

INSPECTION REPORT

ALL HALLOWS RC HIGH SCHOOL

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 131512

Headteacher: Mr S Almond

Reporting inspector: Mr J Bald
17932

Dates of inspection: 12th to 15th November 2001

Inspection number: 230015

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Weaste Lane Salford Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs F McAvoy
Date of previous inspection:	The school has not previously been inspected.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

17932	John Bald	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Special educational needs	What sort of school it is? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9649	Jean Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15798	Colin Collinson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
27210	Clive Ashworth	Team inspector	English	
20380	Neville Pinkney	Team inspector	Science	
27665	Alrene Lees	Team inspector	Music	
28178	John Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
31779	Vivian Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology	
31008	Pauline Rourke	Team inspector	Geography Equal Opportunities	
4355	Frank Earle	Team inspector	History	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12885	John Hunt	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31129	Jeff Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design	
12985	Shirley Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

All Hallows RC Secondary School is small. It has 472 pupils, aged 11 to 16, evenly balanced between boys and girls. Almost all pupils are White. Roughly two per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a very small number have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is average, but many of these pupils have serious difficulties with learning and behaviour. Standards among pupils joining the school have been rising, but are still below average, and well below average in writing. Most older pupils had reached very low standards when they joined the school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average, and significant numbers of pupils have disturbed lives outside school. A significant number of pupils join the school part-way through their secondary education. The school was formed by amalgamating two schools in 1998, and this is its first inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

All Hallows RC Secondary School provides good education for its pupils. While GCSE results are very low, standards are rising steadily among pupils who have had all of their secondary education in this school. Teaching and learning are good, personal support for pupils is very good, and the school is very well led and managed. The cost per pupil is high, but the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is a very strong sense of teamwork and shared commitment in the school.
- Standards at fourteen are very high when compared with similar schools.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- There are very good arrangements to include all pupils in the school's life and work.
- Relationships are very good; most pupils have good attitudes and behave responsibly.
- Personal and social education, careers education, partnership with other institutions are excellent.
- There is very good personal care for pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards in most subjects are still held back by weaknesses in literacy.
- Standards at sixteen are very low.
- There is not enough provision for pupils with learning difficulties.
- Parents do not provide children with enough educational support.
- A small but significant number of pupils have poor attitudes and attendance records.
- Provision for art and design is unsatisfactory, and accommodation for physical education is poor.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED

Since its formation in 1998, the school has improved the standards reached by fourteen-year-olds very significantly, so that they are now well above average for comparable schools. The school has developed an effective and flexible approach to management, which has enabled it to take full advantage of new initiatives, such as the Education Action Zone, and to develop an extensive system of personal support for its pupils, who often have little support for their education outside school. Numbers in classes for younger pupils are rising, and the school has developed excellent relationships with primary schools and with other institutions. Arrangements to include all pupils in the work of the school are very effective, and no pupils have been permanently excluded in the past two years. On the other hand, standards at GCSE have remained very low, and standards in the present Year 11 are lower than in Year 10. Attention to the priority of raising overall standards has also led to a reduction in support for pupils with special educational needs whose difficulties lie in learning rather than in behaviour. Overall, the pattern of improvement in the school has been good, and the very strong spirit of teamwork in the school has put it in an excellent position to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E	E	E*	E

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

GCSE results have remained at a low level since the opening of the school, and were in the lowest five per cent of all schools nationally in 2001. However, this reflects the very low standards reached by these pupils when they joined the school, as well as the disturbance many have experienced in their education. Standards in Years 9 and 10, where pupils have had all of their secondary education in this school, are higher. Results in 2001 national tests for fourteen-year-olds were below average in English and mathematics, and well below average in science, but were in the top five per cent overall in comparison with similar schools. These results have been rising steadily over the past three years, and are the foundation of a pattern of rising standards in the school as a whole. Standards in work during the inspection were similar to the test results in English and mathematics, but showed some further improvement in science, where they were below average. There is no consistent difference between the standards reached by boys and girls at fourteen and sixteen. The school has set realistic targets for future improvement.

Standards in other subjects are generally below average to well below average. However, standards are broadly average in information and communication technology, and among the relatively small numbers of pupils taking GCSE in French and geography. Standards are lower than they should be in art throughout the school, and are recovering to a satisfactory level in music in response to recent good teaching. Pupils' achievement in most subjects is held back by weak reading and writing skills, but achievement in number work is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs related to behaviour are achieving well, but those with learning difficulties, particularly in literacy, are achieving substantially less than they should be. Overall, the rising trend in results represents good achievement for pupils aged eleven to fourteen, and satisfactory achievement for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The school has enabled most pupils to develop positive attitudes to education, and to understand its importance for their lives.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Good to very good in almost all lessons, though some lapses are significant. Very good around the school and on visits.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work well together, and take responsibility for their work, including homework. They become mature and considerate.
Attendance	Well below average, and very poor for some pupils.

Pupils respond very well to the school's mentoring and other support. They take part enthusiastically in charity work, and run the school bank. Pupils behave very well in lessons off the school site.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	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 in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school; this is reflected in rising standards at fourteen and in Year 10, and in the generally good quality of learning in Year 11 during the inspection. However, the school is just beginning to adapt the provisions of the national literacy strategy to meet the needs of its lowest-attaining pupils, and the teaching of literacy across the school is not tackling pupils' underlying problems, especially in writing. The teaching of numeracy and of computing skills across the school is satisfactory.

The consistency in the school's teaching across subjects and classes enables pupils to build up consistent habits of learning and positive attitudes to work. Teachers plan lessons well, use time and resources effectively, manage classes efficiently and with good humour, and set and check homework regularly. Additional teaching for pupils with behavioural problems is effective, but the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is too narrow in scope, and is not meeting all of their needs. The grouping of pupils helps teachers to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils and of lower-attaining pupils effectively in most classes. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, caused by weaknesses in planning in art and design, and in the management of poor behaviour. Teachers took effective action to deal with the planning issue following feedback during the inspection.

With the exception of pupils with special educational needs, teaching is meeting pupils' needs well. National differences between the achievements of boys and girls have been tackled, and the learning of pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds matches that of other pupils in their classes. Teaching during the inspection was improving further, and included additional help of high quality for gifted and talented pupils. Careers teaching gives pupils an excellent preparation for future study and work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, and good for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen. Very good opportunities for learning outside the classroom.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. Teaching is not sufficiently adapted to tackle learning difficulties, and specialist teaching is too narrow in its scope.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils settle well and are included in all aspects of the school's life. They make rapid progress in English and in other subjects, particularly science. These pupils are very few in number.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very good for spiritual and moral development in the context of the school's Christian ethos. This helps pupils to reflect on their lives and on the world, and helps them to become mature and responsible. Provision for social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good personal care and support. Generally good assessment of progress and effective guidance on ways of improving work.

The school works hard on its links with parents, but some parents do not do enough to support their

children's education. Careers education, and partnerships with other schools and the community are excellent. Additional care through guidance and mentoring systems is very effective, but there is too little assessment and guidance for pupils with special educational needs. Assemblies are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The senior management team is well organised and gives a clear sense of direction to the school. There is a strong focus on the quality of teaching, support for pupils, and raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors understand the school well, and sustain its climate for learning. The committee system, and financial control are good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school uses its clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in its performance to plan for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Resources are used very well to raise standards, to improve teaching and to support and include all pupils. However, too few resources are allocated to work with pupils with learning difficulties.

The school has high levels of teaching staff and support staff, including well-qualified mentors. Resources for learning are good overall. Accommodation is generally adequate and well kept, but there is too little accommodation for physical education and art.

The school monitors teaching closely, and has good arrangements to improve it further. It takes a leading role in the Education Action Zone, and uses additional funds from this and from sponsorship very well. This is leading to rising standards and low rates of exclusion. Attention to the priority of raising standards has, however, led to a weakening of provision for special educational needs. The school uses the principles of best value effectively in assessing its performance and in deploying resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Children are expected to do their best. • The school is approachable. • There is good information for parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Behaviour. • Co-operation with parents. • Activities outside lessons.

Only 18 parents responded to the questionnaire, and there was a high percentage of positive replies to all questions. Inspectors generally agreed with parents positive views, though they considered that there could be clearer information on standards in some annual reports to parents. Behaviour during the inspection was generally good, though there were significant lapses in a small number of lessons. Homework is regular and effective in most classes, though it is not always followed up effectively for some pupils with special educational needs. Inspectors consider that the school does all it can to co-operate with parents, but that some parents are not playing the part they should in supporting their child's education. They judged that the range of activities outside the classroom was very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards among pupils joining the school at eleven have been improving from a very low level but are still below average, and well below average in writing, where the lowest-attaining pupils are unable to write simple sentences independently. When the school was formed, numbers of pupils fell as significant numbers of parents withdrew their children, and standards among those who remained were low. This continues to affect standards at GCSE and in the present Year 11. Pupils in the current Year 10 are the oldest to have had all of their secondary education in the school.
2. Standards are below average throughout the school in English, mathematics and science. However, results in national tests at fourteen have shown a steady trend of improvement over recent years. Results in national tests for fourteen-year-olds in 2001 were very high in comparison with those in similar schools in all three subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving more than the standard expected also showed a remarkable improvement. Over a third of pupils achieved this in mathematics, while the proportion of pupils doing so doubled in science, and was over four times as high in English. Achievement is now good at fourteen, in relation to pupils' starting points, but a significant proportion of pupils are not reaching nationally expected standards in any of the three tested subjects at fourteen, and standards among these pupils are often very low, particularly in writing. Boys' standards improved at a similar rate to girls' over the three years to 2001, and there was little overall difference in the standards reached by boys and girls during the inspection. Higher-attaining boys did well in English tests, with a higher proportion of boys than girls reaching above the expected standard in the tests. Girls, on the other hand, tended to do better than boys in teachers' assessments in other subjects, and did significantly better than boys in mathematics and English in national tests in 2000.
3. Standards are improving steadily among older pupils, as those who have had their full secondary education in this school move into GCSE courses, and the quality of work was generally better in Year 10 than in Year 11. Nevertheless, standards at GCSE have so far not shown the same improvement as those of fourteen-year-olds, and were lower in 2001 than in previous years. Achievement at sixteen is nevertheless reasonable given the unsettled background of many of the pupils, and the standards these pupils had reached when they joined the school. The proportion of pupils who achieve graded results in their examinations is relatively high, and this is one indication of the school's effectiveness in engaging lower-attaining pupils in their education and including them in its work. The proportion of boys achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C was a little lower than that of girls in 1999, but has increased since then so that boys achievement was better than that of girls in 2000 and much better in 2001. Boys have gained slightly more A and A* grades than girls in each of the three years.
4. Standards in most other subjects are below average, but represent satisfactory to good achievement. Achievement is good in modern languages, physical education and information and communication technology. Standards in art and design are lower than they should be, although they showed immediate signs of improvement in response to feedback during the inspection. There are no consistent differences in achievement in these subjects between boys and girls.
5. Throughout the school, standards in literacy are generally well below average, and are

holding back achievement in all other subjects which involve writing. Many pupils find it difficult to read the texts they need for their examination courses, and much writing has serious errors in grammar, spelling and paragraphing. Standards in numeracy are below average, but represent satisfactory achievement in view of the standards of pupils joining the school. In mathematics lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3, numeracy is improving through the influence of the National Numeracy Strategy. In some mathematics lessons attention is given to number and calculation skills through brief introductory activities which include practice in mental calculations. The school has not yet developed a consistent approach to numeracy, although a policy statement from the mathematics department provides advice on mental arithmetic and the drawing of graphs. However, by the time they are sixteen, most pupils have reached broadly average standards in their use and understanding of information and communication technology, and this represents a good level of achievement.

6. Pupils with special educational needs are given good personal support and are effectively included in all lessons, often by means of work simplified to enable them to tackle it. However, while some make steady progress in reading, too many are stuck at a relatively low level, and some significant underlying problems, for example in spelling among older pupils, are not identified and tackled. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are achieving less than they should. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language during the inspection were making rapid progress in all aspects of their work. They had learned to conduct fluent conversations in English in under six months, and were preparing long-term plans for higher education. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including the single travelling pupil in the school during the inspection, were well supported and achieving well. The achievements of gifted and talented pupils are generally satisfactory, and these pupils benefit from the good match of work to pupils' abilities in top sets, particularly in mathematics.
7. The school is meeting its targets for fourteen-year-olds, but not at GCSE, despite establishing good teaching and a good pattern of learning among pupils aged fourteen to sixteen. Future targets are reasonable in the light of what has been achieved so far, and standards in Year 10 indicate that the improvements in work for pupils aged eleven to fourteen are beginning to be reflected in GCSE courses. Improvement beyond the levels set in these targets depends above all on raising standards in literacy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The school has created a strong community, characterised by very good relationships, orderly behaviour and positive attitudes. Most pupils come to the school from a background where too little is expected of them, and many do not see the point of working hard. The school works hard to change these attitudes through good teaching and very good personal support from teachers and mentors. It also aims to raise pupils' aspirations by getting them to think of their future careers. The outcome is an increasing commitment to work among pupils, which is reflected in standards at fourteen, and is spreading throughout the school. Older pupils highly value the taster college courses which they attend, and the careers talks held in the library at lunchtime are very popular with pupils of all ages.
9. In most lessons, pupils' attitudes to their work are good and sometimes very good. Boys and girls generally take pride in presenting their work. In conversations with inspectors, pupils said they value the good teaching they receive. They particularly like lessons where teachers use the computer program Power Point or the interactive

whiteboard to aid presentation. They enjoy discussions and working in groups. Boys in particular say that they enjoy lessons where learning involves their active participation. On the other hand, the negative attitudes of a small number of pupils, almost always boys, put heavy demands on teachers. In a very few lessons, teachers' behaviour management skills were insufficient to control the immature and disruptive behaviour of these pupils. Pupils taking physical education lessons outside the school site behave excellently.

10. Pupils behave well when moving around the school. They have a mature understanding of the school's discipline procedures, and accept that sanctions are consistent and fair. They are extremely enthusiastic about the school's very good reward system and are strongly motivated by the quality of the prizes. Pupils make the most of the very good extra-curricular opportunities which the school offers. They value the way in which the well-run and welcoming library is open not only at lunch-time and after school for homework, but also in the holidays. The recent poetry competition drew in a large number of entries. Pupils are polite, friendly and open with visitors.
11. The school has not excluded any pupils permanently for almost two years. The number of fixed-term exclusions, mostly for one or two days, is broadly average for schools of this size but low given the school's social circumstances. Boys are excluded more often than girls, but pupils from ethnic minorities are rarely excluded. The low level of exclusions is evidence both of the school's strong commitment to inclusion and of the very good support which pastoral staff and staff in the Learning Support Centre give to pupils who exhibit difficult behaviour. In discussions, all pupils praise their teachers and Year 11 pupils, in particular, show a very mature appreciation of everything their teachers and mentors do for them. Pupils agree that they are not worried about bullying. Pupils of different ethnic origin mix easily together and the recently arrived pupils from Iran have been given a warm welcome by all. There is no evidence of racist incidents.
12. Pupils show a good level of consideration for others. They are active in raising money for a variety of charities. They respond positively when asked to think about the experience of others. Year 11 pupils were quietly reflective in an assembly when their head of year talked about the death in the First World War of the Salford Pals, who came from the streets many pupils lived in, and were little older than them. In a very good careers lesson on the requirements of different jobs, the teacher helped to broaden Year 10 pupils' perceptions of work by encouraging them to reflect about the demands of jobs and their social consequences. Pupils responded very thoughtfully.
13. Pupils generally demonstrate a good level of responsibility and initiative. Many pupils lack parental support for homework and punctual attendance, so they themselves have to bear responsibility for this. A substantial number of pupils have followed the RSA word-processing diploma course after school. Pupils run the school bank, exchange merit awards for prizes, and help run the library. They do these jobs very efficiently. Year 11 pupils have shown initiative by organising concerts to raise money for charity. Older pupils who use sports facilities off the school site respond very well to the trust which the school places in them. Year 11 pupils studying for the Junior Sports Leadership Award show clear commitment to the scheme, and are preparing very sensibly to lead primary school children in sports activities.
14. The school's concerted efforts to improve attendance had brought about a significant improvement in the term of the inspection. For example, the attendance of Year 7 pupils in the first half term of this school year was 94 per cent, and attendance in Year

11 had improved by seven percentage points compared with the previous year. The attendance of boys during this half-term was 1% below that of girls, but had improved much more than that of girls over the last year. Nevertheless, overall attendance remains well below average. Reasons for absence are mainly illness and holidays, some of which are longer than the two weeks allowed by law. A small number of pupils have very poor records. Their parents, and some other organisations responsible for their care, do not respond to the school's strategies to improve attendance. On the other hand, the school is not rigorous enough in its procedures for authorising absence, and some absence is recorded as authorised when it should not be.

15. Registration procedures are effective, but there is some lateness in the morning. This is properly recorded, and the school has suitable measures to promote punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The school has developed a consistent approach to planning lessons that provides a variety of activities within each lesson, with time for reflection and consolidation at the end. As a result, teaching is good or better in seven tenths of lessons. This teaching is effectively focussed on the learning needs of the class and promotes a consistently good pace of work. Most teachers manage their classes well, with good relationships and a sense of humour. They set homework regularly, and use pupils' planners well to keep track of it. Teachers in most lessons adapt work so that lower-attaining pupils can do it, and work in top sets provides good challenge to higher-attaining pupils, including those who are gifted and talented. This is enabling significant numbers to reach higher above-average standards in national tests for fourteen-year-olds, particularly in mathematics. The effect of good teaching on the learning of older pupils is beginning to result in higher standards in Year 10, where pupils have had all of their secondary education in the school, but not yet on standards at GCSE and in Year 11, where pupils' standards on joining the school were lower.
17. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teachers use the same lesson structures as in the more successful lessons, but do not match the work closely enough to pupils' needs to ensure good learning. Teaching in a twentieth of lessons was unsatisfactory. In just under half of these, mostly in art and design, there were weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and in the design of activities for pupils. The teachers concerned took effective action to improve these issues following feedback during the inspection. The remaining unsatisfactory teaching, in three lessons out of over 130 observed during the inspection, was caused by weaknesses in managing a small number of pupils, mostly boys, whose behaviour was poor. These pupils' poor attitudes made teaching very difficult, but the teachers' use of the school's behaviour management procedures made no impact on the problem, and very little learning took place.
18. The school is just beginning to adapt its teaching effectively to tackle the difficulties with literacy that affect most pupils achievement. Teachers of pupils in Year 7, for example, had assessed pupils' work to identify weaknesses that were not addressed by the national literacy strategy. They had begun to adapt its principles effectively to meet these problems, for example by designing writing activities that would help pupils who were still in the early stages of learning to write. Teaching in most lessons, however, does not contribute enough to the development of reading and writing skills. Pupils are not given sufficient encouragement to read and understand demanding texts, and the teaching of writing is not consistently planned. Too much work is copied, sometimes without checks to see that it has been understood, and pupils are

not given enough practice in writing independently. The teaching of numeracy and information and communication technology skills is generally satisfactory across the school, but there is much variation between subjects. For example, pupils use computers well to present their work in design and technology and to investigate issues in history, but teachers in art rarely use them. Some pupils need more guidance when using computers for independent learning. For example, some pupils using a program to teach touch-typing were only using two fingers on the keyboard.

19. The vast majority of strategies, activities and resources in lessons appeal equally to boys and girls. Occasionally materials are chosen to appeal to boys as in the choice of poetry used in a Y11 English lesson. Some teaching methods, such as the use of Power Point in science in Year 10 appealed particularly to boys, as well as proving effective with girls. Boys told inspectors that they enjoyed teaching that allowed them to participate actively, and a practical approach to learning percentages led to good learning in a Year 9 class with a high proportion of boys with special educational needs. Boys in this class understood exactly what they needed to do to succeed, and consolidated this understanding very well through practice. Teachers expect work of equal quality from boys and girls in almost all lessons. All pupils are expected to complete work and to behave well. Teachers in most lessons use questions carefully to ensure a balance of replies from boys and girls, but in some lessons boys answer many more questions than girls, and teachers do not do enough to correct this. While some teachers arrange seating carefully to separate pupils who are likely to misbehave, most do not seat boys and girls deliberately to ensure that boys do not dominate lessons. Overall, however, the effective balance of teaching activities contributes significantly to the school's good provision for boys, and helps them achieve similar standards to the girls.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is inadequate. Work is pitched at a level that ensures that they can take part in lessons, but teaching is not focussed closely enough on their underlying learning difficulties. Additional literacy teaching is too narrowly focussed on work with simple words, and is not integrated effectively with the reading and writing pupils need to do in their classes. In some mathematics lessons, targets set in individual education plans are not used in planning, and potential difficulties in work are not clearly identified and explained. By contrast, the quality of teaching for those with behavioural difficulties is very good. In some lessons, those with the most serious problems are indistinguishable from other pupils in their classes, and teaching in the academic referral unit and learning support centre is very effectively organised to maintain continuity with work in classes. This ensures continuity of learning for these pupils, and enables them to build up good working habits as well as to improve their behaviour.
21. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language during the inspection benefited greatly from the school's structured teaching and good support for learning, including a medical mentor from the university for one who wished to become a doctor. Other pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds were also learning and achieving well.

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

22. The curriculum for pupils aged eleven to fourteen is satisfactory, with a good range of opportunities in mathematics and science. The curriculum for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen is good, and has improved significantly in the past year. All the subjects of the national curriculum plus religious education and media studies are offered to pupils at

GCSE, and vocational courses in information and communication technology have been carefully selected to meet their needs. There is a very strong focus on vocational education for all pupils, including some run jointly with Pendleton College. On the other hand, the range of option choices for pupils is restricted, although the school has plans to extend it during the next academic year. The length of the taught week is slightly higher than in most schools, and this is helping pupils to build and sustain concentration. However, some double lessons in French, and in physical education for younger pupils are too long, and some in design and technology too short, to enable teachers work to maximum effectiveness. The range of learning opportunities in art and design is limited by the range of resources and by cramped accommodation. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.

23. Teachers in most lessons adapt work to enable pupils with special educational needs to take part. However, the curriculum is not adapted sufficiently to make a consistent impact on underlying learning difficulties, particularly in English. The small amount of specialist teaching that is provided is focussed almost entirely on work at the level of words, and does not equip pupils to read the texts they meet in lessons. In most lessons, targets in individual education plans are not addressed. The curriculum is meeting the needs of pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds well, and is very effective for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language.
24. Boys and girls can participate equally well in most of what the school does.. The school keeps close track of the achievement of different groups of pupils, and its extensive systems of support and mentoring do much to ensure that all are included in its life and work. On the other hand, in art, pupils do not use information and computer technology, as required in the programme of study. In physical education, boys in Years 8 and 9 study basketball and girls study dance. This does not prepare girls well when they choose to study basketball in the GCSE course. Strengths in provision for equal opportunities significantly outweigh weaknesses.
25. The school has begun to adapt the provisions of the national literacy strategy to meet the needs of its pupils, many of whom have weaknesses which lie below the threshold of the nationally designed materials. However, planning to meet pupils needs in literacy across the school is not effective, and too many activities, particularly in writing, do not enable pupils to extend their skills, particularly where these are limited. The curriculum provides adequately for numeracy and for the use of computers, though work with computers would benefit from better co-ordination. A very well-planned programme for personal social and health education (PSHE) helps pupils to develop social skills and encourages personal responsibility. It includes health issues, education against the misuse of drugs, personal skills, such as interview technique, and aspects of citizenship. Provision for sex education meets statutory requirements. The timing of this programme is well adapted to pupils' needs.
26. Careers education is an integral part of the PSHE programme, and is additionally supported through activities for gifted and talented pupils, links with the career service and local business, and by the mentoring programme. Pupils' career horizons are widened by regular "Career of the Month" events, in which they can talk to visitors about a wide range of careers, which have recently included law, teaching, nursing, dentistry and the Royal Air Force. Pupils make good use of the very well-stocked careers library, which has printed and computerised information and a data base of over 1200 local firms.. All pupils in Year 10 have two weeks' work-experience. They are very well prepared for this, and for the transition from school to work. For example, in a Year 10 careers lesson, pupils were helped to broaden their perceptions of work and to understanding the implications of different kinds of career on the quality of life,

for workers and for their families. Business mentors from the local business community contribute to careers education and help pupils to prepare for interviews. The overall quality of careers education is excellent, and it is much appreciated by the pupils.

27. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Almost all subjects, with the exception of art and science, offer some form of enhancement of pupils' learning in the class-room. This often takes the form of "master-classes" which provide pupils with extra support and opportunities to develop confidence and independence in learning. This provision is particularly strong in sport, with close to half of all pupils participating in the extra-curricular sports programme. Good provision is also made in English, (many pupils attending performances at the Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre), in history, ICT, design-technology and music. Links with the Italian consulate enable the school to offer Italian conversation classes which are attended by pupils and adults. This has also led to staff exchanges with teachers from Bologna. Plans are well under way to extend extra-curricular provision significantly in partnership with Pendleton College. There is a broad and effective range of sporting opportunities, which has been developed in part to raise the involvement of boys in the school. Several former pupils are professional sportsmen, and they visit the school regularly. The school has an outstanding record in competitive sport.
28. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is excellent. The school enjoys very good links with a wide variety of organisations and companies. The Education Action Zone has attracted sponsorship from local sporting and other businesses and many are actively involved with the school, sponsoring prizes for attendance and providing materials to run the school bank. Local training providers also contribute to the employability skills programme and in counselling pupils about their options for further and higher education. New Opportunities Funding is used imaginatively to fund "taster" courses at the college for pupils. The courses are intended to be interesting, open up possible career opportunities, raise aspirations and increase the number of pupils going on to further and higher education. Over eighty per cent of pupils in Year 10 have opted to be involved in this initiative.
29. Relationships with the school's partner primary schools and colleges are excellent. The plan for the Education Action Zone has, as one of its objectives, improving the arrangements for transition from primary to secondary school. This funding has enabled the school to plan a wide variety of activities which have enriched pupils' experience and provided greater continuity as they move from one school to the other. Teachers have also been able to learn from each others' experience. Prior to the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies, teachers visited partner primary schools to look at how these initiatives had been managed for younger pupils. Specific programmes in science, maths, literacy, technology and religious education have been organised to help pupils make a success of their transition to the school. A very successful summer school for gifted and talented pupils used the work of L.S. Lowry to provide a wide range of challenging activities for these pupils. The effectiveness of these activities is indicated by the increased number of pupils entering the school in the current year. Older pupils receive very good information about the opportunities open to them in the sixth -form and further education colleges with which the school works. Staff from the colleges visit the school and pupils are encouraged to attend college open-days and evenings. These links are being progressively improved as, for example, with the extra-curricular programme being planned in partnership with Pendleton College.

Spiritual development

30. Provision is very good. The school's mission statement forms the basis of a Christian ethos which pervades all aspects of its life. The religious education department gives a strong lead in planning a programme of spirituality that accurately reflects the mission statement. The school meets the requirements for collective worship. Acts of worship in assemblies and daily prayers in form time are good, and often very good, with pupils playing a leading role on occasions. This was well illustrated in a Year 11 class by a moving reading of the poem 'Footprints', followed by time for pupils to reflect. Festivals and Holy Days are celebrated, and marked by special events. Retreats and voluntary masses give good opportunities for spiritual reflection. Forty pupils and ten teachers attended an early morning mass. The concept of valuing all as equals was made real by teachers and pupils sitting alongside one another, shaking hands and sharing the sacrament as equals. Teachers are aware of the opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum. In personal, social and health education, pupils consider loss and bereavement, and reflect on changes in their lives. There is an effective school support network to help pupils, and staff, who suffer bereavement. Evidence of pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is clearly illustrated in the book of pupils' poems produced as a result of the school's poetry competition. Moving poems reflect the pupils' concern about the terrorist attack in New York and their desire to do something to help.

Moral development

31. Provision is very good. The school has a clear code of conduct that reinforces pupils' sense of right and wrong. This is supported by the discipline system, mentoring and the learning support centre. Pupils understand the system, and appreciate the positive reward structure on which the behaviour code is based. Teachers take every opportunity to help pupils distinguish between what is right and wrong within the school. For example, a display of pupils' work on racism promotes spiritual and moral awareness through the Christian teaching on love of one's neighbour. The behaviour code is almost always administered fairly and consistently by the teachers, who provide good models for behaviour by their caring and sympathetic attitudes. Pupils express practical moral concern through support of a large number of charities including the Rainbow Trust, the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development, St. Francis' Children's Hospital and the British Legion Poppy Fund. There is a good coverage of contemporary moral issues in the personal, social and health education programme, while the religious education department emphasises responsibility, making choices and respect for self and others in the relationships aspect of sex education. In history, pupils study the Holocaust and have marked 'Holocaust Day'. Pupils debate the moral issues surrounding the use of fertilisers, in science, and consider the dilemma caused by the need to improve productivity set against possible pollution and damage to the environment. Assemblies make a strong contribution to moral development. One outstanding assembly during the inspection, based on original documents and objects from World War I, emphasised the suffering caused by war, and made a good connection with the Christian message of the necessity to get on with one's neighbours in order to end conflict.

Social development

32. The school's provision is good overall, and has some very good features. The school is a harmonious community and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils learn to respect each other in the context of a caring community. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop socially, to relate to each other and to take individual and collective responsibility within the school. Pupils run the school bank,

help in the organisation of the library, contribute to assemblies and take a leading role in charity work, such as helping at the Salford Cathedral 'Drop In' Centre. Pupils' social awareness and skills are promoted through opportunities in lessons for work in small groups and pairs. This is particularly strong in modern foreign languages, information and communication technology, physical education and music. However, in a small but significant minority of lessons, arrangements for dealing with poor behaviour are not sufficient to prevent it from disturbing other pupils' learning.

33. Residential retreats and educational visits continue the process of developing social skills. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities provides many opportunities for a wider social experience, such as the responsibility of working in teams and taking leadership roles in sport. In physical education, senior pupils are being given the opportunity to train as sports leaders with a view to using their skills in the community. They also have the opportunity to visit community leisure centres and work alongside the public, fulfilling the expectations of their teachers that they should behave as mature adults. The PSHE programme's treatment of social and moral issues is a strong feature of the curriculum. Pupils consider issues that contribute to social development such as health and safety, sex and drugs education, and preparation for life after school, emphasising the theme of good citizenship.

Cultural development

34. Provision is good. Pupils' appreciation of cultural traditions is fostered by good use of the locality, and raising pupils' awareness of local history. This was used effectively, and sensitively, in a Remembrance Day assembly that focused on the 'Salford Pals' in the First World War, who came from the same streets in which the pupils live. In history, pupils study the work of Lowry and the industrial conditions of nineteenth-century Salford. The Lowry Summer School is an excellent opportunity for pupils to learn about their own culture. Several subjects make a good contribution to pupils' awareness and understanding of Western culture. Display is used well in modern foreign languages to create a sense of the country being studied, and the French club is well supported. Theatre visits organised by the English department make a strong cultural contribution, as does the study of poems from different countries. In science pupils are introduced to the work of early scientists from different countries through the study of the solar system. Pupils study music from around the world in the curriculum, and there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs to cater for pupils' different musical tastes. School productions, such as the successful musical 'Oliver', also raise pupils' cultural awareness and plans are in hand for the next production. Residential trips, such as the physical education department's visit to a water-sports centre in Spain, enable pupils to experience a culture different from their own. In religious education, pupils are introduced to cultural aspects of other faiths, and gain an insight into the richness of other cultures. However, there are limited opportunities elsewhere for pupils to develop their understanding of the wide range of other cultures represented in the Greater Manchester area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school has an extensive and very effective system of personal support and guidance for pupils. Teachers know pupils well. One pupil commented that "teachers are always there to help you if you have difficulties" and this is typical of the response of all pupils in discussions. Teachers with particular responsibility for the personal care of pupils are highly experienced and have a thorough knowledge of the local community. They work very closely with parents and have gained the support of the majority for the school's aims. Pupils with serious personal problems receive sensitive

and effective support, from both teachers and other adults. Where necessary, the full resources of the school are concentrated on providing support for groups of pupils. The system of personal support and guidance is underpinned by very good communication between staff, good recording and monitoring systems and good liaison with agencies outside the school. The school has good child protection procedures, and all staff are aware of them.

36. Support for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Staff work hard to give pupils confidence in themselves, and each pupil has a well-designed personal planner that helps them to organise their work in an adult way, as well as providing a continuous record of achievement. The school's reward system recognises all kinds of achievement and motivates pupils very effectively. Good guidance is given through the personal, social and health education programme, through assemblies, through the careers programme and by form tutors and pastoral staff. The school uniform has been designed to be simple, cheap and attractive. School meals encourage healthy eating, and breakfast is provided in the canteen. The school has good health and safety procedures.
37. The school has well-thought-out procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. There is an effective system of reward points, which pupils get automatically as long as they do not misbehave in class, and which can be exchanged for school visits and the chance to enter a draw with excellent prizes. Sanctions for misbehaviour are accepted by pupils as fair and consistent. The academic referral room provides very effective care for pupils who misbehave in class. They continue with their work, and senior staff, with the referring teacher, later assess the problems underlying the poor behaviour and take further action. The school has a clear policy on bullying and very effective arrangements to prevent it. Most pupils said that they were not aware of any bullying, and all agreed that if they had any problems they would tell their teachers. Boys and girls told the inspectors that they felt the system was fair, and boys in particular were highly motivated by prizes.
38. Two full time social inclusion officers, one funded through the Education Action Zone, have improved the attendance of a significant number of pupils. The school follows up absence on the first day and has very efficient monitoring systems. It sends termly letters to parents giving pupils' attendance record, and has an extensive range of certificates and prizes for good attendance. However, the school's lack of rigour in classifying absence as unauthorised is undermining the effectiveness of this work in the most serious cases.
39. The school has an extensive and effective mentoring system which serves a substantial number of targeted pupils, and a learning support centre for those at risk of exclusion. The skilled support provided by these systems is highly valued by pupils and there have been many individual success stories. The learning support centre helps pupils establish good habits in their work and behaviour, and pupils are well supported when they return to the classroom. The centre plays a major role in the inclusion of all pupils and in reducing truancy. Recently-established links between learning mentors and departments have improved the focusing of pupils' targets. Significantly more boys than girls attend the centre.
40. The school has effective systems to assess progress and set targets in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Information from assessment in these subjects is generally well used in planning work, though some targets for improvement are not specific enough to lead to progress. Assessment in other subjects is less well developed, but is adequate overall.

Assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs meet legal requirements, but lack detail for pupils who do not have statements of special educational need. The needs of some pupils are not identified and tackled early enough. For example, one pupil in Year 11 read well, but had significant spelling problems that had not been identified, even though these were likely to affect her GCSE performance. Assessment throughout the school is not sufficiently focussed on literacy problems, although there has recently been good assessment of the writing difficulties of pupils in Year 7, which the school is using well to adapt the provisions of the national literacy strategy to meet the needs of its pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Very few parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire. However, their views were positive, and were reflected in larger number of replies to the questionnaires sent as part of the inspection of religious education. The rising number of pupils coming to the school, also reflects parental approval, particularly as a significant proportion of these pupils have achieved well in their primary schools. The small number of parents who attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting were very enthusiastic about the school's approach, both to their children and to them as parents. Parents recognise how hard the school is working for their children and appreciate all the time teachers give to extra-curricular activities. They also commented very favourably on the school's good facilities.
42. The school works hard to establish effective links with parents. Teachers and others with responsibility for guiding pupils have established good relationships with parents, and these effectively support the school's strategy to improve attendance and behaviour. The school has efficient communication systems. Newsletters are clearly laid out, and are full of interesting information contributed by all departments about the work of the school, pupils' successes, and extra-curricular activities. The school also ensures that information about its work reaches parents through the local newspaper. The school prospectus is well presented and informative, but it does not provide all of the information required by law. For example, it does not include absence rates or national comparative data for test and exam results. Pupils' planners have good provision for following up the completion of homework, and offer immediate and flexible opportunities for parents to communicate with teachers.
43. Annual reports on pupils' progress show teachers' good knowledge of pupils. They contain useful comments on pupils' attitudes and on how these affect progress. The reports provide information on standards in national tests at fourteen, but otherwise most do not give parents a clear enough idea of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Most reports contain targets. Some of these are useful, but others are too general to contribute to improvement.
44. Most parents come to the new intake evening when their children join the school and there is also a good response to prize evenings. However, many parents have little involvement with the work of the school, and this has a negative impact on their children's attitudes and progress. A small but significant number of parents, and some other organisations with parental responsibility for pupils, do not fulfil their legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school regularly, despite regular reminders from the school. Many parents do not show interest in their children's homework, and many do not sign their homework planners. About half of all parents do not attend parents' evenings. The school has tried different strategies to persuade more parents to come to these important consultations, including changing the time and using the occasion to hand out reports, but is disappointed by the limited impact

of these changes.

45. In conjunction with Pendleton College, the school has held a successful course on the skills required to be a good parent. The success and popularity of these classes, located in a local primary school, has encouraged the school to make plans to extend the courses to five more schools. This initiative has the potential of enabling parents to better support their children's education. A very few parents actively help the school and this support is valued. The All Hallows Family Association provides social events and organises fund-raising activities. Some parents support their children's participation in extra-curricular sports events by helping with transport to matches.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher and senior management team provide strong and effective leadership. They are well organised, and have a clear focus on raising standards and on providing personal support for pupils who need it. The effectiveness of teaching is closely evaluated by the senior management team, and this is leading to a consistent and effective approach that promotes good learning. Additional support for pupils is clearly thought out, and is leading to generally good behaviour, with a low rate of exclusion for a school of this type. While the needs of boys are not specifically addressed in planning for this support, they are very effectively met.
47. The work of other teachers with management responsibility contributes effectively to standards and learning, particularly in mathematics, and the school has promoted successful middle managers to the senior management team. However, this has led to gaps in the some aspects of middle management, particularly in art and design and special educational needs. These were affecting the quality of learning during the inspection, and were particularly significant in the case of special educational needs, as some of the oldest pupils had significant difficulties that had not been identified. The evaluation of teaching in some departments was also less effective than that by the senior management team. At the time of the inspection, the school had no consistent approach to teaching literacy, but it was beginning to adapt the provisions of the national literacy strategy effectively to meet its needs, particularly in Year 7.
48. The school uses its development plan well, and budgets carefully, allocating funds to educational priorities, including the retention of effective teachers. It has taken a leading role in the organisation and management of the Education Action Zone, which has secured substantial external funding. This is used for a good range of purposes, including the teaching of gifted and talented pupils and the learning support centre, which provides very close support for pupils who would otherwise be at risk of exclusion. Governors are effectively involved in all aspects of the school's work, and contribute effectively to establishing priorities and maintaining its core values.
49. The school uses a good range of national and local data to monitor standards, and the senior management team and governors are fully aware of the continuing weakness in standards at GCSE, as well as of the trend of rising standards among younger pupils. Additional resources are allocated, through the mentoring schemes, to help pupils at risk of not meeting their targets at GCSE. Most pupils receiving this support had developed good patterns of learning, and it had helped them to achieve the results predicted for them on the basis of test scores on entry to the school. These arrangements had been particularly effective for boys at the time of the inspection, but interim monitoring showed that they were beginning to raise standards among girls. Information from the scheme has contributed to the school's current arrangements to

help all pupils organise their coursework for GCSE.

50. Staffing levels in the school are high, and staff are generally well deployed, although the specialised literacy skills of some senior staff are under-used. Support staff are often very well qualified for their work – for example, learning mentors have good practical experience of management, and one has a good honours degree in psychology. Staff with management responsibilities have adequate time for their work. The school has good arrangements for the professional development of teachers and support staff and for the induction of new teachers. These are linked to the school development plan, and have contributed to the consistency of teaching during the inspection. Administrative staff know the pupils well, and contribute much to the learning climate of the school, as well as ensuring that it runs efficiently. Catering and cleaning staff are efficient, and ensure a good environment for learning.

51. The overall quality of learning resources is good, and teachers use them well to sustain pupils' interest by providing variety in teaching and learning. The library is particularly well-used by pupils at break and lunchtime, and its collection of careers resources, built up in close co-operation with the careers teacher, is outstanding. Other library resources are generally adequate, but have not received this degree of attention. There are too few resources for art and design, and this significantly limits the range of activities pupils can undertake, particularly in 3-dimensional work. Teachers during the inspection were beginning to devise good new resources to teach pupils with poor writing skills, but some of the resources used for reading are focused too closely on single words, and do not help pupils to read the texts they meet in lessons. Accommodation is generally adequate, but facilities for art and design are cramped, and those for physical education poor, particularly for outdoor sport. The school has limited the effects of this shortcoming by imaginative use of local sporting and exercise facilities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to build on the pattern of rising standards that they have established, the headteacher and governors should take the following steps.

- (1) Improve standards in literacy, particularly in writing, by:
 - Planning tasks in all subjects that will contribute to progress in reading and writing as well as to learning in the subject
 - Ensuring that all pupils complete work to a good standard
 - Improving marking and guidance to pupils
Paragraphs 1, 5, 18, 23, 25, 40, 54-60, 88.
- (2) Extend its efforts to raise standards at GCSE, by:
 - Improving arrangements to identify specific weaknesses in pupils' skills
 - Matching teaching more closely to pupils' learning needs
 - Extending the range of subjects and vocational courses offered to pupils
Paragraphs 3, 7, 22, 80, 89, 94.
- (3) Improve provision for pupils with learning difficulties, by:
 - Extending the range and quality of teaching for these pupils
 - Making closer links between specialist teaching and work in lessons
 - Identifying learning difficulties and tracking progress more effectively
Paragraphs 1, 6, 20, 47, 88, 89.
- (4) Work to improve levels of support from parents, by:
 - Extending its arrangements to provide training for parents to include support for literacy
 - Pressing for strong action to be taken against parents who do not ensure their children attend school
Paragraphs 14, 44.
- (5) Take action to improve poor attitudes and attendance, by:
 - Identifying and supporting pupils joining the school who likely to have poor attitudes
 - Improving the use of disciplinary procedures in the small number of classes where they are not effective
 - Identifying more effectively absence which should not be authorised
Paragraphs 9, 14, 17, 88, 99.
- (6) Improve provision for art and design, and accommodation for physical education, by:
 - Ensuring that accommodation and resources for each subject are adequate
 - Improving the leadership and management of art and design
 - Monitoring teaching, learning and standards more closely in art and design
Paragraphs 4, 17, 51, 73-9, 123.

Additional points for consideration by the school in formulating its action plan.

Ensure that boys and girls have equal access to all activities in each subject. *Paragraph 24.*

Extend opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own. *Paragraph 34.*

Meet all legal requirements in information supplied to parents. *Paragraph 43.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	125
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	18	71	30	6	0	0
Percentage	0	14	57	24	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	472
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	229

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	114

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	13.7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	44	57	101

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	23	22	23
	Girls	31	34	29
	Total	54	56	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	53 (39)	55 (47)	51 (34)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (6)	34 (20)	18 (9)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	15	23	22
	Girls	33	31	26
	Total	48	54	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	48 (52)	53 (45)	48 (25)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (63)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	11 (19)	19 (18)	16 (11)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	46	42	88

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	8	31	40
	Girls	3	34	37
	Total	11	65	77
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	13 (19)	74 (85)	88 (93)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	20 (25.3)

per pupil	National	39
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/A
	National	N/A	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	449
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	23	0
Other minority ethnic groups	23	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	35
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	245

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	66.2:1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.2
Key Stage 4	19.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	1,509,616
Total expenditure	1,518,435
Expenditure per pupil	3,352
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	8,819

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	458
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	33	6	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	39	6	0	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	50	0	11	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	28	22	0	0
The teaching is good.	44	44	6	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	44	0	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	22	0	11	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	11	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	28	17	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	28	6	6	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	28	6	6	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	33	11	0	11

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

ENGLISH

53. Overall ,the quality of provision for English is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Leadership and teamwork are very effective.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are still well below average.
- There is too little provision for pupils with special educational needs in English.
- Pupils' skills in independent learning and in speaking are underdeveloped.
- Some marking gives pupils too little guidance on how to improve.

54. GCSE results over the past three years have been consistently well below average, and girls are achieving more than boys. On the other hand, results in national tests for fourteen-year-olds have been rising steadily since 1999. Results in these tests in 2001 were still well below national average levels, but were well above average in comparison with similar schools, and showed exceptional improvement among the higher-attaining pupils. Boys did slightly less well than girls, but the gap between boys' and girls' results was smaller than in most schools. Nevertheless, almost half of the fourteen-year-olds did not reach the standard expected nationally. Standards during the inspection were similar to those in tests. The learning of pupils with special educational needs was generally satisfactory in English lessons during the inspection, but there was not enough additional teaching to meet all of their needs, particularly in reading and spelling. Overall achievement in English is reasonable, but standards among younger pupils are rising, and achievement at fourteen is now good.

55. Speaking skills are generally weak throughout the school. A significant number of pupils speak with brief and undeveloped responses, and do not have adequate control of the vocabulary and sentence structures of standard English. Many find it difficult to create and sustain different speech patterns for different audiences, although some higher attaining pupils have good control of language when expressing complex ideas. For example, some members of a Year 11 class discussing metaphysical poetry were able explain the poet's ideas well. Opportunities for pupils to learn to use formal spoken English are limited. Listening skills are generally better developed, and pupils often listen intently, especially when they are gripped by a topic.

56. Standards in reading are below average, and often lower. Most pupils understand the basic meaning of the texts they read, and some understand meaning that is implied

rather than stated explicitly. However, many pupils have reached low standards for their age in reading, and find difficulty in reading and responding to demanding text. The analytical skills of many pupils are weak, though higher-attaining pupils in Year 8 explored ideas of genre and atmosphere well in their study of the novel 'Room 13'. A small but significant number of pupils are still in the early stages of learning to read by the time they leave the school. While almost all of these pupils are identified as having special educational needs, the teaching they receive is not sufficient to tackle their problems.

57. Standards in writing are below average overall, and often well below average. Some higher-attaining pupils produce interesting and creative stories and poetry, but the achievement of most pupils, in almost all subjects, is hampered by weak literacy skills. Pupils' work shows frequent errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, all but the lowest-attaining pupils attempt extended writing in various forms in their English lessons, and this, together with the department's clear and appropriate focus on developing basic literacy skills, is leading to some improvement. The department ensures that even the lowest attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are entered for GCSE, and this has a positive result on achievement. There was very good teaching and learning in one writing lesson for pupils with special educational needs during the inspection, based on adapting the provisions of the national literacy strategy to the needs of the students. The teacher had identified key weaknesses in pupils' ability to compose sentences, and had produced an attractive worksheet that led them to write a simple story by writing a sentence describing each stage of a hazardous journey. However, this was an isolated example, and there is as yet no systematic approach to teaching writing across the school. The school is providing good opportunities for pupils to write outside lessons, and the quality of reflection in an anthology of poems published following a competition was often very moving.
58. The quality of teaching in English lessons during the inspection was good overall and sometimes very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Planning is detailed and provides a logical, sequenced structure to learning. Classes are managed well, and the brisk pace in most lessons keeps pupils alert. Good questioning skills help pupils to refine and clarify their thinking. Teachers offer a good level of individual help to pupils as they work. This makes pupils feel valued and confident, and helps them to understand what they need to do. Most lessons contain a suitable level of challenge for the pupils. For example, Year 11 pupils coped well with complex language and ideas on pre-twentieth century poetry, whilst a class of lower-attaining pupils in Year 9 made good progress in analysing the language of charity leaflets.
59. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the objectives of the lesson are not made clear at the outset, and the allocation of time to activities within the lesson is less well thought-out. Marking is satisfactory overall. At best, it tells the pupil exactly what to do to improve but some marking is too brief to be of use. On the other hand, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently, for example by using the library for research, and there is not enough work in groups to enable pupils to develop their speaking skills.
60. Leadership of the department is good, and teachers work well together as a team. Teaching is underpinned by sound schemes of work and there is a well considered and detailed development plan. Assessment and the use of data to predict and track pupils' progress are good. Teaching is monitored effectively by the head of department. Computers are under-used in teaching and learning English. Extra curricular provision, including theatre and cinema visits and a poetry competition, are valuable additions to the life of the school. In view of the rising standards in Years 7 to

9, the strong teaching in the department and the good systems for the assessment and tracking of progress, the department is well placed to make further improvements.

MATHEMATICS

61. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards in national tests in Year 9 are well above those in similar schools.
- Results at GCSE are improving.
- The monitoring of the work of the department is very effective.

Areas for improvement

- The teaching of low-attaining students, including those with special educational needs.

62. The results of national tests for fourteen-year olds have improved steadily over the last three years. Results in 2001 were below average, but were very high in relation to those in similar schools, particularly in the higher grades. The performance of boys is slightly below those of girls, but there is little difference in the standards overall. The number of pupils gaining A* to C grades at GCSE more than doubled in the three years 1999 to 2001, although standards overall are still well below average. There is little consistent difference in the standards reached by boys and girls. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, and often good for the older pupils. Once the standards reached by pupils joining the school are taken into account, the overall level of achievement in mathematics is good.

63. Pupils' work during the inspection confirmed the pattern of rising standards in Years 7 to 9. Although most pupils joining the school at eleven have reached low standards in mathematics, a substantial majority make good progress. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 7 is improving skills in mental arithmetic. The attention given to number and calculation also has a positive impact on speed and accuracy in Years 8 and 9. Pupils show confidence in mental calculation that supports other topics, for example, in lessons on the sum of angles of a triangle and algebraic substitution. Suitable extension work is provided for higher attaining pupils, for example in using graphical calculators to plot graphs.

64. The pattern of improving standards continues in Years 10 and 11, particularly in Year 10, where pupils are building well on their achievement in national tests. Lower-attaining pupils in both years are working at below average levels for their age, but learn well in response to work that is carefully matched to what they already know. For example, pupils in one class in Year 10 were still consolidating their understanding of the number of degrees in a triangle, but they quickly extended their knowledge to take in the external as well as the internal angles in the triangle, and speeded up their number skills by quickly subtracting a series of numbers from 180. Lower attaining students also use calculation skills well, for example in the drawing and interpretation of graphs showing football scores. Higher-attaining students make good progress in work on quadratic equations, and apply algebraic methods and trigonometrical methods effectively in problems on right-angled triangles. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 are being prepared for the top grades at GCSE. They fluently substitute

positive and negative numbers in algebraic formulae, can factor expressions in algebra, and make good progress in work in cumulative frequencies.

65. Teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, and their planning is good. Teachers use a good variety of methods and resources to interest pupils. This is generally successful, although in a few lessons pupils' concentration is not maintained to the end of the lesson. In the most effective lessons, teachers' expectations are high, extension work is used well and there is a good pace to the work. For example, in a lesson on angles, brisk and effective questioning was very effective in getting accurate answers from all pupils and keeping their attention. Most lessons get off to a lively start with short activities to reinforce and speed up number skills, such as the teaching of percentages using a counting stick and the use of a 'bingo' activity to practice simple calculations. In a few lessons for lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, planning does not take sufficient account of gaps in pupils' knowledge, and explanations are not clear enough to promote effective learning.
66. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has been in post for three years, and there is a clear direction to the mathematics teaching. Teachers are suitably qualified and have a good range of expertise and experience. Teamwork in the department is good. New textbooks have been introduced and schemes of work have been revised. The work of the department is very effectively monitored and evaluated, and this contributes much to the consistency of teaching and learning. School records of pupils' performance are used well to set targets for individual pupils and groups of pupils. All pupils take courses leading to GCSE, and lower attaining pupils take certificates of proficiency in basic mathematical skills. This ensures that all remain engaged and included in work in the subject; While computers were not fully operating at the time of the inspection, other resources are of good quality and are effectively used.

SCIENCE

67. Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9.
- There are very good procedures for assessing and monitoring progress.
- Vocational courses in Year 10 make good provision for lower-attaining pupils.
- Leadership of the department is very good.

Areas for improvement

- A consistent approach to sharing and reviewing learning objectives with pupils.
- The teaching of literacy skills in science.
- A more consistent approach to behaviour management.
- A greater intellectual challenge for higher attaining pupils.

68. Results in national tests for fourteen-year-olds in 2001 were well below national average levels, but very high in comparison with similar schools. Boys and girls performed equally well. The results were a considerable improvement on the previous year and have improved markedly since the opening of the school. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were very low compared with the national average, and were lower than in 2000. However, standards in Year 11 during the inspection were better than those in recent examinations, and overall levels of achievement in science are now good. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, although science is not making a full contribution to the development of writing.

69. Standards in Year 9 during the inspection were below average, but there was evidence of improving standards in Years 7 to 9, reflecting the improved understanding of science by pupils joining the school and a new, carefully structured scheme of work. Pupils generally acquire a fairly sound general knowledge of the subject but most have very limited ability to recall work from previous units of work, or to apply their knowledge confidently. For example, pupils in Year 8 had confused ideas about renewable and non-renewable energy sources and about the units for measuring heat energy. Lower-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs are provided with good modified learning materials and given very good support from teachers and support staff in lessons and reach standards broadly in line with their ability. Pupils generally make good progress through Years 7 to 9.

70. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 have sound knowledge of their subject material, talk confidently about their work and have produce good coursework investigations. However, they do not consistently or convincingly link appropriate theories to their

predictions of the outcome of an investigation, or to the evaluation of its results. For example, pupils made accurate predictions about how temperature would affect the rate of a chemical reaction but did not put relate this to their knowledge of the kinetic model of chemical reactions. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 11 are well supported in lessons, and those in Year 10 generally find the challenge of the GNVQ courses appropriate to their needs, particularly the boys. For example, Year 10 pupils worked well when setting up experiments to culture bacteria on agar jelly, observing and understanding safety precautions.

71. The overall quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers have good knowledge of science and prepare lessons well, using a variety of strategies to produce good opportunities for learning. For example, a very effective power point presentation captured the interest of Year 11 pupils, particularly the boys, and generated a lively and well-informed discussion of social and moral aspects of the use of fertilisers and pollution of rivers. Clear learning objectives for lessons are identified, but these are not always shared with pupils or adequately reviewed at the end of lessons to assess and consolidate progress. Pupils' learning is most effective in lessons with a high level of challenge and pace. For example, Year 10 pupils drew on their knowledge of electricity and magnetism, with the aid of good demonstrations, to develop a sound grasp of electromagnetism, and were then challenged with to explain the working of circuit breakers in their homework. In the isolated example of unsatisfactory teaching observed, behaviour was not managed well enough, and too little learning took place. Analysis of pupils work, however, also showed weaknesses in teaching and marking the writing that pupils need to do to record their work.
72. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department has a very clear and realistic view of what needs to be done to raise standards further and there is a good development plan. A new scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is already leading to improvements in standards, as reflected in the results in the national tests, and the introduction of vocational courses in Year 10 has provided a stimulus for lower attaining pupils generally. There are very good procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress throughout the school and there is effective use of target setting from Year 8. The use of computers is developing well, and the current programme of refurbishment of the laboratories will considerably improve the facilities for teaching and learning.

ART AND DESIGN

73. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- There are good relationships between pupils and teachers.
- Pupils are managed well.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are much lower than they should be.
- The teaching of basic skills in drawing, composition and colour needs to be improved.
- The strategic management of the subject is weak.
- Accommodation and resources are inadequate.
- Sketchbooks are under-used.

74. Results in GCSE examinations in 2001 were well above average, particularly among the girls. However, the standard of work during the inspection was much lower, and well below average at fourteen and sixteen. While this reflected the very limited skills of pupils joining the school, overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Girls perform better than boys due to their better attitudes. They listen more carefully and take greater pride in their efforts.
75. The work of pupils in Years 7 to 9 during the inspection showed some improvement over time, but was well below average, due to the lack of basic skills of observation from drawing. Pupils can make compositions from overlapped shapes to create Cubist-like images with limited, subdued colours. Others make interesting collages from facial features taken from magazines and re-arranged into grotesque, funny or dramatic faces. Most drawing is in pencil, and on a small scale. Sketchbooks are not used for investigation or visual research, and few pupils refer to them when developing or planning work. Pupils lack understanding of the techniques necessary to show scale, texture, form and proportion in their drawing. Pupils make insufficient use of the work of famous artists, European or from other cultures, to influence their own work.
76. Although pupils in Years 10 and 11 have sketchbooks, they use them as homework books, and few have their books open alongside them as they work. The emphasis on finishing work, rather than developing it through research, limits its quality. Pupils have made drawings of New York from the Internet, but there was little evidence in their work during the inspection of drawings of buildings in Salford.
77. Achievement is unsatisfactory. Even allowing for the varied, often limited experiences of art and design the pupils have had on arrival in school, there is too little development of their skills in drawing, composition and colour in Years 7 to 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not understand their own work or the work of famous artists well enough to make satisfactory progress, and depend too much on their teacher for guidance on how to improve. Pupils with special educational needs are not engaged sufficiently in their work to enable them to make satisfactory progress. The narrow curriculum, and ineffective use of sketchbooks, allow few opportunities for gifted and

talented pupils to make satisfactory progress.

78. Teaching and learning during the inspection were satisfactory in most lessons, but unsatisfactory in a quarter. Teaching improved significantly in response to feedback during the inspection. Teachers manage pupils well, and the best lessons begin with clear, often exciting demonstrations. In a good lesson in Year 8, for example, the teacher made her expectations of behaviour and productivity clear when asking the class to make a pastel drawing of the range of tones in a still-life group. Pupils responded eagerly to the different scale, materials and approach, gaining knowledge of observation and analysis. On the other hand, some lessons lacked challenge, and did not give pupils a clear idea of what they were learning. When this happened, pupils' attention wandered, there was too much noise, and learning was unsatisfactory. In some lessons, teaching and learning were affected by the teacher's lack of specialist knowledge of the subject.
79. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. While the head of department provides leadership and has a vision for future developments, there are insufficiently detailed plans to bring about curriculum improvements or to monitor teaching and learning. The curriculum in art is centred on drawing and painting, without opportunities for pupils to work with print, textiles, and clay or to generate imagery with computers. The study of both European art and art from other cultures is underdeveloped. The marking and assessment of work does not link pupils' work to national standards, and gives too little guidance on how to improve. Information about pupils' work is not used to set targets or to plan teaching. Accommodation and resources are inadequate. Some rooms are too cramped for the size of groups, or to allow for larger scale work, and some rooms have no sink. Younger pupils have no sketchbooks.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Overall, the quality of provision for design technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are now good.
- Examination performance improved in 2001.
- Standards at 14 have been rising.
- Marking and assessment procedures are good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at GCSE remain low.
- Planning for progress in Years 7 to 9 lacks detail.
- Resources are not always well matched to pupils' needs.
- The range of courses in Years 10 and 11 is narrow.

81. Few pupils take design and technology at GCSE, and results over the past three years have been well below average, though they improved slightly in 2001. Standards are below average at fourteen. However, most pupils join the school with poorly developed skills in the subject, and overall achievement is satisfactory, and sometimes good, particularly in food technology. The learning and achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, and good in lessons where they are given practical tasks well matched to their needs.

82. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 produce good practical work in all subjects taught in the department. They use a wide range of hand and machine tools safely and confidently, and offer ideas well, for example in suggesting variations and using colours in a toasties project in food technology. Other examples of good work included good sketching of animal shapes for a child's educational jig-saw, and well-planned work in a project on vegetarianism, where graphs were used to present the results of a questionnaire. Homework is completed well across the department, and pupils are encouraged to write in complete sentences in their work. Where the work is weaker, it is mainly due to lack of depth in research, poorer presentational skills, weak handwriting and spelling errors. There is no significant difference between boys and girls, but boys' written work is generally weaker than that of girls.

83. Standards in Year 11 during the inspection were below average in resistant materials and food technology. However, standards in Year 10 showed an improvement in all subjects taught in the department, with girls generally performing at a higher level than boys, particularly in the quality of presentation and in written work. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 11 and good in Year 10. The better design folders show good research, use of colour, commercial material, photographs and information communication technology in presenting work. Examples included a bedside table project, which included accurate use of three-dimensional drawings and good analysis

of existing products, and good research into a savoury take-away snack product to be sold in the school canteen. There is neat work, with good ideas in electronics for a key ring light. The work of lower-attaining pupils had weaknesses in the proportions and use of lines, and annotations of drawings, in the quality of research and in spelling.

84. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from very good to satisfactory and is good overall. The success of most lessons is based on careful planning, particularly of the tasks pupils are given to do. For example, pupils in Year 10 were using a variety of presentational skills to produce a welcome pack for visitors to the 2002 Commonwealth Games, and a Year 11 group made good progress in a "hands on" exercise looking at the techniques in finishing different types of softwoods and hardwoods. Pupils were also challenged to think hard, for example in a Year 9 lesson, in which they learned to disassemble a dish, and considered why ingredients are added to a product to improve appearance or taste. Pupils in these lessons are managed well, and pace is good. Boys in particular sustain contribution well when they are engaged in practical work. Where the teaching is satisfactory, planning is generally good, but resources are less well-matched to pupils' needs, and some lose concentration. Marking homework are generally well used in the department. Provision for numeracy and the ICT are satisfactory, and include effective use of computers in design. Provision for literacy is making some contribution to learning, and pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well in discussion. However, literacy work is not helping pupils to tackle their longer-term weaknesses in writing.
85. The department is managed well, and teaching is effectively monitored and evaluated. Outline planning and assessment procedures, including target setting, are good. However, there is no overall plan for progress in Years 7 to 9, and some lessons are too short to allow pupils to gain maximum benefit from particular work. The department has recently introduced new subjects in Years 10 and 11, but there are as yet no vocational courses. During the week of inspection, the dust extraction system was not fitted to the circular saw and there are no fume extractors in the electronics room. Technicians make an effective contribution to learning. There is a good display of work, with examples of work that show the standards needed to achieve specific grades in examinations.

GEOGRAPHY

86. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- There is very good management of pupils' behaviour and learning.
- Teaching is good in almost all lessons.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.

Points for development

- Work needs to build more consistently on what pupils can already do.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write independently.
- Higher-attaining pupils need greater challenge.

87. Standards at fourteen during the inspection were below average, though standards among higher-attaining pupils were broadly average, and sometimes better. Standards at GCSE have been well below national average levels over the past three years, although almost all pupils have gained a graded result. During the inspection, no pupils were studying geography in Year 10 but two pupils were studying the subject in Year 11 as an extra-curricular activity. These pupils were reaching broadly average standards overall, and their coursework was of a good standard.
88. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 are given the same work, and the achievement of many pupils in the middle of the ability range is good. There is occasional extra work for they relatively small numbers of higher-attaining pupils, but they are under-challenged, and achieve less than they could. The achievement of some lower-attaining pupils is limited by poor attendance. The learning of pupils with special educational needs during the inspection was satisfactory overall except for writing, where they sometimes copied work they did not understand. Overall achievement during the inspection was satisfactory, and boys were reaching similar standards to girls.
89. Pupils use appropriate geographical vocabulary for their age, reinforced by the glossary that they develop in their exercise books. They use this vocabulary effectively in answering and asking questions, but the understanding of many pupils does not go far beyond the definition of a word. All pupils in Year 7 understand direction and the use of symbols on maps. Some have successfully undertaken a first-hand investigation into traffic volume at a local crossroads, and made effective use of computers to present their findings in graphs and charts. Higher-attaining pupils have completed this work to a high standard. Pupils in Year 8 understand significant elements of the processes of weathering and erosion, but many have difficulty in grasping the concept of different levels of economic activity. Higher-attaining pupils understand this concept well and are categorise activities and identify them from photographs. Most pupils in Year 9 have sound understanding of the relationship between climate and vegetation. All understand the impact of natural hazards on the environment, and higher-attaining pupils use their good prior knowledge of volcanoes to support their investigation of seismic activity. The learning of the small number of pupils taking geography as a voluntary course during the inspection was good overall,

but in one case was hindered by very weak spelling that had not been identified and tackled.

90. Teaching is good for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and very good for the pupils taking GCSE. Teachers manage pupils well, and behaviour and relationships are good.. This enables the teachers to concentrate on presenting information in a clear and interesting manner, for example through a well-chosen video of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. Lessons are very well planned and organised to engage pupils' interest. This secures good participation from all, and pupils work hard. Potentially difficult pupils are handled with a light touch and good humour, and there is sometimes an element of fun in lessons that boys in particular enjoy. All pupils respond well to questions from the teacher, trying always to give a thoughtful if not necessarily correct answer. They show some initiative in lessons, often asking questions of the teacher to check their understanding, and will politely persist in asking questions if they do not understand what is required of them. In some lessons, the teacher selects too many boys to answer questions, and some girls then become rather passive in their learning. Learning also suffered in one lesson when behaviour was not well managed, and the pace of work was too slow.
91. Virtually all pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work. However, the quality of learning is limited by too much use of worksheets, which do not demand enough of higher-attaining pupils, and provide too few opportunities for pupils to write independently or to learn to draw their own diagrams. Provision for developing reading and writing is given too little consideration, and geography is not making the contribution it should be to literacy. However, the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to numeracy through work with graphs and co-ordinates, and computers are generally used well.
92. Geography is well managed on a day to day basis through the humanities department, but there is no head of geography, and this restricts arrangements for longer-term management. Work is regularly marked, and a formal record kept of assessments and tests. Pupils are given good guidance on National Curriculum standards by means of graded displays of work. They have termly targets, but these are very broad, and are not written in pupils' own language, so that their value is limited. Good resources and accommodation create a good climate for learning and give pupils variety and interest in their work.

HISTORY

93. Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching in most lessons is well-planned and effective.
- Literacy skills are well taught and help pupils with weak study skills to learn.
- Good use of computers helps pupils to organise their own learning.
- Extra- curricular provision enhances pupils' class-room experience.
- Management of the subject is good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at GCSE need improvement, especially by girls.
- Speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped in lessons.
- Pupils in a minority of lessons do not concentrate and work properly.
- Assessment in Year 9 does not accurately reflect standards.
- Pupils need clearer targets for improvement.

94. Results at GCSE in recent years have been well below average, and this was reflected in work during the inspection. The performance of boys is significantly better than girls in most years. Most pupils in Year 11 can present basic factual information in written form, and generally give correct answers to questions posed by the teacher. Higher-attaining pupils write at length, and can give a coherent account of historical events, but most pupils are weak at working independently on historical sources. They tend to describe the content of the material, rather than interpreting and evaluating it. Answers to questions in class are often brief, and sometimes poor recall of previous learning hinders the development of a real understanding of the topic studied. The Year 10 examination group is more representative of the full range of ability, and a significant minority reach average standards for their age. Most pupils are making progress in their knowledge of the past and reaching a satisfactory level of achievement.

95. Standards are below average at fourteen. Most pupils can put together basic information from written and visual sources to provide simple explanations of life in the past and can write short biographies of important people. They are weak at evaluating sources and in explaining their reasons for coming to a particular judgement about a past event. Higher-attaining pupils reach nationally expected standards. These pupils write at length, with confidence and flair, when their interest has been aroused. Many pupils enter the school with weaknesses in reading and writing and have poor recall of what they have learned at primary school. The great majority are making good progress in acquiring knowledge of the past and the emphasis in many lessons on the development of literacy skills is helping them to handle source materials in a more

thoughtful way. Overall, achievement by most pupils in years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, and there is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls.

96. Teaching during the inspection was good or better in three quarters of lessons, and satisfactory in all but one of the remainder. All lessons have clear aims which are carefully explained to pupils who know what is expected of them. Most lessons also have clearly defined literacy targets. This is particularly helpful to pupils with special educational needs. Very good teaching in a Year 7 lesson on the Roman Army helped these pupils to understand unfamiliar words and extend their vocabulary of historical terms. A well-planned lesson in Year 8 on the execution of Mary Queen of Scots showed higher-attaining pupils how to formulate a simple hypothesis using written and visual sources. Good teaching in a Year 11 lesson on American involvement in Vietnam made effective use of written sources and short video clips. The teacher's good subject knowledge and clear explanations helped pupils to understand how a number of factors need to be brought together to explain complex events in the past.
97. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there are some weaknesses in managing the class, so that some pupils lose interest and distract others. Answers to teachers' questions are often brief, and pupils are not challenged to provide more explanation or give reasons in support of their views. Discussion is rarely used to develop pupils' thinking and listening skills. In the single unsatisfactory lesson observed, weak management of poor behaviour prevented any significant learning from taking place. Pupils' work is regularly marked, and comment is often encouraging and helpful. Assessment of written work at fourteen, however, tends to over-estimate pupils' achievements, and does not accurately reflect the standard reached in lessons. Targets are sometimes set for pupils, but these are not always clearly focused on how to improve in history, especially at more advanced levels.
98. Leadership and management are good. The development plan sets out clear strategies to raise standards, and work on literacy is improving the writing of younger pupils. Text-book and video resources are good, and teachers are beginning to use the Internet well for individual research. History makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development, and good use of local history is helping pupils learn about their own heritage. A history club and master-class provide enhanced opportunities for pupils to develop their interest in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

99. Overall, the provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards are rising.
- Most pupils learn well and make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are mainly good and occasionally very good.
- Most pupils have good attitudes and behave well.
- Relationships are good, and provide much mutual support.
- The curriculum is well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Provision is effectively managed.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are below average at fourteen.
- Some pupils do not complete homework regularly.
- Attendance at some classes for older pupils is poor.

100. The standards reached by fourteen-year-olds in teachers' assessments are rising, but are still below average, and girls of this age are doing better than the boys. Standards at sixteen during the inspection were broadly average. The school has recently introduced a range of GNVQ programmes at the foundation and intermediate level to replace the GCSE that it previously operated. Over the last three years the percentages of pupils gaining grades in the range A* to C at GCSE have been above the national average in one year and below in the other two. However, the proportion of pupils achieving a graded result has been high, and pupils have achieved better GCSE results in ICT than they have achieved in most other subjects. Progress between the ages of 14 and 16 is good, and by the age of 16 boys and girls perform equally well.

101. Many pupils enter the school with very low skills in information and communication technology, and this limits the pace of their learning. For example, pupils in a Year 7 class working on basic word processing tasks made restricted progress because of very poor keyboard skills and an overall lack of confidence. Pupils in these classes only made limited progress with the basic tasks after receiving detailed guidance and support from the teacher.

102. Pupils in Year 9 during the inspection were reaching below-average standards. For example, pupils in a middle-attaining Year 9 group were working on aspects relating to the Internet. Most had to be closely guided by the teacher in order for them to make progress with the task of identifying different ways of linking internet web pages. The majority of pupils working towards the various GNVQ programmes are producing work

which is comparable to that normally found elsewhere. For example, pupils in a Year 11 group who were working towards a GNVQ Foundation Part One Award made good progress with their work involving the development of spreadsheets to assist in running a business. Pupils' portfolios in this class were carefully presented, and met the requirements of the course well.

103. Teaching and learning are mainly good and occasionally very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are well planned, with an appropriate range of activities, and pupils are well supported. In some classes, pupils work well on a collaborative basis.. Management of pupils is effective and behaviour is generally very good. Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work. Relationships between pupils and with the teacher are very good. However, standards in a number of classes suffer from a high level of absence, and some pupils do not complete their homework, even though this is carefully checked by teachers.
104. The subject is effectively led and managed. Lessons are observed, and assessment results are reviewed on an annual basis. The curriculum is well planned, and meets pupils' needs well, particularly between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Resources are good overall, though some are ageing. At the time of the inspection, a virus had caused the school serious problems with its computer network, and some work had been lost. Although accommodation is generally satisfactory, some areas are in need of refurbishment, and there is insufficient working space for pupils close to the computers.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

105. Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Planning is generally good.
- Resources and accommodation are good overall.

Areas for improvement

- Information on the performance of groups of pupils is not analysed closely enough.
- The monitoring of teaching is not focussed closely enough on raising standards.
- Teachers and pupils have too little access to computers.

106. Standards in Year 9 in 2001 were below average, but represent a significant improvement on those for 2000. Higher-attaining fourteen-year-olds achieve good standards for their age. The small number of pupils taking French to GCSE achieve above-average results. Girls generally do better than boys, although some boys have attained A grades in the recent past. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs benefit from work that is carefully matched to their needs, and make good progress. In view of standards in literacy and in speaking and listening

among pupils joining the school, overall achievement in the subject is good at fourteen, and satisfactory at sixteen.

107. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils produce good extended writing, and refer, generally accurately, to past and future events. They speak with reasonable confidence, but often need support in moving beyond set phrases. Standards among lower-attaining pupils are well below average, although weaknesses in their work are typical for lower-attaining pupils of this age, and pupils remain involved in their work. They understand short extracts in familiar contexts and copy single words or short phrases correctly. They produce some extended writing and attempt to refer to past and future events, but their work is often inaccurate. Some lower attaining boys are very reluctant to speak French.
108. Standards of work produced by higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are broadly average for their course. There is more extended writing, and pupils refer to past and future events with some confidence and accuracy. They improve the quality of their writing by increasing its complexity, and use drafting and word processing to improve the presentation of their work. Lower attaining pupils are working at low levels in all aspects of French. However, their writing is poorly organised and shows inaccuracies, especially among boys. Lower-attaining pupils' listening skills are not well developed. However, they can take part in simple structured conversations of two or three exchanges, and read short extracts made up of familiar language.
109. The department's emphasis on spelling, grammar and sentence construction makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy. The department makes a satisfactory contribution to numeracy through study of the counting system used in French, currency conversions, and the twenty-four hour clock. There is very little use of information and communication technology.
110. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, and its overall quality is good. Teachers make a crisp start to the lesson, giving pupils a clear idea of what they are expected to learn. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with a variety of methods of presentation to maintain pupils' interest. Teachers use visual presentations and real objects to support understanding, so that pupils quickly learn new material. They place high expectations on pupils through consistent, effective use of French, so that pupils learn to respond confidently. Learning is reviewed effectively at the end of each lesson, and suitable homework is set. This teaching leads to good learning among higher-attaining pupils. However, its makes much more limited impact on the underlying weaknesses in speaking and listening and in literacy of many lower-attaining pupils.
111. Leadership and management in modern foreign languages are good. The school is arranging for all pupils to take French throughout the school, and is providing additional lessons in Italian. On the other hand, timetabling difficulties leave intervals between lessons which are too long for some pupils, and some lessons for younger pupils are too long. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' work, including a portfolio of work at different levels of the National Curriculum. The scheme of work, however, does not refer consistently enough to the National Curriculum, and there is too little provision for pupils to assess their own learning. Monitoring of teaching and learning quality is informal, and lacks a sharp focus on raising attainment. The department development plan is up to date; it links into the school development plan and is presented appropriately. Resources are generally good in the department, but it has too little access to computers. There are too few books and other resources for the subject in the library.

MUSIC

112. Overall the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The teaching and learning of most pupils are now good.
- Pupils attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Standards in Years 7 and 8 are improving.

Areas of improvement

- Standards in Years 9 and 10 are well below average.
- Assessment has yet to be developed to monitor the progress of the subject.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently.

113. Teaching and learning during the inspection were good, but this is a recent development, and pupils had considerable disruption to their musical education prior to the arrival of their present teacher. The small number of pupils taking GCSE music in 2001 achieved very low results, and standards at 14, in teachers' assessments and during the inspection, were well below average. Girls achieve better standards than boys, and the gap is similar to that in most schools nationally. Throughout the school, higher-attaining pupils, especially the girls, work well in pairs, but many boys prefer to work alone. Lower-attaining pupils find it very difficult to work without personal support from the teacher and soon lose concentration. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Levels of achievement are improving, but are not yet satisfactory.

114. Pupils in Year 9 during the inspection could clap simple word rhythms, and worked well in pairs, but could not keep together as a class. Higher attaining pupils composed music confidently, and some pupils successfully improvised simple melodies using the rhythm of Haydn's Minuet in G. Pupils in Year 10 during the inspection had only recently begun to build the background knowledge and skills in music they needed for their GCSE course. However, they listened well to Debussy's L'après-midi d'un Faune, and gave good answers to questions about mood and how it was achieved. Pupils defined the elements of music used in the piece and described what they heard in simple, but well constructed sentences. Pupils behave responsibly when collecting instruments and are keen to play them. The quality of teaching and learning in individual instrumental music lessons is very good.

115. Teaching and learning are good overall, and at times very good in Year 10. Subject knowledge is good, and lessons are well planned, building well on short activities that hold students' interest and attention. There is a good variety of strategies, including paired work. The teacher manages the pupils very well, the emphasis being on learning, respect and self-control. Most pupils respond with good behaviour in class, and those few that do not are treated firmly but positively. However, although the teacher provides good feedback to individual pupils, there is time for classes as a whole to reflect on their work, and to recognise what they have achieved and what could be improved. As a result, they are not building a mental picture of what makes a

good performance and composition. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve their composing and performing tasks quickly in lessons, and could cope with more demanding work. However, there is good challenge to pupils in Year 10.

116. The current management and leadership of music in the school is good, and provision is beginning to develop. However, the teacher has not yet had time to begin to assess and track progress effectively, and arrangements for this are inadequate. Pupils in the very well-led choir, which includes a few boys, show genuine enjoyment in their singing, and more pupils are now learning to play instruments. Music makes good provision for pupils' social and moral development, and very good provision for their cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. The quality of provision in physical education is good.

Strengths

- There is a strong, committed staff team.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good.
- Extra-curricular sport provides very good opportunities for all pupils to excel.
- The appointment of a school sports co-ordinator has raised the profile of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are below average throughout the school.
- Accommodation for physical education is inadequate.
- There is too little time for the subject in Years 7-9.

118. Standards at fourteen and sixteen are generally below average, but are improving. A significant minority of pupils, particularly boys, achieve good standards, and boys perform better than girls overall. As most pupils joining the school have reached low standards in physical education, current achievement is good.

119. By Year 9 most pupils are competent in a range of games skills. Year 8 girls show sound footwork skills in netball, changing speed and direction effectively. In boys' basketball, most pupils understand the principles of play, but only high-attaining pupils develop more an effective understanding of rules and tactics. Standards in girls' dance are below average. Low-attaining pupils show a good sense of rhythm, but lack confidence, and do not move fluently. Most pupils make good progress as their confidence improves. Year 9 girls produce good creative ideas in their group dances, and show a sound understanding of dynamic effort in performance. Most pupils understand the need to prepare for exercise, and know how to warm up. Pupils' planning and performing skills develop well in most lessons, but there are limited opportunities for evaluating their own and others' work, particularly against specific criteria. As a result, these skills are under developed. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the physical education programme and make good

progress.

120. Pupils aged fourteen to sixteen continue to develop their skills well. In basketball, for example, most boys show average or better understanding of the principles of defensive play, and pupils can apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of rules and tactics, successfully, in a game. Higher-attaining pupils perform at an above average level. Independent learning skills develop well. Pupils in Year 11 showed maturity and competence when using sophisticated equipment in a session booked by the school at a local health and fitness centre. GCSE pupils, studying for the Junior Sports Leaders' Award, prepare and deliver lesson plans suitable for primary age pupils, and evaluate each others' work confidently. Standards in GCSE coursework are below average, but a significant number of high-attaining pupils achieve at least average standards in the theoretical aspects. All pupils contribute well to discussions, and many take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils' skills in using computers develop satisfactorily through individual studies on personal fitness.
121. The quality of teaching, and the learning it promotes, is good throughout the school with a high proportion of very good teaching in Years 10 and 11. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. Good relationships between staff and pupils usually create a positive, co-operative learning environment. There was one exception to this, when poor behaviour disrupted learning. Overall, the teachers' management of pupils is good, and contributes significantly to high levels of participation, standards of dress and good behaviour in the majority of lessons. Pupils are well motivated, and have good attitudes to the subject, reflected in the good physical and creative effort they put into their work, and their support for extra-curricular activities. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, prepare their lessons well and generally maintain a good pace of work. However, in Years 7 to 9 the pace of learning is hindered by the length of the double period allocated. This is too long for most physical activities to be sustained at a brisk pace by younger pupils. The pupils' concentration often declines, progress slows and time is not used to the best effect.
122. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers share the aims of lessons with pupils, and check that they understand them. Well-designed tasks ensure that pupils build on previous learning, and make progress through opportunities to practise new skills, and to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and use a range of strategies effectively to give pupils a share of responsibility for their learning. Teachers use questions skilfully, for example to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding of the skeletal and muscular systems in Year 10. The marking of GCSE coursework provides good advice on how pupils can improve their work, but teachers do not always ensure that pupils take action as a result. Teachers give appropriate attention to literacy, numeracy and the use of computers in written work.
123. Leadership and management are good overall. The staff form a strong, committed team, enhanced by the recent appointment of a school sports co-ordinator, as part of the Education Action Zone project. The latter has enabled a variety of curriculum initiatives that benefit the school, particularly the development of strong primary school and community sporting links. However, time for the subject is below nationally recommended levels, and there are weaknesses in schemes of work and assessment procedures. Boys and girls do not follow the same programme of learning activities in Years 8 and 9, and this limits girls' opportunities to study basketball. Accommodation for the subject is poor, particularly for outdoor sports. The school has taken effective steps to minimise the impact of this problem by using facilities in the community, but it nevertheless has a detrimental effect on standards

and progress, and causes some time to be wasted in travel.

124. About half of the pupils participate in an extensive programme of clubs and inter-school competitions. These are open to all, and provide very good opportunities for all pupils, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel. Earlier this year, the Year 8 boys' football team won the Salford Schools' League without losing a match, while the Year 10 girls' netball team reached the semi-finals of the Salford Schools' Cup. Individual pupils gain representative honours at district level in football, netball, rugby league and athletics. Four boys have signed schoolboy contracts with professional football clubs.