including textiles, is broad and balanced. Assessment is being used to support the setting of targets as well as informing future practice. In Key Stage 3 effective changes have been made to improve boys performance. A plan, mapping out the progressive development of basic skills in Key Stage 3, across the department, would support future development.

115 Management and leadership of the department are good and there is a positive ethos. Teachers work together closely as a team and share responsibility for work in the department. However, processes for drawing up the departmental action plan and recording meetings are less well established. The department has made very good progress on most of the issues identified in the previous inspection and maintained and improved the strengths. Preparation and research skills in Year 11 have improved dramatically, extra resources and technical support have helped in the significant improvement in pupils' attainment. The use of ICT to aid pupils' learning is an area for further development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116 Standards in Key Stage 3 and 4 are below national expectations. In 1999, the proportion of pupils obtaining GCSE grades A*-C were well below the national average. Pupils achieved on average, half a grade lower in design and technology than in their other subjects. Results in the resistant materials and food technology courses were better than in graphics and overall were an improvement on the results obtained in 1998, where the food course had the higher attainment. Pass grades results in 1999 were just below the national average having been in line with the average in 1998. The attainments of boys and girls in 1999 were broadly in line. In 2000, the results indicate a significant rise in the grades A*-C achieved in food technology but overall results are still below the national averages, with the girls attaining higher than the boys.

117 In the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 is below the standards expected nationally but is rising. This represents good progress as pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are well below average. The majority of pupils have satisfactory making skills in a range of materials and their graphical skills are equally well developed and near to nationally expected levels. For example, in a Year 9 resistant materials lesson, pupils were using a range of two and three-dimensional drawings, diagrams and annotations to explore and record their design ideas for a clock. Knowledge of design and technology and the technical vocabulary which underpins it, are below nationally expected levels for all pupils except the higher-attaining pupils. The girls' design skills are marginally better than those of the boys but overall all are below national levels by the age of 14. For lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, practical making skills are better developed than other aspects of the subject.

118 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are below the level expected nationally, due, in part, to few higher-attaining pupils choosing to study the subject to GCSE level. In the work seen during the inspection levels of attainment are slowly rising on all the courses offered. Girls achieve better than the boys do in designing, and making skills are satisfactory on all the courses. Knowledge and understanding of design and technology is below nationally expected levels for all but the highest-attaining pupils.

119 Throughout the school, pupils handle tools, equipment, machines and materials with increasing accuracy and skill and work with due regard for safety and hygiene. Graphical communication skills progress well over time and pupils use an increasing range of drawing and projection methods to model and record their design ideas. Higher-attaining pupils make better progress with design skills than the other pupils, undertaking research, analysing, drawing up specifications and evaluating with increasing depth and rigour. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory and often good progress in relation to their prior attainment, especially in making.

120 The quality of teaching is consistently good in both key stages. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and plan lessons carefully. In a significant majority of the lessons observed, teachers used effective strategies and learning activities appropriate for pupils of all levels of attainment. For example in a Year 7 resistant materials lesson on designing a mobile for a young child, the teacher used a range of strategies to engage the pupils with the learning. These included explanation, questioning, demonstration on the whiteboard of specific graphical techniques. This led to pupils recording research information in a variety of ways including bar charts combined with high levels of individual support from the teacher. Such teaching approaches ensure that pupils work hard, and show high levels of interest in the tasks presented to them, leading to rapid progress and good productivity in lessons. Teachers give good individual support to the pupils, often including accurate and

informed feedback. This makes an impression on the pupils, encourages them to value their efforts and raises their level of motivation.

121 In some lessons the teachers shared the aims of the lesson with the pupils so they were aware of what they should achieve by the end, but this was not a consistent practice. Rarely did the teachers review the progress with the pupils made at the end of the lesson, or set time targets for the completion of intermediate tasks, and this contributed to a loss of pace in the learning in some lessons. The teachers have consistently high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour so the pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Relationships between pupils are very good and they collaborate very effectively when given the opportunity to work together. Routines are well established and classroom organisation and management are good.

122 The department lacks leadership with no overall head of department to coordinate the work of the contributing material areas. Communications are difficult due to the wide spread of the facilities and this contributes to a lack of coherence in the delivery of the subject. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum but information and communication technology is insufficiently integrated into the schemes of work. The delivery of design skills in Key Stage 3 is not planned for in a systematic, unified and progressive way, and the range and length of projects should be reassessed to give greater breadth to the pupils experiences. Material resources and teacher-produced materials to support the learning are good and have a positive impact on the quality of learning.

123 Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection but the school needs to ensure that standards are improved further to meet national expectations. Pupils' attainment has improved in Key Stage 3 and there is a small improvement in GCSE results. Design skills are still weaker than practical making skills. There has been some improvement in the rotational course arrangements in Year 9 of Key Stage 3 but the delivery of the subject still lacks continuity in Years 7 and 8. Facilities for information and communication technology have been improved as has the machinery provision in resistant materials, though some deficiencies remain.

GEOGRAPHY

124 Standards in geography in Key Stage 3 are below national expectations and in Key Stage 4 are slowly rising although they are still below the national average. This is a direct result of target setting and the constant monitoring of the pupils' work, especially field and course work. At the same time, the department has also implemented strategies to improve boys' performance levels by the encouragement of extended writing and the use of writing frames. In Key Stage 3 pupils research the causation of waterfalls and are able to refer to a wide variety of source materials successfully. ICT is being used well as a geographical tool and pupils produce some very good quality topic work although some of the work seen was direct copying from the Internet or CD Rom. Key Stage 4 pupils are able to develop a deeper understanding of weather systems and their oral responses are good. However, some pupils find difficulty in writing their answers and are apprehensive when completing examination style questions. The department offers a great deal of support and encouragement for these pupils to make progress. Teachers' assessment for geography at the completion of Key Stage 3, tends to be below the national average and in comparison with other subject areas because the department applies the guidelines for achievement very stringently. Classes are taught within a broad range of mixed-ability groups and the overall standards of work seen are satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and are good in Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving satisfactorily in Key Stage 3 and are much improved in Key Stage 4. The higher attaining pupils are encouraged to complete extension work and to investigate topics to a greater depth.

125 Pupils respond well to the work being offered. They show an active interest, good concentration, the majority of pupils keep on task throughout the lesson and are making satisfactory progress. Pupils' behaviour is good during lessons and they work well together.

126 Teaching is mainly good resulting in improvements in the quality of learning. Lesson planning is satisfactory matching the needs of the majority of pupils. Classes are taught within a broad range of mixed-ability groups. Lessons proceed with suitable pace allowing the pupils to make satisfactory progress both during the lesson and over time. However, there is still a need for the teachers to continue to develop more varied teaching strategies and to extend the range of written work. The quality of relationships at all levels is a strength of the department. Pupils enjoy their geography lessons.

127 The department's leadership and management is good and is appropriately focused on the achievement of raising standards. There is a positive ethos of constant improvement through the monitoring of performance and this is a developing strength of the department. The department has continued to make improvements in all areas since the last inspection. Good teamwork means that there is a consistency in the way the department approaches all aspects of its work. The Schemes of Work are satisfactory but there is a need to ensure that all facets of the curriculum are clearly covered such as the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural aspects of the syllabus which need to be taught more explicitly. There is also a need to ensure that all Key Stage 3 pupils are given the opportunity to carry out fieldwork assignments on a more regular basis. Resources are well managed and much use is made of ICT as an integral part of the schemes of work at both key stages.

HISTORY

128 Standards in history are in line with national averages in both key stages. The school regularly comes close to national averages for GCSE higher-grade passes, with every candidate recording a pass grade. These results are very good when judged against prior attainment. Pupils use of historical skills is a strength, both in the use of concepts and in the evaluation of ideas. The levels of success in history are evident in the completion of accurate, thoughtful class-based written responses, the open-ended discussion in classes and the fruits of fieldwork. Through the use of effective strategies, pupils of all capabilities are able to be challenged successfully to achieve historical understanding.

129 History teachers set high standards of behaviour and these are readily met because pupils recognise that they will have a positive and exhilarating experience in history lessons. They find teaching highly motivating as it attracts their enthusiasm and focuses their attention. This explains the very good rate of progress when measured against prior attainment.

130 Teaching is generally very good and is a strength of the school. It promotes access to learning by being sensitive to the needs of individual pupils but does so in a context where there is generally relentless challenge to all pupils to develop their historical skills. Lesson planning is highly structured and this sense of structure is conveyed to pupils by the clarity with which the aims of lessons are portrayed and by the way that continuity between lessons is accomplished. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed and teachers know their subject well which is a strength. The fruits of this energetic and effective teaching are to be seen in the quality of the local studies coursework produced at GCSE and in Year 9. This work on Heptonstall and the Rochdale Co-operative 'Pioneers' is of a very high calibre and is evidence that the pupils have been taught and encouraged to apply historical skills in a practical and independent manner. The key to the success of this teaching programme is an effective assessment strategy which identifies and supports the

learning of individual pupils.

131 The curriculum now provides a clear learning pathway from Year 7 to Year 11 and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The history curriculum makes a strong contribution to cultural and moral education through such topics as the study of 20th Century India and the Holocaust in Key Stage 3 and the study of the American West at GCSE level. There is, however, insufficient use of information technology within the curriculum because of inadequate access and the programme of historical visits has diminished since the last inspection.

132 Since the last inspection considerable improvement has been made in history because imaginative and thoughtful leadership, combined with very effective teaching, has generated high levels of pupil enthusiasm for history. To support further improvement in teaching quality the history department needs to develop its monitoring and evaluation strategy, and increase its use of information technology within the curriculum.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

133 In 1999 standards in information technology at the end of Key Stage 3 were well below the national expectation but are above the national average in Key Stage 4. The proportion of pupils who achieved the standard expected of 14 year olds in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments made by their teachers at the end of Key Stage 3 was well below what is expected. The proportion assessed at the higher levels was very low. There has been significant variation in attainment in recent years. The assessment for 2000 is better than the previous year, especially at the higher levels of attainment and are in line with national expectations.

134 The proportion of pupils who achieved grades A*-C in the GCSE examination in 1999 was above the national average. Very few pupils achieved the highest grades but all of those entered for the examination achieved a grade in the range A*-G. Far more boys than girls were entered for the examination and their achievements were broadly similar. Trends over recent years are not discernible because of large variations in the numbers taking the course. For example, the entry in 1999 was 39 pupils but this year it was 111. The school is

awaiting the outcome of an appeal against the grades awarded this year for the coursework element of pupils' assessment.

135 Pupils currently in Year 7 quickly become confident users of the school's networked system and develop well their word processing skills using a commercial standard word processing package. They learn to use the features on the button bar to present their text to a high standard. They gain confidence in the basic operations of logging onto the system and retrieving, editing and saving files. By the time they reach the end of Year 8, pupils have experience of desk top publishing, databases (including retrieving information from CD-ROM and the internet), control of a screen turtle (LOGO), and spreadsheets.

136 Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 3, a majority of pupils reach the expected standards in the required areas of study except that they have insufficient experience of using a computer to log data and analyse it. The work in Year 9 brings together the skills pupils learned in Years 7 and 8, by requiring each of them to do an extended project on a theme park of their choice. High attaining pupils produce good quality work in which they have analysed the task, drafted relevant designs, implemented their ideas, tested for fitness of purpose and evaluated their finished items for each stage in the process of setting up their theme park. Pupils of average and low attainment complete

relatively well such projects but not to the same complexity or quality when compared with the high attaining pupils. In Key Stage 4, over half of each year group choose to study ICT for GCSE. Overall, they make sound progress and their attainment is at the national average. High attaining pupils produce work of good quality in their projects for GCSE assessment.

137 Pupils show considerable interest in their work. Attitudes are very positive and many pupils persevere with their work, totally absorbed by the tasks, especially in Key Stage 4. Younger pupils are well motivated and react positively to the good levels of challenge in their work. Behaviour is good. Lower attaining pupils occasionally lose their concentration and are disruptive when the tasks are too difficult for them to make progress. Pupils relate well to each other, and to their teachers. They are willing to work sensibly in pairs and help each other when necessary.

138 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. In two out of three lessons the teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject, plan lessons well and organise tasks effectively. The practical work done on computers is managed well. When pupils need to work alone at a computer, suitable written work is set as an alternative for other pupils. For example, while half of the pupils in a group from Year 7 were introduced to logging on to the network system and setting up a word processing document, the other half completed worksheets which assessed their basic knowledge of components and terminology. This enabled the teachers to manage the lesson successfully.

139 Lesson objectives are clear and build well upon previous work. The content of lessons is sufficiently challenging for most pupils. Occasionally, suitable, alternative tasks are needed for lower-attaining pupils. Methods of teaching and the organisation of lessons offer pupils good opportunities to develop their skills through well-conducted discussion and demonstrations. Sometimes pupils are not sufficiently engaged during demonstrations of techniques, through the lack of skilful questioning. Many good learning opportunities arise in practical work where pupils can test their own ideas and investigate the outcome of decisions or hypotheses as, for example, in the simulation of managing a team of BT engineers. During practical sessions teachers frequently offer pupils support and guidance at just the right moment.

140 Teachers' expectations combine effectively with interesting activities to ensure that pupils are well behaved. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace and resources are used efficiently. Much good ongoing assessment of pupils' progress and understanding takes place during lessons and any difficulties and misunderstandings are remedied quickly. Pupils' progress is recorded well. Homework is used to reinforce understanding and to cover some theoretical aspects of the subject. The subject is well managed and enthusiastically led, and is well placed to sustain its growth and development.

141 All teachers in the school are undertaking a course of training to enable them to use ICT in their lessons. Little of ICT in other subjects was seen during the inspection but pupils' earlier work and teachers' planning indicates some effective uses in modern foreign languages, design and technology, geography, science and the GNVQ course. The taught course in ICT and the frequent crashing of the networked system hampers the ready access to computers by classes in other subjects. This lack of availability of computers was identified as a weakness in the last inspection report.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

142 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations in both French and German. Pupils in Year 9 can for example write descriptions of the town where they live in which they express opinions about it as a place to live. In Year 8 pupils

can re-use language which they learned the previous year to express opinions about leisure activities. All pupils have sound listening skills, they respond well when French or German is used as the language for instructions.

143 The results at GCSE in 1999 were below national averages in French, German and Spanish. In 2000 the results for French improved, particularly for girls. In 1999 in Spanish only 28.6% achieved Grades A*-C whereas in 2000 there was a considerable improvement with 70.5% achieving A*-C. However in German there was not the same improvement. The long-term illness of a member of staff and the difficulties which the school had in finding a suitable replacement have limited pupils' progress. In lessons during the inspection in Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is good in French, Spanish and German. In Spanish they can for example describe an imaginary holiday spent in a Spanish speaking country with sufficient detail to achieve the higher grades at GCSE. Pupils are well behaved and positive about their learning which enables them to make progress.

144 Since the last inspection, GCSE results in French, German and Spanish have improved with more pupils being entered for public examinations. Behaviour in lessons has improved and there is greater provision for differentiation within teaching.

145 Overall teaching is sound. It is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 in French and German, it is good in Spanish in Key Stage 4. In both key stages teachers use the target language effectively in the classroom and they are confident and fluent. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Teachers are clear about their objectives and these are communicated to the pupils at the beginning of lessons. Lessons have a brisk start and no time is wasted. When given the opportunity to work in pairs and groups, pupils respond well and can take responsibility for their own learning. However, this does not happen as often as it could. Teaching is mostly teacher centred. Pupils are well managed and in the few cases of poor behaviour, firm action is taken. Books are marked regularly but it is not always clear to the pupils what they need to do to improve. Pupils are tested at the end of each module and tests in Key Stage 3 are marked using appropriate national assessment criteria. Pupils are able to interpret the criteria effectively. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. The department is aware of their needs and teachers have prepared differentiated worksheets.

146 The department is soundly managed, staff work well together and the NQT and supply teacher feel supported by their colleagues. Resources are equitably shared and efficiently managed. The classrooms provide a good learning environment, they are spacious, well furnished and have curtains which allow teacher to use a variety of aids in their teaching. Two rooms are equipped with computers but their use needs some further development.

MUSIC

147 Standards in music are below national expectations in both key stages, but show signs of improvement, particularly in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is lower by approximately one National Curriculum level. GCSE results show a small but significant improvement in 2000, even though the number of pupils achieving grades A*-C is less than the national norm. In Key Stage 3, Year 7 pupils are able to listen to a piece of music with absorption and concentration, and are thus able to follow the score with accuracy. Despite attainment that is lower than the national norm, Year 9 pupils show progress in their composition and performance of fanfares but their knowledge of conventional notation is very limited. In Key Stage 4, Year 10 pupils are able to make a connection between the metre of a piece of music and a subsequent improvisation. Pupils are able to respond to questions positively and accurately although they exhibit a limited

knowledge of technical terms.

148 The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. In Key Stage 3 teachers' knowledge and understanding is good, as is the teaching of basic skills. Whilst planning is satisfactory, the breadth and balance of pupils' experiences could be greater so that, for example, exemplars of listening to pieces with a strong sense of pulse could include non-orchestral works, or works from non-European cultures. Furthermore, singing is often relegated to the end of a lesson, where its time is squeezed. This results in very limited provision for the development of choral skills within the classroom. Whilst teachers' management of time is generally good, a more concentrated focus on parts of the lesson will give more time for singing. The Department has established a series of Key Words for each year in Key Stage 3, and much teaching is linked to these. There is evidence that these words and their meaning are beginning to impact of pupils' learning. Homework is limited and the opportunity for individualised learning is lacking. This could be overcome by the encouragement of personal listening at home or at school. In Key Stage 4 teachers exhibit good knowledge of their subject. Teaching enhances and supports learning, with good use being made of wall displays to develop knowledge and understanding. There is, however, a tendency to rely too heavily on commercially produced material, reading through texts and supporting this with provided examples for pupils to listen to, rather than being more selective and using the material to support the needs of individual pupils. Opportunities to check pupils' knowledge and understanding are sometimes lost, for example, when a melody is played on a keyboard with pupils following a score, the teacher does not stop mid-phrase and ask the number of the bar that has been reached.

149 Learning in both key stages is satisfactory and there is no significant difference between years, nor between boys and girls. The pace of learning is better at Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, as is the support they receive. Providing differentiated learning opportunities is at an early stage of development. Expectations of pupils are satisfactory overall, although more could be expected from those who have a musical aptitude. The marking of pupils' work lacks consistency, due to limited use of assessment criteria and variation in the quality of observations from teachers.

150 A team of visiting instrumental tutors visits the school on a regular basis, and the school pays for tuition so that it is free for those pupils who access it. The school is to be commended for this support. The amount of time that each tutor is able to give is limited. The department has chosen to allocate a relatively large number of pupils to each teacher, resulting in an encouraging quantity of tuition but with attainment levels that are not as high as they could be if fewer pupils were taught. This is an issue for the school when it considers value for money.

151 Pupils in both key stages have very good attitudes towards their learning. They settle quickly and quietly at the start of lessons, are attentive and are rarely off-task. Pupils respect the learning environment and treat the facilities with care. The same degree of respect and care is shown by pupils towards each other and towards staff, with whom there are very good relationships. Pupils help each other during practical activities.

152 There is a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, including groups for recorders and guitar, a wind band, a swing band and a choir. Although there is open access, the number of pupils participating is small given the overall size of the school. In one rehearsal observed, the member of staff had clear expectations of the young players, encouraging improvements in musical skills which led to clear evidence of sound learning. In a rehearsal of the choir, the development of vocal and choral skills was less evident, the pupils merely singing through the material, which they enjoyed doing.

153 The music department operates within an arts faculty that includes art and PE. Curriculum coherence is yet to be firmly established within this structure. The scheme of work for music is in the process of being developed and expanded. It gives learning objectives that are appropriate although the curriculum is, at times, a little limiting, with few opportunities for group instrumental work or for systematic choral development. Similarly, the departmental handbook, whilst detailing policies on assessment, homework, instrumental provision and musically-gifted pupils, contains no policies for pupils with special educational needs, differentiation, peripatetic instrumental provision and equal opportunities. The departmental action plan identifies short-term goals, with indications of how they will be achieved. These are useful, but there is insufficient focus on the long-term and the absence of a departmental strategy to achieve specific objectives for the department over a longer period of, for example, two or three years. There is little objective information about pupils' levels of knowledge, understanding and experience prior to their arrival at the school.

154 There have been some significant improvements since the previous inspection. Teaching is improving and engaging pupils' attention. Attainment is still low but is showing signs of improvement. There is new accommodation for the subject, but this is inadequate for the needs of the department. Although these arrangements may be temporary, they currently have a negative impact on standards. There are no practice rooms, either for groups of pupils to use for practical activities, or for visiting instrumental staff to use. One of the two classrooms is barely large enough to accommodate pupils and the larger pieces of equipment, and there is very poor sound proofing between rooms. Resources and equipment are now satisfactory although commercially produced cassettes and vinyl LPs should be replaced by compact discs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155 Standards in physical education in Key Stage 3 are below national averages. However standards of attainment in the lessons seen are broadly in line with that expected nationally. Standards in Key Stage 4 GCSE physical education exceed the national averages. The attainment of girls is slightly lower than that of boys but higher than the national average. Standards of attainment in lessons in Key Stage 4 are broadly in line with that expected nationally. In Key Stages 3 and 4 most pupils are able to explain and apply safety and fitness principles. They demonstrate increased co-ordination and control as they move through the school. In Key Stage 4 they are able to select and combine more advanced skills, particularly in dance. Higher-attaining pupils are able to sustain activity and show more precise technique in execution of a skill such as the dig in volleyball. Most pupils can apply what they have learned into a conditioned game and some more effectively into the full game. Attainment in the areas of planning and performance is better than in evaluation and analysis of performance.

156 The quality of teaching in physical education is almost always good and sometimes very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. They give clear teaching points and demonstrations resulting in good progress. Teaching includes a variety of effective strategies such as the sharing of learning objectives, the posing of questions to solve through performance and gradually introducing another element to practices to ensure they build up to the game. Teaching is less effective when activities are not progressive and too much time is spent in explanation and instruction rather than activity. Useful and timely interventions by teachers result in improved skill levels in games and improved aesthetic content in dance. However in Key Stage 3, pupils are not aware of the criteria against which they are assessed. This means they are less

secure about how to evaluate their performance and the performance of others in order to make improvements. Positive relationships in physical education are based on high expectations of attitudes and behaviour. Pupils work productively and enthusiastically and they obviously enjoy their lessons. They cooperate well with each other and show respect for each others' abilities and points of view.

157 The department is well organised and managed. There are good schemes of work in place to support the teaching and learning of planning and performance but they do not include learning objectives covering evaluation skills. There is efficient and effective deployment of staff, resources and equipment. The department has not had any processes in place to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning although there are some planned for the next academic year. This has led to little staff development of teaching and learning. The development plan is limited in scope. Outcomes, implementation and actions have no obvious links. The implementation of the plan is largely about the provision of equipment and resources. Accommodation is more than adequate in terms of quantity. The gymnasium needs some maintenance and is not at present used to its full advantage for the teaching of gymnastics.

158 The department has made good progress since the last inspection in key areas. GCSE standards have risen steadily and the attitudes of pupils are positive. However, although the time allocation for physical education in Key Stage 3 is sufficient to allow delivery of National Curriculum requirements, it is still shorter than average and inhibits progress and attainment. Gymnastics and dance are now taught in Years 7 and 8 but pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to develop skills in these areas because the balance of activities is still dominated by games. The extra curricular provision and range of opportunities is very good and involves high numbers of pupils and staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

159 Standards in Religious Education are satisfactory in Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 due to inadequate provision. Since the last inspection the school has adopted the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus but it is still not complying with statutory requirements in Key Stage 4. A new personal social and religious education course has been introduced in Key Stage 4, with a very thorough focus on contemporary moral and social issues. This programme only contains a small clearly identifiable religious element and because the course as a whole is not placed in an overarching framework of concepts, skills and knowledge drawn from religious experience, it does not yet fulfil statutory requirements. The provision of the GCSE short course in religious studies to three classes in Year 10 does not address the issue of compliance because it only relates to part of a year group, which in turn raises issues about equality of access to the curriculum.

160 Attainment in Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations and has improved since the last inspection. It is characterised by high quality extended writing, accurate recording and a clear understanding of various aspects of world religions. Pupil strengths are particularly in the attainment target 'learning about religion' and further improvement will be possible if pupils are encouraged to explore the parallel attainment target of 'learning from religion'. No overall judgement was possible on attainment in the GCSE Course as only three lessons had occurred in Year 10. Nevertheless, good progress has been made. Pupils find religious education to be exciting and lower-attaining pupils feel the subject to be very accessible.

161 Behaviour in religious education in Key Stage 3 is always good, with pupils being extremely attentive and enthusiastic. By contrast at GCSE, whilst pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, there is an evident lack of enthusiasm from a significant minority of pupils. In both key stages, however, there are always effective relationships between teachers and

pupils.

162 The quality of teaching is generally sound and frequently good. In GCSE, a sound start is made and good teaching is making this course viable and effective because of the strength of teachers' subject knowledge, the emphasis on learning objectives and careful planning which emphasises the importance of prior learning. In Key Stage 3, teaching is characterised by an insistence on establishing a supportive and accessible learning environment, by encouraging positive behaviour and by a further emphasis on learning objectives. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed, frequently within one lesson, with extended writing being a particularly successful outcome. The promotion of spiritual, moral and cultural understanding is a strength of the teaching. The department is very effective in promoting access to the curriculum for lower-attaining pupils, but there is insufficient differentiation and a lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils. The curriculum is skewed towards 'learning about religion' and this is reinforced by the teaching. ICT is insufficiently used and visits to places of worship are rare. Marking is sometimes very thorough and provides clear targets for pupils but this is not yet sufficiently consistent.

163 Through careful leadership, the provision of religious education in Key Stage 3 has improved since the last inspection because a coherent pathway from Year 7 to Year 9 has been provided, supported by a good range of teaching techniques. This has led to an improvement in pupil attainment. The department now needs vigorously to address the issues of differentiation and challenge and also to achieve a better balance in the delivery of the two attainment targets. The school management and governing body need to address the issue of achieving full compliance with statutory requirements in Key Stage 4.