

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ASTLEY PARK SCHOOL**

Harrington Road, Chorley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119877

Headteacher: John McAndrew

Reporting inspector: Robert B Thompson  
10781

Dates of inspection: 29 April - 2 May 2002

Inspection number: 244722

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Harrington Road Chorley Lancashire
Postcode:	PR7 1JZ
Telephone number:	01257 262227
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Smith
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22695	Robert Thompson	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages Physical education	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27409	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	English Geography English as an additional language	How well does the school care for its pupils?
22695	Ray Cardinal	Team inspector	Special educational needs History Religious education	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
2746	Roy Lund	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	
8810	Sue Aldridge	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Information and communication technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14563	Graham Pirt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art	How well are pupils taught?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Astley Park is a large special school, which provides education for 134 pupils, aged four to 16, with moderate learning difficulties. There are currently 96 boys and 38 girls on roll. At present there are three children in the Foundation Stage of the school. Several pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs, which describe additional special needs; eight have severe learning difficulties, 18 have emotional and behavioural difficulties, nine have speech and communication difficulties, and 14 have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). There are three pupils from ethnic minorities. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language and 38 per cent of pupils receive free school meals. On entry to school, all pupils have attainments that are below national expectations and most have low self-esteem and lack confidence as a result of previous unhappy school experiences. The school has a wide catchment area but all pupils live within the county of Lancashire except three. Most pupils are brought to school on provided transport. The school has been part of local education authority special educational needs review for almost three years, the result of which should be known in the near future.

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

This is an improving school with sound leadership and management and provides a sound education for its pupils. Senior staff give clear educational direction to the work of the school and strong support to the headteacher. The quality of teaching and learning is good and, as a result, pupils, whatever their age, gender, additional need or ethnic background, achievements are good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The school is effectively led and managed by the headteacher, strongly supported by senior staff.
- Teaching and support in lessons is good overall; this ensures pupils make good progress.
- The school ensures the pupils make good progress in their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Staff manage pupils well. As a result pupils have good attitudes to work and behave very well in lessons and in and around the school. Relationships are very good.
- There is good use of links with the community to enhance the quality of pupils' education.
- Teaching and support in lessons given in the school are good overall; this ensures pupils make good progress.
- The quality of information provided for parents is very good.

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

- The role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to work and socialise with their mainstream peers.
- The overall management of the curriculum.
- The procedures to monitor and improve attendance.
- Staff knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in February 1998 and has potential to further improve. The quality of teaching has improved, which in turn has raised pupils' achievement. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and are now good. A very good careers library has been established, enhanced by a good careers programme. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well embedded in the school. The increased provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has had a positive effect on pupils' work. Procedures for monitoring, evaluation and assessment of pupils' progress, behaviour and personal development have been implemented well. The school has improved its development planning; it covers three years and is costed effectively.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	Key
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	very good A
Reading	B	B	B	good B
Writing	B	B	C	satisfactory C
Mathematics	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	

\* IEPs are Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs.

All pupils, whatever their age, gender or ethnic background make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school's statutory targets are appropriate. Pupils make good progress towards the whole school targets and those within their Individual Education Plans. Progress in literacy and numeracy is good. Pupils with additional special needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 11, with all 19 pupils gaining Entry Level Certificates at the highest level. Pupils' achievement in physical education (PE) is very good; many are achieving near national standards in their work. Achievement in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. Pupils' achievement in music and art is good in Years 1 to 6, but unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 due to inadequate time allocation. Pupils develop good self-awareness and an awareness of others. Pupils' achievements since the last inspection have improved.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are interested and responsive in their lessons. They enjoy taking responsibility, such as returning the registers or setting out equipment in the hall and putting away at the end of lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous to staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning. They work and communicate as independently as possible. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good; pupils trust staff and relate well to them.
Attendance	Attendance, compared to similar schools, is satisfactory.

Pupils are enthusiastic when they arrive in the morning and they maintain their interest in activities throughout the day.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 - 6	Years 7 - 11
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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



Teaching and learning are good overall. Children in the Foundation Stage of the school are integrated with Nursery and Reception. The quality of their teaching and learning is good. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science and personal and social education. Teaching and learning in physical education is very good and is a strength of the school. The strength of teaching is the teachers' knowledge of pupils' ability and special educational needs. Teachers are skilled at involving all pupils in whole-class teaching and learning, and in matching work to individual need. Support staff are well deployed and this helps pupils to be involved and succeed. Teachers and support staff work well together as a team, manage behaviour well and give appropriate praise for effort. This enhances pupils' progress. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good. The teaching of pupils with additional special needs and those with English as an additional language is also good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The quality of the curriculum is good for pupils up to Year 6 and very good for pupils in Years 10 and 11, but there is insufficient time for music and art for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Preparation for life after school is very successful. The school should examine opportunities to provide a greater range of extra-curricular activities for pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils are well supported by staff in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' work makes them aware of how society works and the relationships between rights and responsibilities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils receive high quality support and guidance from school staff and other professionals involved in their education. Procedures for pupils' welfare are good. However, staff training on child protection procedures needs updating. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are not satisfactory.

The school has effective links with parents. The quality of information provided to parents, particularly on pupils' progress, is very good. Careers education and the introduction of citizenship are particularly good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and the management of the school are sound. The headteacher is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. The vision for the school's development is constrained, as the school is waiting for the outcome of a long-standing special educational needs review. The school should formalise induction procedures for staff.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. The governing body of the school is very supportive of the work of the school. However, at the moment the governors have insufficient expertise, to monitor and evaluate procedures effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has begun to formally monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. The school has identified whole-school targets and targets for individual pupils. The school is at an early stage of analysing information about standards in order to identify what it needs to do to improve them further.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses its school improvement plan to guide spending. Specific grants are used well to support improvement. The school understands and satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.

Overall staffing levels, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The careers library is very good.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The school is helping their children to mature and become more responsible.</li><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• The teaching is good, and children behave well.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework provided for pupils.</li><li>• A more interesting range of activities outside school.</li></ul>

The inspection team agree with positive views parents have of the school, but also agree with parents that a more suitable amount of homework could be provided, particularly for pupils in the secondary department of the school. The inspection team also agrees that the school could look for innovative ways of increasing extra-curricular activities for pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils' progress is good and their achievement is also good. All 21 Year 11 pupils taking the Entry Level Certificate in 2001 gained passes. Seven pupils achieved six passes each at the highest level and a further five pupils achieved five passes each at the highest level. This is good for a school of this type. Appropriate targets have been set for all pupils for the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 9. Pupils' good achievement is a good improvement since the last inspection when achievement overall was satisfactory. The three Foundation Stage children are taught with Reception and Nursery children. They achieve well and make good progress towards their Early Learning Goals. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 shows a very good improvement because pupils were judged to be making unsatisfactory progress in three subjects at the time of the last inspection.
2. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills. Achievement in reading, speaking and listening is good. Specialist provision for language support is an important element in maintaining the high standard of language development throughout the school. Achievement in writing is good in Years 1 to 6, with, for example, good progress made in creative writing including poetry, and satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 11, where pupils become more reluctant to write.
3. In mathematics pupils' achievement is good throughout Years 1 to 11. Younger pupils recognise the characteristics of different shapes. By the end of Year 6, higher attainers make good progress in addition. By the end of Year 9, pupils choose random numbers and count on in fives. They estimate what is heavier or lighter and check by using scales to measure. Pupils' good achievement by the end of Year 11 is well illustrated by examination results. All 19 Year 11 pupils taking the Entry Level Certificate in 2001 achieved passes at the highest level.
4. In science there is also good achievement throughout Years 1 to 11. Higher-attaining pupils learn to make predictions by the end of Year 2. Lower attainers develop their observation skills and by the end of Year 6 they know, for example, that clothing worn varies according to the weather. By the end of Year 9, all pupils are aware of the idea of a "fair test" and by the end of Year 11 they can plan an investigation.
5. In French, pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 9. French was not taught in Years 10 and 11 during the week of the inspection, but scrutiny of work, pupils' files and records show that progress is at least satisfactory by the end of Year 11. Despite many pupils having limited language skills when they start to learn French in Year 7, they participate well in role play activities by the end of Year 9, for example as shopkeeper and customer.
6. In physical education, achievement is very good. Pupils participate in a variety of small games as they progress through the school and develop a good understanding of rules. All pupils develop skills in self-awareness and control. Other skills develop well, including throwing, batting and catching. These skills are well used in cricket by the end of Year 11, with pupils also developing good teamwork. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. In Years 1 to 6 pupils show a growing confidence and increasing skills in using computers. In Years 7 to 9 the achievement of some higher attainers is limited by the fact that some Year 7 pupils come from other schools and need to consolidate their previous learning. Some late-comers bring negative attitudes to school and this slows down their learning, as opposed to the Year 7 pupils who have come through the junior department of the school and have more positive attitudes to learning.
7. Achievement in design and technology is good in Years 1 to 6 and very good in Years 7 to 11. Pupils develop designing and making skills from an early age and by the end of Year 2 higher

- attainers do both. Higher attainers evaluate their work by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, all pupils including lower attainers further develop their designing and making skills using a wide range of food items and resistant materials.
8. Pupils use their display work as a means of developing their communication skills; for example, in history and geography they use their ICT skills and log onto the Internet to research topics. Pupils achieve well in history in developing their investigation skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of past societies. Younger pupils develop a sense of “past times” very well. Older pupils develop skills in using sources to interpret history and make comparisons between present and past times. In geography, pupils’ achievement is satisfactory. Younger pupils carry out fieldwork activities, for example in a visit to the local park, and then produce attractive maps. Older pupils compare countries at different stages of development.
  9. Achievement in personal, social and health education is very good. Younger pupils develop good self-awareness and awareness of others. By the end of Year 6 pupils understand the consequences of actions including breaking rules. By the end of Year 9 they show an increasing awareness of different health and safety issues that form part of everyday living. By the end of Year 11 they develop skills in risk-assessment and decision-making very well. In religious education pupils achieve well in learning about Christianity and other religions. Their skills in reflection and response in religious education lessons also develop well in Years 1 to 6 but are less well developed in Years 7 to 11.
  10. Achievement in music and art is good in Years 1 to 6 but unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 due to the inadequate time allocated to the subjects. In music the youngest pupils show a developing awareness of different songs. By Year 6, they listen carefully to music, sing tunefully and beat tambourines and shakers in time. Higher attainers in Years 7 to 9 who benefit from extra curricular activities or who play instruments at home make satisfactory progress. Lower attainers, who rely on the insufficient amount of time allocation for the subject, lose their skills and enthusiasm and therefore make unsatisfactory progress. In art, younger pupils learn basic drawing and painting skills. Older pupils develop their skills further as they learn more about colour, tone and line.
  11. There is no discernible difference in the achievements of boys and girls in the school. Pupils who have English as an additional language, make good progress in their communication and language skills. The achievement of pupils with additional needs, such as those with autistic spectrum disorder, challenging behaviour (EBD), or communication difficulties, make good gains in relating to staff and each other.
  12. The headteacher is developing knowledge of how the school compares cost-wise and standards achieved with other similar schools. This is very difficult at the moment as the special school PANDA (Performance Assessment and National Contextual Data) do not give sufficient information to make such judgements, although, with the introduction of Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting (PIVATS), this gives the school an opportunity to compare its performance with similar schools, in the local authority or nationally, using PIVATS data.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons and display positive attitudes to their work and enthusiasm for school. The positive comments in the previous report regarding pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development in lessons and around the school have been maintained and pupils are well prepared by the school for the next stage of their education.
14. In the overwhelming majority of lessons seen during the inspection pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good. They complied with teachers' requests and instructions and remained on task sufficiently well to successfully complete their work. Pupils accepted the presence of a visitor in their classroom and were confident to engage in informal discussion between themselves and the teacher because of the very positive support they received from teachers and support workers. When they had completed their work pupils were eager to show it to the visiting inspector and

were anxious to receive praise for good work done or good behaviour demonstrated.

15. Most pupils displayed positive attitudes and good behaviour. Their confidence and self esteem is built up as a result of the very good support they receive from staff. All pupils in the school are treated as individuals by the staff and, as a result of the strong Personal Health and Social Education (PSHE) programme delivered, and the very high profile that the school places upon this subject. Pupils increase their knowledge of drugs awareness, health education and preparation for life.
16. Attendance at the school is within the norm for this type of school. Unauthorised absence, at 6.5 per cent, is higher than average but is mostly made up of a small number of persistent non-attenders in Years 10 and 11. Authorised absence is lower than in similar schools and is mainly for medical reasons. Exclusions are about average for this type and size of school. They are brought about by five pupils.
17. Pupils display good enthusiasm for school. In the main they enjoy coming to school, are enthusiastic to attend lessons and display good interest and involvement in activities. In a Year 11 food technology lesson pupils worked well together under the guidance of the teacher to prepare a buffet luncheon and were keen to experiment with differing recipes and taste the food they had produced. In a Year 2 PHSE lesson pupils listened with great interest to a story being read to them by the teacher and discussed in a sensible and mature manner the moral displayed by the story, and were able to articulate well what they considered they were good at. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, pupils discussed sensibly the problems of operating a bank account and were able to express to the teacher their views on their personal standing.
18. Pupils are well managed and in the small instances of challenging behaviour in lessons observed during the inspection week teachers coped extremely well and demonstrated confident knowledge of pupil handling techniques. Behaviour at play and lunch times is similarly good. Lunch times are pleasant, social occasions where pupils of all year groups sit together and talk quietly to one another and demonstrate mature behaviour.
19. There is a marked absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and through the strong teaching and pastoral programmes understand that it is necessary to get on well together for a community to be successful. The school's behaviour policy, which is based primarily on reward, is known to all pupils, who are very keen to achieve merits, which, when totalled, lead to small prizes or treats. Pupils were eager to point out to inspectors the number of merits they had been awarded. The inspection team was impressed by the courtesy and friendliness shown to them by the pupils.
20. Pupils are given good opportunities to display initiative and personal responsibility. Pupils from year groups are elected to membership of the school council and council members are proud to see their names written on the school notice-board. Similarly, council agendas and decisions are also displayed. Pupils help in other ways such as collecting registers, helping in classrooms and being monitors and are beginning to develop a sense of responsibility and self worth.
21. Pupils treat property with care. They are anxious to see that text books are returned to the library, computers are switched off and litter is not dropped.

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

22. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are now good. Lessons are characterised by the good subject knowledge and the use of very effective methods of teaching that demonstrate high expectations that pupils will succeed, and a good use of assessment in lessons.
23. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen compared with one in ten lessons in

the previous inspection. Teaching is now predominately good with over 20 per cent of lessons very good or excellent. This good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the school has been brought about by an improvement in the curriculum provision, leading to teachers being more informed about what they need to teach, and the monitoring of teaching by senior staff through the performance management process. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has also led to improved methods of teaching.

24. In English, teachers have good knowledge of the pupils' needs and this has a positive effect on the teaching along with the effective use of classroom support assistants. Most teachers are confident in using the literacy strategy, or some of its parts. There is a good use of phonics and structured opportunities to develop reading and writing. Teachers use their good knowledge of the pupils effectively, for instance where pupils are encouraged to talk about their weekend. Secondary pupils are positively encouraged to contribute in discussions, such as in a Year 7 lesson where pupils were having their social use of language extended by discussing the emotions evident in a photographic portrait. There is not the same whole school approach, across all subjects, to the teaching of basic skills of reading and writing as there is to speaking and listening. On occasions there is an overuse of worksheets which limits pupils' opportunities to write independently.
25. The quality of teaching mathematics is good and for those pupils in Years 7 to 9 is often very good or excellent. Teachers plan their lessons well and apply a good range of teaching methods based on good subject knowledge. Where teaching is very good or better teachers use a range of activities that keeps pupils of all abilities fully involved in their learning. For instance, in a very well planned lesson for Year 9 pupils, following a lively oral start, the teacher challenges pupils to respond in a task of counting to 20 and back. She develops an excellent response as she swings a toy on an elastic cord between the pupils who are expected to respond. There is an excellent response from the pupils when the teacher sings the "number Rumble" in which pupils count in a "cha-cha" rhythm. Pupils with additional needs are also fully involved in the lessons and make progress equal to other pupils.
26. Teaching in science is mostly good and often very good. It is most successful when very good use is made of practical activities. In one lesson for pupils in Years 2 to 4, the teacher had prepared layers of different materials such as soil and sand to represent layers of rock. There are high expectations of good behaviour in the lessons. Older pupils are enabled to recall that food provides carbohydrates and less able pupils are enabled to find the appropriate diagrams in textbooks. Work is well matched to the different learning abilities of pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants ask good questions of pupils that help them to think more clearly.
27. The teaching of computing skills is good in the small number of lessons seen. Teachers skilfully guide pupils through challenging tasks, are aware of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses and extend pupils in all lessons observed. The pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are challenged, for instance when using a mobile computer-controlled device. Teaching in design and technology and physical education is mostly very good or better. In history, geography, modern foreign languages, personal, social and health education and religious education teaching is good. Teaching is also good in art and music, but there is insufficient time allocated for these subjects, resulting in unsatisfactory achievement for pupils in Year 7 to 9.
28. For pupils of all ages, lesson planning is at least good and sometimes very good. Teachers follow planning so that they cover work at appropriate times for pupils. Individual Education plans usually have appropriate targets. However, there are a small number of occasions when teachers do not set precise enough, or measurable, targets. Teachers use assessment to judge the impact of their teaching on the progress that pupils make. For all pupils questioning is used effectively to test knowledge and obtain opinion and choices. Pupils respond positively to this approach and this helps their personal development and involvement in their own learning.
29. The training opportunities that staff have engaged in have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers manage behaviour well and follow the behaviour programme that

is in place. As a result disruption to other pupils' learning is kept to a minimum and they are able to learn and make progress in a calm environment.

30. The good quality of teaching and learning in the school is enhanced by the good and often very good support provided by classroom support assistants. These staff are an integral part of the teaching and learning for pupils. The teaching staff have considerable confidence in them and pupils benefit from the effective team approach adopted in classes. Assistants are often responsible for working with small groups or individuals in many subjects. They do this well, following teachers' planning and showing initiative when required. The quality of teaching and learning is also enhanced by the support provided by visiting professionals, such as the speech and language therapist and the physiotherapist.
31. Since the previous inspection the school has worked to ensure that pupils have access to improved levels of effective teaching. However, there are still some examples of inconsistent practice across the school. This is evident in the variation between the quality of teaching, for instance, in English and mathematics. The very good and sometimes excellent planning and teaching of these subjects, by a small number of teachers, are not sufficiently shared with other staff. In the best of these lessons teachers demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge and how to teach the subject to pupils with special needs. They use a range of methods and provide very effective changes of activities that keep the pupils interested and working well. These lessons meet the varied needs of pupils with additional needs such as autism or communication difficulties well.
32. A significant minority of parents (16 per cent) thought that their children did not get the right amount of homework. The inspection team concurs with these views.

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

33. There has been satisfactory improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. Taught time has been extended, and the curriculum is now good for primary pupils. However, taught time remains low for secondary pupils, and there is still too little time allocated to music and art for pupils in Years 7 to 9. The school has successfully implemented literacy and numeracy strategies, developed a programme for careers education and citizenship, and extended the range of subjects that are externally accredited. This has a positive impact on the achievement of pupils.
34. The curriculum and opportunities for pupils at Foundation Stage are very good. For pupils in Years 1 to 6 it is good. Taught time is in line with recommendations, and the curriculum is enriched well by educational visits and visitors. All National Curriculum subjects are taught in suitable proportions, as is religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE).
35. 'Thinking Skills' have been introduced into the school curriculum in the secondary department as a pilot scheme. This work is being monitored and evaluated. If successful it will be consolidated into the curriculum from September 2002. However, as a result of the time allocated for this pilot, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have suffered by having insufficient time for their art and music studies. The timetable allows each pupil a one hour lesson of each of these subjects for one term each year. This amounts to 20 minutes a week across a year and is not enough to allow teachers to cover all the required Programmes of Study. As a result, pupils do not all achieve as well as they might, despite good teaching. The school acknowledges that there is insufficient time to cover all areas that need to be taught, particularly singing. This makes the curriculum at this stage unsatisfactory.
36. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, there are 23.5 hours of taught time, which is slightly below that recommended. Nonetheless, the curriculum is very good and prepares pupils well for the next step. All the required National Curriculum subjects, plus religious education and PSHE are

taught. The school offers appropriate options by providing elements of non-statutory subjects in the form of case studies, units of work within the City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education Foundation Level (DoVE). For example, there is a case study that focuses on World War II, and a mini-enterprise that includes elements of art and design and music. Vocational courses are provided through college links, which have been carefully considered to ensure that provision meets the needs of pupils of different abilities. All pupils have an opportunity to participate in the enterprise, which raises funds for a charity of their choice. In Year 10, pupils take part in community links, either with senior citizens or with young children. In Year 11, pupils progress to work experience placements. Good links with a wide range of employers help to ensure that pupils have a placement that is carefully matched to their needs and career aspirations. Overall, the curriculum for these oldest pupils prepares them very well for the next step, and all go on to either further education or work.

37. The school has successfully developed good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. It has implemented well modified forms of both the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). Pupils in the secondary classes are organised into groups with similar abilities for literacy and numeracy sessions, and this is working well.
38. The curriculum meets pupils' individual needs adequately, mainly through Individual Education Plans (IEPs). However, whilst many pupils' statements include an objective for them to have experience of learning alongside their mainstream peers, there are few opportunities for this. College links provide opportunities for pupils to socialise with others of the same age, and extra-curricular music provision provides opportunities for pupils to perform with peers from a mainstream high school. Links with a high school have started to develop in information and communication technology (ICT). The school has also introduced specific sessions for secondary pupils, to encourage the development of thinking and listening skills. This works well, and pupils transfer their skills to other subjects across the curriculum.
39. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory. The best provision is for music, which helps to ensure that pupils with a talent for music achieve well. There is also a lunchtime disco once each week. There are regular visits, and visitors to the school. However, the school has not exploited the sources of funding that might enable it to overcome the problem of pupils' dependence on school transport, and this inevitably limits what can be done after the school day is over.
40. A well planned programme of personal, social and health education is taught to pupils of all ages and gives relevance to the curriculum. It includes suitable programmes of sex education, drugs awareness and citizenship. Discrete careers lessons begin in Year 9, and guidance provision includes a well-organised and well- stocked careers library.
41. Learning opportunities for pupils with additional special needs such as pupils with speech and communication needs, those with autism, and those with emotional and behavioural needs are good. Their access to the curriculum is enhanced by the organisation of teaching groups that enables teachers to more easily match work to pupils' needs so that they have full access to the curriculum.
42. All pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs, are regularly reviewed and revised in accordance with the needs of the pupils. Provision for additional special needs, is good, including therapy provision for speech and language development. The school provides very well for the needs described in pupils' statements including the needs of those who have individual care plans. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and succeed to reach their potential. They display good knowledge of pupils' needs and appropriately revise strategies and approaches to enhance the learning of pupils with additional needs.
43. The school very successfully develops pupils' moral awareness. Provision for spiritual, social and cultural development is good. The latter has developed well since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. The curriculum now reflects the multicultural diversity of British society more effectively than it did at the last inspection.
44. Since the last inspection, a School Council has been established, giving pupils a stake in school



improvement and an understanding of their personal rights. Representatives are democratically elected and professional minutes of meetings are kept. At present the council is pressing for a choice of food at lunchtimes, the provision of playground furniture and a review of playground rules. There are very clear school rules, which have been drawn up in consultation with pupils, and these are consistently applied. Good work and behaviour are given a high profile through whole-school celebration, the awarding of certificates, displays around the school and verbal praise in class. All pupils are given responsibilities, and the oldest ones are charged with tasks such as preparing and cooking their own lunch, and ensuring that their protective clothing, used at college, is clean and ready for wear each week. Staff provide good role models and seize opportunities to explore with pupils their views on examples of breaches of the law. These opportunities range from discussion about the fairness of a penalty at a weekend football match, to consideration of the motivation behind the atrocities of September 11<sup>th</sup>. In religious education and through assemblies, pupils learn about the moral codes of different religious groups, and are encouraged to see other points of view and understand their origins. As a result, pupils develop a clear set of values and tolerance of the views of others.

45. Through themes in assemblies, reinforced in lessons during the week, pupils are encouraged to understand human feelings and emotions. During the inspection, the theme was friendship; pupils were able to consider the importance and qualities of friends. Assemblies provide collective acts of worship, with hymns, prayers and opportunities for reflection. A simple grace or prayer is said at the start of lunchtime. This is good practice.
46. Through the school's rewards system, pupils are encouraged to recognise their strengths and to seek to improve in other areas. For example, there is a cup awarded each year for a pupil who overcomes a particular fear. In the classroom, pupils' contributions are valued, and this gives them the confidence to express their views. In one classroom, a moving poem about the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> written by a Year 10 pupil is prominently displayed. Teachers strive to make the links between different subjects clear by teaching in a cross-curricular way. This helps pupils to make connections between different subjects and areas of learning. The co-ordinator for Years 7 to 9 has audited the curriculum to enable links to be exploited, and this is good practice.
47. Good provision for social development includes explicit teaching of social skills, particularly speaking and listening. This helps pupils to relate well to one another and to adults, including those they do not know well. Through PSHE, citizenship, community service and work experience, pupils are made aware of how society functions, and of the relationship between rights and responsibilities. The responsibility that an individual has for the wider society, the environment, and those less fortunate is brought home to pupils through opportunities to fund-raise and through environmental projects.
48. The subjects of religious education, art and music make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' cultural awareness. They extend pupils' understanding of their own culture and give them a wider view of other cultures, past and present. Displays around the school include those of Indian, African and Aztec art. Visiting musicians have played Samba music, and there has been a performance of Peter and the Wolf. Pupils have visited the Lowry gallery in Manchester. In religious education, pupils become aware of the cultural implications of the main world religions, and they see where there are similarities and differences between these cultures. Thus they develop an appreciation and understanding of the diverse cultures in Britain and beyond.

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

49. The school cares for its pupils and looks after them well. The pupils are treated with courtesy and respect and they respond by treating each other and the adults in the school in the same manner. Relationships are good throughout the school and, as a result, it is a calm and orderly community and the parents and carers acknowledge and appreciate this aspect of the school's work. Although all incidents are recorded following local education authority procedures, the school

should ensure that incidents are recorded in a bound, numbered book, rather than word processed and filed in a loose leaf binder.

50. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. The teachers and learning support assistants have high expectations of behaviour and there are clear routines for lessons and other activities, including lunch times and breaktimes, which ensure that the pupils behave appropriately and that lessons are calm and purposeful. However, there are some behaviour targets within the pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are too vague to be of much use in monitoring the pupils' progress towards meeting them. There are very effective procedures for dealing with oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, and pupils are taught how to deal with it as part of their personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum.
51. The teachers and learning support assistants are sensitive to the needs of all the pupils and monitor and support their personal and social development well. Pupils' personal and social development is supported well by the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and the new citizenship curriculum.
52. The policies and procedures for the pupils' health and safety are very clear and this aspect of the school's work is managed well by the school's health and safety co-ordinator, who has a series of risk assessments in place. The school is checked regularly for fire safety by the Fire Brigade and they deem the school's procedures for fire evacuation and regular fire drills to be effective. The local education authority provides comprehensive audits of health and safety. Health, safety and hygiene are integral and effective areas within the curriculum of risk areas like science, design and technology and PE. Pupils demonstrated a thorough understanding of safe working in all the lessons observed in these subjects. Pupils' welfare is also served well by clear consistent routines for lessons and other activities. The school's access is very restricted, but the staff use effective procedures to ensure that pupils are safe when they arrive at school and when they depart. There is also good supervision for break times and dinner times.
53. The school's procedures for child protection are currently unsatisfactory because staff have not received recent training relating to the latest Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills guidelines and new staff do not receive induction training relating to child protection. As a result of this, some staff are unclear about how to recognise the signs of abuse and unclear about what to do if they suspect abuse.
54. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Overall, they have improved since the last inspection. However, there is no co-ordinator for assessment and there is no whole-school assessment policy. Pupils are assessed on entry to school using baseline assessment procedures and are regularly assessed throughout the school using a range of nationally standardised tests for reading and mathematics. The school has recently introduced the Performance Indicators for Value Added Targets (PIVATs) to help assessment become more finely tuned. PIVATs work alongside the National Curriculum levels of attainment and are more precise in assessing pupils' attainment.
55. A good assessment procedure is used on entry to the school; these are used very effectively to plan activities and modify programmes of work for individual pupils. In other years teachers make a good assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress in literacy (English), numeracy (mathematics) and science. In addition to Teacher's Assessment Tests (TAS) in mathematics, science and English, pupils at Key Stage 1 sit National Curriculum tests in mathematics, English and science, achieving Levels 1 to 2. Pupils in Years 6 and 9 sit SATs in science and mathematics, achieving Levels 2 to 4 at both age groups.
56. Assessment is also good in geography, art, physical education (PE) and French. In art there is a good system in place for addressing pupils' skills and knowledge. Although the assessment and records are good in information and communication technology (ICT), the attainment of the lowest attainers needs to be identified more clearly. There is a very good system of assessing pupils' work in design and technology (DT); teachers have developed their own system for checking pupils' skills. Assessment in music, and personal, social and health education (PSHE) is

satisfactory. Procedures for assessment in both religious education (RE) and history are satisfactory.

57. The deputy headteacher works effectively to ensure that annual and transition reviews of pupils' statements are carried out to the new Code of Practice requirements. Parents, carers and, on occasions, a range of specialist representatives, and pupils, when appropriate attend reviews. This is good practice.

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

58. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire thought that their children liked school and they were kept well informed about how their children were getting on. They felt comfortable about approaching the school with questions or with a problem, and that the school works closely with them.
59. Parents are extremely pleased with the support and guidance offered to them by the school and deeply appreciate and value the efforts that the school makes in promoting the well being and education of their children.
60. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the school, although very few are able to do so owing to the fact that pupils come to school from great distances by local authority transport.
61. Communication between parents and the school is very good. The school holds two parents' evenings per annum, which are arranged after reports have been issued. Parents of both primary, including the youngest children in foundation, and secondary pupils are able to see the headteacher, deputy, class teachers and subject teachers at these evenings and a section of the evening is devoted to parents of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 to inform them of further education opportunities available. These parents' evenings are well attended and appreciated by parents.
62. Good arrangements are in place to introduce pupils to the school. Parents of prospective pupils, nominated by the local education authority, are contacted by the school and interviews are arranged, either at the school or at the parents' home if parents cannot come to school. This is described by the school as a non-prejudicial visit and after the visit a decision is made whether to admit the pupils. The school prospectus is attractively presented and parent-friendly and meets all statutory requirements. In addition the school provides regular newsletters, which contain interesting information about current events, pupils' progress and events which the school wishes to promote.
63. Annual reports are issued, which give good information to parents on a subject by subject basis on the progress their children are making. Parents are asked to contribute to discussion on targets for their children at Annual Reviews.
64. Appropriately, the school consulted all parents prior to bringing a Home/School Agreement which most parents sign. School diaries are used when pupils have communication difficulties. This practice is appreciated by parents and works well. The school is very pro-active in contacting parents if they have any cause for concern or any reason to congratulate pupils.
65. The school has an active Parent, Staff, Friends Association (PSFA), which arranges a number of successful social functions for the school such as bingo, a coffee day (for charities), a table-top sale and help with raffles. The PSFA also donates many prizes for school events and their work is much appreciated by the school. The school arranges through the PSFA regular meetings with support staff and gives parents good information on drug awareness and how to assist children to develop language and speech skills.
66. The school is looking at ways to involve parents more in all aspects of school life. Because of

long travelling distances parents find it difficult to attend functions and activities on a regular basis. However, due to school support and encouragement there is a very high attendance of parents at their children's annual reviews. There is also good video evidence of parents attending whole-school functions such as the Christmas productions where all children in the school perform. This is good practice and supports pupils' progress.

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

67. The leadership of the school is sound. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. The headteacher manages effectively on a day-to-day basis and has worked hard to address all the key issues from the previous report. Progress in addressing these key issues has been satisfactory. The headteacher is a good role model and is very visible around the school, available to support staff and pupils when necessary. Pupils' achievements are regularly praised in class and in whole-school assemblies. This contributes to an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between pupils and staff, where leadership is seen to value and respect the opinions of all.
68. The senior management team is well supported by a very experienced, competent and skilled middle management team of five senior teachers, so that all areas of the school are represented. This is good use of the experience of staff available in school. It positively involves them in the leadership and management of the school.
69. The headteacher has successfully completed a national leadership course for serving headteachers. This is impacting positively on the management of the school. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have completed a nationally recognised course to assist in carrying out self-evaluation of the standards and qualities in school. This they have found to be helpful when setting up systems to monitor and evaluate standards in school and compare them with similar schools. This is good management practice and is done well.
70. The headteacher has worked hard to keep morale at a high level, but has found this difficult as there has been a local education authority (LEA) Review of Special Needs taking place for almost the last three years. There are a number of possibilities for the future provision for SEN pupils. This has made his task difficult as the governing body and staff need to know if the school or themselves have a future in the authority. Considering the uncertainty over future developments, morale is high in the school and there is a very positive atmosphere and ethos.
71. The leadership of the school has raised the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The headteacher is very aware of the difficulties raised by part-time temporary staff and has a list of experienced supply teachers who are used to cover classes when permanent staff are on other duties, such as annual reviews of pupils. This works very well, as the school has found that it is difficult to replace experienced school staff with part-time temporary who are able to maintain the high quality of education provided, but on a part-time basis when covering for permanent staff.
72. Since the last inspection, integration with mainstream schools has virtually stopped. Integration between a local secondary school and Year 7 pupils is planned to take place later this month. It is an exchange of pupils to study ICT. The main-stream pupils will be taught in Astley Park School, and Astley Park Year 7 pupils taught in the local secondary school. The school has bid for funding from the LEA for further inclusion. This is well documented in the school improvement plan.
73. The school meets its stated aims well and provides a good safe environment for pupils where they feel secure and can make progress. The aims and policies are well reflected in the work of the school. The school's planning system is based on individual pupil targets that help pupils make progress.
74. Overall, management of the school is sound. Performance management procedures are well

established. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have acted as team leaders to staff and the first cycle has been completed. Lesson observations have been completed and teachers' strengths and areas for development have been fed back. Teaching staff are happy about the way performance management has gone, and the external assessor complemented the school on its strategy. Arrangements are under way to train three senior staff to act as team leaders for the second cycle. This is good management and provides staff with personal and professional development opportunities.

75. Although the curriculum taught is strong, as there is a lack of a whole school curriculum co-ordinator, the overview of the whole-school curriculum is weak. There is no overall curriculum policy, setting out what the school sees as the range of learning experiences that will enable it to meet its aims. Nor is there any guidance about how much time should be allocated to different subjects at each stage. These weaknesses result in an imbalance in the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, where the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The timetable is drawn up without sufficient consideration of how to make the best use of staff expertise or the school's resources, such as the fact all staff teach numeracy and literacy in the mornings. Some staff have specific numeracy or literacy strengths and would be better deployed teaching literacy or numeracy, not both. There also needs to be a review of the different lengths of teaching periods during the school day.

76. Although all individual subject co-ordinators are successful in their own subjects, the school lacks a whole-school curriculum policy and co-ordinator to oversee its implementation. As a result, there is an unsatisfactory situation where the governing body is unable to monitor and evaluate the work of the school as it is required to do.
77. The senior management team are constantly monitoring and looking at the possibility of reorganising the secondary department time-table to ensure that it is structured in such a way as to make the best use of individual teachers` expertise, the most recent pilot being the introduction of 'thinking skills' across the secondary curriculum. This is being monitored carefully to assess the value added across other curriculum subjects. This is good management of the curriculum, and management and efficient use of staff.
78. Although pupils` attendance is satisfactory compared to similar schools, the procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. There is no first day contact. First letters are sent home by pupils, and letters are not posted until there is a second occurrence. This term, although registers are marked correctly, totals are not being entered and therefore attendance is not monitored across the school. This is unsatisfactory management of attendance and subsequently does not allow the governors to monitor and evaluate the school procedures.
79. Staff training for child protection procedures has not been updated for some time. Senior management acknowledge this oversight and have agreed to rectify this as soon as possible so that staff knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures can be brought up to the highest level.
80. During the last six months the governing body lost almost half of its members but has recently been brought up to full strength. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are extremely committed and supportive. Stability has been maintained as the governor attached to literacy and numeracy has been co-opted back onto the governing body and continues her good work monitoring and evaluating numeracy and literacy. Governors show a good understanding of the way in which the population of the school is changing and what the school needs to do to address the changes.
81. Overall, the school's staffing is satisfactory. There are sufficient teaching staff with suitable curriculum, phase and special educational needs training and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. The learning support assistants are well qualified and experienced and make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress in learning and in personal and social development. However, the school has no technical support for science or for design and technology, which limits the amount of preparation which the teachers can carry out. The school's administrative assistants are effective.
82. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school is bright with colourful displays of the pupils' work. It is well looked after by the caretaker and his staff. There is a well-equipped leavers' block with food technology area and resistant materials workshop. However, the workshop is very cramped and there is very little space for the storage of large materials or for partially completed pupils' work. There is a spacious food technology room in the main school block. The science laboratory itself is well laid out but there is no preparation room so that equipment can be laid out prior to lessons and dealt with after lessons, away from the pupils' attention. At present art and music share accommodation and this is unsatisfactory. The information and communication technology (ICT) room is well equipped but cramped and poorly ventilated. Physical education currently takes place in the hall as there is no separate dining hall or gymnasium, limiting the range of activities which can be carried out in PE. Physical education lessons is disrupted because the hall space has to be used as a corridor to connect different wings of the main school building. The library is very small and cramped.
83. The school's resources are good and they are used effectively to support the pupils' learning. They are of a high quality and are easily accessible for classroom use. They are monitored well by the curriculum co-ordinators.

84. Good informal systems of induction and support are in place so that the strengths of the new teachers and staff are utilised, which has led to pupils making good progress, academically and in their personal development and behaviour. However, these are informal and staff would benefit from more formal arrangements and structured target setting. The professional development of staff is supported strongly by the senior management team. This is good practice and enhances the standards pupils achieve.
85. Financial planning is sound. However, there is a predicted carry-over of 10 per cent. There are plans within the school improvement plan to increase the number of teachers in the primary department by one, and continue with accommodation improvements on a rolling programme, which would bring the balance down to an acceptable level. However, there is a degree of uncertainty in school because of the imminent outcome of the LEA SEN review, which may result in the school catering for primary or secondary pupils only.
86. The headteacher, school bursar and governors have firm control over planning the budget, and ensuring the money is effectively targeted to areas of need. Proposed spending within focused plans is appropriately detailed in the school improvement plan (SIP). One of the most recent successful projects is the development of the ICT suite and introduction of the Intranet in school. Subject co-ordinators annually audit their subjects, from which they bid for finances linked to the SIP. There is an appropriate finance committee of the governing body, which meets on a regular basis and monitors and reviews the budget. Figures are produced by the school bursar and the headteacher and presented in a way which is easily understood and appreciated by the governing body.
87. Specific grants made to the school are used to target training and raise standards such as literacy and numeracy training. Money is appropriately earmarked for staff training through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). Staff who are pursuing this training, such as in ICT, are complementary about the standard and are keen to participate, incorporating their new skills into their planning and report writing.
88. There is good day-to-day management of the finances of the school and the school in general. The school secretary has been trained and has been appointed school bursar. The school bursar, together with a part time administration assistant, runs the office efficiently. They use a management information system effectively to monitor all accounts and provide financial information for the governing body to monitor the school budget, and for subject co-ordinators to monitor their spending on a regular basis. There is close liaison between the bursar and the LEA finance department, and the school buys into a financial package of support from the LEA in order to enhance best value. The most recent auditors' report (January 2002) judges the procedures to be satisfactory. Minor recommendations made have been put into an action plan and are being implemented.
89. The school is committed to the principles of best value and carries these out satisfactorily. An example of this is the way in which the school used to contract to the LEA for technical advice and support for its ICT. It has identified an independent ICT technician who performs the same service, but better and at a fraction of the cost, giving a regular weekly service and being on call at other times. An example of this service was seen during the week of the inspection: the Intranet aerial was damaged, the technician was called, and the service was resumed the same morning, high quality service indeed.
90. Taking into account:
- the good progress pupils make;
  - high standards of behaviour and good attitudes pupils have to work and their good relationships in school;
  - sound leadership of the school;
  - satisfactory improvements, including teaching and learning since the last inspection;
  - the relatively high cost per pupil;

The school gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

### The governors and the school should:

- Improve the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. (Paragraph 76)
- Improve the curriculum and its management by:
  - i) developing a whole-school curriculum policy, with appropriate procedures to monitor and evaluate its success (Paragraph 75)
  - ii) providing sufficient time for art and music for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9; (Paragraphs 10, 33, 35, 119, 157)
  - iii) ensuring that the time-table is structured to make the best use of teachers' expertise and the school's resources. (Paragraph 77)
- Improve pupils' attendance further by developing and implementing procedures to monitor and promote good attendance. (Paragraph 78)
- Through training improve staff knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. (Paragraphs 53, 79)
- Provide a greater number of opportunities for pupils to work and socialise with their mainstream peers. **\*\***(Paragraphs 38, 72)

*\*\* This issue is highlighted in the school development plan, to work with the LEA as a priority.*

In addition, governors should consider improvements to the following minor issues:

- Formalise induction procedures for all staff. (Paragraph 84)
- Examine opportunities to provide a greater range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. (Paragraph 39)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	107
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	19	64	21	0	0	0
Percentage	3	18	60	19	0	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

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	134
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	51

#### 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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	# 6.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	## 6.7

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

# Authorised for mainly medical reasons

## Due mainly to a small number (8) of persistent non-attenders in Year 11.

## External Accreditation:

### Assessment and Qualifications Alliance: Entry Level Certificate of Achievement.

Subject	Summer 2000 Number of passes (14 pupils)	Summer 2001 Number of passes (26 pupils)
D & T Food Technology	7	8
D & T Resistant Material Technology	3	4
English	9	13
French	11	17
Science	12	19
Mathematics	10	19
D & T Graphic Products	No entries	7
Information Technology	No entries	10

### City and Guilds Diploma of Education Foundation Level.

23	Full Diploma
3	Individual Modules

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	131
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	# 5	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	## 4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

*# One pupil*

*## 4 pupils.*

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.8
Average class size	11.4

### Education support staff: Y1 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	374

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1048626
Total expenditure	1099131
Expenditure per pupil	8202
Balance brought forward from previous year	159699
* Balance carried forward to next year	109194

\*High carry over, 10.4%. School development plan identifies:

- (i) money set aside for new teacher in primary department for September 2001;
- (ii) essential improvements to building, planned over three years;
- (iii) imminent result of LEA SEN review, which has constrained spending.

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
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	134
Number of questionnaires returned	55

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	20	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	31	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	33	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	40	16	0	5
The teaching is good.	82	13	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	16	7	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	15	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	13	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	78	13	7	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	82	15	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	16	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	40	7	4	11

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Forty-one per cent of questionnaires were returned, and indicated strong support for the school.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

91. There is a small a number of children (three) in the Foundation Stage. They are fully integrated and taught with the Nursery and Reception children. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across all areas of learning and Early Learning Goals. Lessons are well planned. Children are set challenging tasks. Assessment is used well to inform future lessons. Questioning is used very well to check for understanding. Lessons are brisk and children well motivated. Children respond positively to this approach and this helps in their personal development and involvement in their own learning. Provision for these children is very good.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

92. Children are given very good opportunities to develop their independence skills by being given responsibility in classroom tasks. They play alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 and their needs and views are always taken into account as they are encouraged to develop relationships. Social skills of dressing are targeted as they change for physical activities and feeding and drinking skills are developed during lunchtimes and at breaks.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

93. Children are given significant opportunities to participate in speaking and listening activities and are introduced appropriately to reading and writing activities. These opportunities are usually shared with older pupils in Years 1 and 2. However, the baseline assessment of those in the Foundation Stage means that they work towards the individual targets that are set for them. They are introduced to skills that help them form letters and to recognise early sight vocabulary.

#### **Mathematical development**

94. Children are provided with opportunities to copy simple patterns, recognise basic shapes and gain a knowledge and understanding about how numbers work. Through their use of sand and water they gain knowledge of capacity and weight.

#### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

95. Children recognise and name features of living things, such as parts of the body and face, as well as features in the environment. They are given opportunities to classify these into sets of categories. They use the computers and gain knowledge of how computers help with their learning. Through work in history they are helped to gain an understanding of the passage of time.

#### **Physical development**

96. Children are exposed to a range of appropriate physical activities from fine motor skills, such as cutting, to the larger scale movements they explore in PE and games.

#### **Creative development**

97. Children are given opportunities to explore both visual and musical activities in art and music lessons. They can explore the use of two-dimensional and three-dimensional activities and use a wide range of percussive and tuned instruments appropriate to their development.

## ENGLISH

98. Pupils' achievements and progress in English are good overall. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and reading, which maintains the standards noted at the last inspection. Progress in writing is good up to Year 6; however progress in writing by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is only satisfactory. This is due mainly to a reluctance by pupils to write, the inadequacy of ICT provision within the classrooms and the reluctance by some teachers to use the computer in lessons. All Year 11 pupils were entered for the Certificate of Achievement in English and 13 pupils passed at Level 3 last year.
99. Pupils, by the end of Year 3, are making good progress in speaking and listening. It is being effectively taught through other subjects: for example, Year 1 pupils focusing on adjectives to describe shapes of a particular colour in a numeracy lesson. This good progress continues as pupils move up the school and by the end of Year 7 pupils are actively learning Makaton signing and relate the words using Makaton later in the lesson; these lessons are being planned and delivered jointly by the teacher and the speech therapist. Weekly sessions of SULP (Social Use of Language Programme), SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) and the Derbyshire Language Scheme are delivered by both the speech therapist and support staff under the direction of the class teacher. This good support has helped to maintain a high standard in the use of language throughout the school. For example, one Year 5 pupil could describe how upset she felt when she fell out with friends. A Year 6 pupil describes how to maintain friendship you must 'hug them, ring them and care for them'.
100. By the end of Year 9, pupils still continue to receive language support; however, Makaton is not in evidence in the senior school. During a SULP session Year 7 pupils could describe vividly the feelings of people in photographs and a low-attaining pupil was helped to describe feelings with the use of puppets. During a Year 8 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson high-attaining pupils describe how you breathe smoke into your lungs. Pupils, by the end of Year 11, continue to make good progress in speaking and listening. Year 11 pupils discuss an evening's viewing on television for a specified audience and talk about the different kinds of programme favourites. A group of low-attaining pupils demonstrate how to use a telephone in an emergency and they role play making a doctor's appointment. During a science lesson Year 10 pupils could describe why some organic material decay and others do not.
101. Year 1 pupils arrive in school with little or no writing skills. A high-attaining group write their own news, low attainers are overwriting and high-attaining Year 1 and 2 pupils copy sentences provided by the teacher. By the end of Year 6, pupils progress further using 'Starspell' on the computer to test their own spelling skills. Year 5 pupils write sound blends to match pictures, lower attaining pupils use magnetic letters to demonstrate their knowledge of word blends. Pupils know how and when to use capital letters, full stops and spacing when writing stories and letters. High attaining pupils create their own endings to unfinished stories. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is good. However, it is less so by the end of Year 9 and achievement slows down and, although some pupils progress well, this is not consistent across the key stage. There are very few Year 9 pupils using joined up writing. There is a lack of the use of ICT within the classroom, and an over-use of work sheets with small boxed spaces to allow pupils to answer questions. Progress continues to be satisfactory into Year 11. Poor spelling is not always corrected in pupils' books despite spelling homework being given out regularly to pupils throughout the school. There are incidences of good written work: for example, one Year 10 pupil wrote a very moving poem entitled 'Twin Towers' the day after the American bombing last September. During a Year 10 lesson, pupils wrote about television programmes suitable for a specified audience; however, no pupils within the group used joined up writing. The school has identified the need for improvement in handwriting and presentation and this is the literacy target for this term.
102. Pupils' achievement and progress in reading is good throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and adapted to meet the needs of all the pupils and staff have been fully trained. On entry to school pupils are unable to read. By the end of Year 3, high-attaining pupils read simple books on the Oxford Reading Tree, all pupils match words on the computer, pupils identify key words and recognise their names. By the end of Year 6, high-

attaining pupils are achieving Level 2 National Curriculum levels, they read simple text and sight read using a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. Low-attaining pupils match picture to picture and name main characters from their reading scheme, for example, Biff and Floppy the dog. Progress continues to be good. By the end of Year 9 high-attaining pupils read with insight into the main characters and plot. They interpret the stories well. Lower attaining pupils are achieving National Curriculum level 1; with support they read simple text and sound out simple words. By the end of Year 11 older pupils read abridged classical novels such as 'Oliver Twist', 'Frankenstein', 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', and 'Pride and Prejudice'. Year 10 and 11 pupils enjoy reading teenage reading scheme books such as 'Impact', 'Chillers' and 'Livewire'. The reading schemes all have very supportive work sheets and checklists to go with them and Year 11 pupils enjoy assessing their own reading progress.

103. Teaching and learning are good overall. During the best lessons the teachers plan well, imaginatively linking the outcomes to the planning for pupils of that age. Teachers in these lessons are skilled in the use of different strategies to support literacy. They plan well to suit individual needs and use resources in an imaginative way. This helps to motivate pupils and they respond by working hard and showing high levels of enjoyment. Teachers and support assistants manage pupils behaviour very well. They know their pupils very well; relationships are very good and play a positive part in the quality of learning in English.
104. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to implement the latest Key Stage 3 literacy strategy in secondary school. She has little input in the planning and teaching of English in the primary department. Teachers in the lower school very much determine their own strategies and plan accordingly using the literacy strategy and adapting it. This works well. Baseline assessment takes place for Year 6 each year and there is a set Transfer Day before Year 7 and when a large number of pupils from other schools start the new academic year in September. Assessment throughout the school is good in English. Clear targets are discussed and set. Results are used to inform planning. However, the literacy targets in the Individual Education Plans are not consistently SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time manageable). The school is aware of this weakness and is revising and refining their Individual Education Plans for literacy to take account of this. Monitoring does take place by senior management, and the co-ordinator when time allows, and the subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development through the contents of its lessons. Resources are good; however, the siting of the main school library within a classroom is unsatisfactory because pupils cannot access the library as it is being used as a teaching room.

## **MATHEMATICS**

105. Pupils achieve well in mathematics at all ages and make good progress both in their lessons and over time. This is because of the good quality of teaching and the confidence teachers have gained in their subject knowledge from the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers plan their lessons well and often make good use of oral and mental starters in the lessons and plenary sessions to cover what pupils have learnt. The range of activities that teachers use helps maintain a pace to the lessons that holds the interest of pupils well.
106. Since the previous inspection there have been good improvements in both the achievement and progress of pupils, which are now more consistently good across all ages. This reflects a similar improvement in the quality of teaching, with no unsatisfactory lessons being seen during the inspection. Also, a plan of work to be covered is now in place that provides for individual pupils' developing skills and knowledge systematically.
107. The quality of mathematics teaching is good; for those pupils in Years 7 to 9 it is very good or excellent. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, plan their lessons well and apply a good range of teaching methods. Teaching is very good or better when teachers use a range of interesting activities, planned well with clear objectives, which keep pupils of all abilities fully involved in their learning. For instance, in a very well-planned lesson for Year 9 pupils there is a lively oral start with the teacher challenging pupils to respond in tasks of counting to 20 and then

back, passing a bean bag to signal that it is their turn to respond. This leads to a very good pace to the activity. It also allows the teacher to choose when particular pupils have to respond, so pupils of all abilities participate and make progress. Teachers use clear language when introducing basic mathematical skills. Pupils with additional needs are also fully involved in the lessons and make progress equal to other pupils. For instance, when a Year 10 pupil with autistic needs had, in a lesson dealing with measures, become interested in the one kilogram weight, at the exclusion of others, the teacher re-directed his attention so that he recognised that there were alternative weights he could investigate. Teachers manage the pupils very well and this leads to their being fully involved in lessons.

108. The assessment of pupils' achievements is good and, at times, very good in mathematics. Although there are minor differences between classes in its use, the monitoring by the co-ordinator maintains its overall quality. Formal assessment is carried out regularly. Informal ongoing assessment, based on the good use of questions and timely marking of pupils' work, is also used successfully to find out what pupils have learned. Teachers differ, however, with the level of detail of learning targets they then set for pupils from these observations. The Individual Education Plans, although often good, sometimes lack precise targets against which progress can be measured. In a small number of lessons for pupils between Years 3 and 9, teachers underestimate the ability of more able pupils and do not provide them with tasks that are sufficiently challenging.
109. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well. She has a very good subject knowledge, particularly in relation to meeting pupils' needs. Planning is monitored and there is good evaluation of how pupils are progressing in the subject. She provides advice and support for other staff. Resources and accommodation are good.

## **SCIENCE**

110. Throughout the school pupils' achievements in science are good. Nineteen pupils were awarded the Certificate of Achievement in last year's Year 11. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Overall, standards are similar to those found in similar schools nationally. There is no discernible difference between the achievements of boys and girls or in achievement in the different aspects of science.
111. By the end of Year 2, pupils know that sedimentary rocks are formed in the sea from different layers. Higher-attaining pupils are able to make predictions about the conditions under which materials will cool down. Lower-attaining pupils observe the effects of cooling.
112. By the end of Year 6, the pupils know the different parts of the body. Higher-attaining pupils read a thermometer and plot how water cools when using different kinds of insulation. They predict which insulating materials will keep this warm and cool. Lower-attaining pupils know that we wear different kinds of clothing, depending on the weather.
113. By the end of Year 9, the pupils are aware of the idea of a "fair test". Higher-attaining pupils predict what will happen if plants are deprived of water and sunlight. They understand that magnets attract and repel each other and ferrous metals. Pupils understand that heating will melt ice and boil water and the main differences between mixtures and compounds. Lower attaining pupils complete the same work, but with more support, and their recording is less descriptive, because of difficulties with writing.
114. By the end of Year 11, pupils know that organic materials decay and plan an investigation to show the factors involved in decay. Higher-attaining pupils examine the distribution of different species in a pond and a stream. They are able to make up simple electrical circuits. They know that gases are produced when things burn and the differences between physical and chemical reactions. Lower-attaining pupils cover the same work. Their recording is limited, writing under prompts or with different work sheets.



115. Overall, teaching and learning are good and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching ranged from satisfactory to good with some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 4 to 6.
116. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good. They plan well across all age ranges, ensuring that pupils gradually improve their knowledge and understanding. Literacy is promoted well, with a good use of different questions, which encourages communication, speaking and listening. Numeracy is encouraged through estimating, measuring and weighing during experiments. Graphs and tables are used effectively to record results. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to research information and assist in planning and recording activities, especially in Years Reception to 6.
117. There are clear classroom routines, which help to maintain the pupils' interest and concentration and ensure that health and safety procedures become second nature. This results in high quality teaching and learning. Teachers expect high standards in work and behaviour and the pupils respond appropriately. Effective lessons have a clear structure in which the objectives are shared with the pupils. Questioning is carefully structured so that pupils of all attainment levels recall what they know and discuss, for example, how a prediction can be tested practically. There is a wide range of activities and a good pace to lessons with plenty of interesting activities, so that the pupils are occupied and interested throughout. Higher attaining pupils increasingly manage to work on their own as they move through the school and low attainers receive well focused, targeted support from the teachers and learning support assistants. Ongoing assessment of the pupils' work is used effectively to plan future lessons. However, although homework is given, it is not used regularly enough to reinforce the work done in lessons or to encourage pupils to undertake their own independent research.
118. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership overall, with good programmes of work and effective support to colleagues. He has a clear vision for taking the subject forward. However, whilst the pupils' work is monitored, the co-ordinator does not currently have the opportunity to observe colleagues' lessons. There is a good laboratory but no preparation room for laying out equipment prior to lessons and there is no technician support for lesson preparation and for looking after resources. The resources are good.

## **ART**

119. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory between Years 7 and 9 as there is inadequate time allocated to the subject. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils made satisfactory progress from the beginning of the lesson to the end. However, over time they are not gaining sufficient skills or knowledge to allow them to develop to the best of their ability. In this respect there has been no progress since the previous report and this is unsatisfactory. Between Years 1 and 6 pupils make good progress. In these years lesson times are appropriate and the content, based on topics, addresses simple colour mixing, line, tone and the work of other artists.
120. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Learning is good between Years 1 and 6 and good in lessons for pupils between Years 7 and 9. It is not possible to make comparisons with the previous report because no judgements were made, as too few lessons of art were seen. Teachers plan lessons well based on the content for the work to be covered. This planning ensures that work effectively enables pupils to create art using different materials, such as collage, as well as different ways of drawing and painting. In three dimensional work, pupils use air-drying clay, wire and willow sculpture and mod-roc effectively. There are good examples of all of these types of work on display, or in evidence, in the school.
121. Pupils up to Year 6 make satisfactory progress as they learn basic drawing and painting skills. They start to explore pattern and texture as they create collages and paintings. Older pupils start to develop their skills further as they learn more about colour, tone and line. Pupils use their sketch books well. Pupils have undertaken three dimensional work in a range of media. There is a small amount of learning related to the work of known artists. For instance, when some pupils

are painting they are provided with examples of work by Van Gogh. Others explore how Claude Monet used paint as they try to recreate his style. All pupils with additional special needs achieve appropriately in the subject.

122. Teachers plan well for the lessons and materials and work areas are well prepared. They introduce the tasks well and lessons are well organised. Teachers manage to retain pupils' interest through the good pace of the lesson and the provision of opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of activities. For example, in a lesson involving observational drawing of aboriginal art motifs pupils take a great interest in both the motifs and the style of painting. There is a good range of resources, including examples of work by other artists as reference material. Teachers of younger pupils have satisfactory subject knowledge and their enthusiasm and the good support of classroom support assistants help pupils achieve well.
123. Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes to their work in the subject. They work well together, find enjoyment in the resources provided and work hard in lessons. For instance, when the teacher provided a wooden African mask they were all keen to handle it and make comments about its shape and the expression carved on it.
124. The co-ordinator leads the subject well but is restricted by the time available and therefore there has been little improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection. She provides advice and support for other staff and has modified the assessment procedures for the subject, which are now good. Portfolios of pupils' work have been compiled and the co-ordinator now checks the planning and records of other teachers. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The accommodation is barely satisfactory as the room is shared with music as a teaching base.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

125. Design and technology (DT) is taught as resistant materials and food technology throughout the school, with some graphics taught to the older pupils. The standards of achievement in DT are good from Reception to Year 6 and very good from Year 7 to Year 11. Twelve pupils were awarded the Certificate of Achievement in last year's Year 11. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement has also improved in Years 4 to 6 since the last inspection, when achievement was found to be unsatisfactory. Standards achieved are similar to those in similar schools.
126. By the end of Year 2, higher-attaining pupils design and make party hats and jellies for a party and make a variety of greetings cards for different occasions. Lower-attaining pupils join in the making activities, with effective support.
127. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils are able to produce cross-stitch patterns and to weave strips of paper to make table-mats. They sand and assemble a wooden boat from pre-formed parts. They make three dimensional cards and Christmas decorations, using scissors and glue. Lower-attaining pupils produce the same artefacts, with good support from the learning support assistants.
128. By the end of Year 9, in resistant materials, higher-attaining pupils are able to make sketches of designs and to produce simple design briefs, using a computer. They are able to make a variety of artefacts from wood, metal and plastic, including trays, pencil racks and boxes, toys, badges and plant pot holders. Pupils fill in evaluation sheets to show what they did and whether the items are fit for their purpose. They are developing their making skills in measuring, marking out, cutting with saws, pinning and gluing. Pupils follow a similar design, making and evaluation process in food technology, producing a range of dishes, including cakes, biscuits, quiches and pizzas. They select ingredients and equipment, estimate quantities, weigh, mix and blend and cook. Lower-attaining pupils work hard to produce similar items and follow the same process, but the teacher plans and targets more adult support to ensure success.

129. By the end of Year 11, higher-attaining pupils are continuing to develop their designing and making skills in resistant materials and in food technology. They make tables, CD racks and cupboards and plan and prepare meals and buffets with salads, fruit salads, quiches and flans. The pupils are able to produce food for a coffee morning, as part of their mini-enterprise initiative. Lower attaining pupils produce similar items and follow the same process, but more support is given, which is much appreciated by pupils. Pupils undertaking graphics use pencil and paper to produce a wide variety of drawings, presented in different ways. Good use is made of ICT and computer programs to aid progress.
130. Pupils in all years know the importance of using tools safely and wear goggles and other protection when necessary. They are also good at observing the basic rules of hygiene in the food technology room.
131. Teaching and learning in all aspects of the subject are good in Reception and through to the end of Year 6 and very good in Years 7 to 11. There are good routines established in the primary classrooms, the workshop and the food technology room, which mean that the pupils get down to work promptly and work safely. Where lessons are very good, they are planned well, with a wide range of stimulating activities appropriate to each pupil, which maintain the pupils' interest and concentration. Well-targeted questioning at the start enables the pupils to recall what they already know and gives them confidence. Relationships are very good in DT lessons, with a happy buzz of activity. Literacy is promoted well, through well-focused questions which promote communication, speaking and listening. Numeracy is promoted effectively through estimation, weighing and measuring during making activities. As they move through the school, higher-attaining pupils are increasingly able to work on their own without supervision and lower-attaining pupils are effectively and sensitively supported by teachers and learning support assistants: there is a very good mix of enabling and direct instruction. Very good attention is paid to safety and hygiene issues. Digital imaging is used very effectively to record pupils' work. At present, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology for individual research and homework is not used effectively to connect with life skills in the pupils' homes.
132. The leadership of the co-ordinators for resistant materials and food technology is very good, offering good support to other colleagues who teach the subject. They have considerable vision for taking things forward. At present, there is no technician support and learning support assistants are not always available for lessons in the workshop, which raises concerns about health and safety. The accommodation is good overall, with a well equipped food technology room, a food technology area in the leavers' base and a workshop. However, the workshop is very cramped and there is insufficient storage space for large materials and for ongoing pupils' work.
133. The improvement in DT since the last inspection has been good, with improved teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6, better programmes of work and effective assessment procedures, all of which have all helped to improve standards.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

134. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory and sometimes good. Planning and assessment have also improved since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory.
135. By the end of Year 6 pupils learn about different types of weather, rivers, different kinds of homes and the locality of the school in relation to home; they study overseas localities such as St. Lucia, Bangladesh and Chembokolli in India and compare them with their local areas such as Chorley and Rivington. They produce attractive maps following field trips to the local Astley Park and Chorley Market. Year 3 pupils studying the water cycle know what water is used for and they recognise that the blue line on the map is a river. During a Year 1 lesson a pupil identified a 'windmill' when a wind farm was shown. By taking Year 1 pupils outside to let streamers blow in the wind, they have an understanding of the effects of the wind and a few pupils recall the name for wind-sock. A high-attaining Year 3 pupil said that 'the sun makes water go up to the clouds and turns it into rain'; however, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have difficulty recalling that rain falls on

mountains, flows into rivers and finally to the sea.

136. By the end of Year 9, pupils understand about weather and water supply. They explore climate, agriculture and work in industrial areas locally and abroad, such as the rainforests of Brazil and more economically developed countries like France. They understand the difference between volcanoes and earthquakes. During a very good Year 8 lesson, pupils read the room temperature on the gauge on the wall, they then place it outside and record a temperature of 22° Celsius. This is followed by a short video clip depicting pupils in Australia doing exactly the same but recording a temperature of 45° Celsius. 'That is double our temperature,' remarks a Year 8 pupil. Year 8 pupils are asked to devise weather symbols: a low-attaining pupil suggests 'a sun', 'an ice cream' and 'people sunbathing'. A high-attaining pupil talks about 'people researching into weather conditions'.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and at times very good. Teachers take care to promote literacy and numeracy and the level of discussion supports pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. Pupils appear eager to learn, and there is a strong element of enjoyment experienced in lessons.
138. Since the last inspection the school has put in place a new policy and programme of work based on the National Curriculum to guide the teaching and planning of geography to pupils in Year 1 to Year 9. Whilst there are details of work planned, there is not enough information on how to teach pupils of different abilities. There is extra support, mainly through learning support assistants, within the classroom for the less able pupils. There is a simple assessment tracking system applied to all the units taught in geography and, although at an early stage of development it is beginning to have an impact on learning and is a good start. Assessment is supported by helpful comments on pupils' work, particularly in lower school; however, there is an over-use of work sheets with classes in Years 7, 8 and 9, and under-use of ICT, which would help to gain the older pupils' interest and improve their knowledge and understanding. Geography makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
139. The co-ordination of the subject is a little fragmented. There is a teacher who co-ordinates the geography taught in lower school and a teacher who co-ordinates the subject up to Year 9. No geography is taught to Years 10 and 11 and, as a result, there is no accreditation at present in geography. The co-ordinator in the secondary department does not teach geography despite being a geography specialist and the subject is taught by a number of part-time staff. Geography is taught weekly in lower school and to Year 7 pupils; however, it is taught on a carousel system with history and French to Years 8 and 9. This organisation of the curriculum has significant drawbacks, especially for pupils whose ability to retain key facts is limited. Resources are satisfactory; teachers are beginning to develop a collection of their own resources. There are attractive wall displays around school depicting 'The Workings of Chorley Market', 'The Weather' and 'Stories from around the World'.

## **HISTORY**

140. Pupils' achievement is good. All pupils make similar progress, including those with additional special needs, such as EBD and ASD. Improvement from the last inspection is satisfactory. Younger pupils look at famous people in the past, including Florence Nightingale, and at different generations in their own families. By the end of Year 2 they make statements about the past such as "last Friday we went swimming" and start to sequence events. Their developing sense of chronology is further shown in a study of the Vikings in statements like "the Vikings came a long time ago". Higher attainers add more detail to statements about the past such as "the Vikings were nasty to the people". By the end of Year 6, pupils find information from sources in their study of the Victorians. They look at pictures of rich Victorians and describe them as wearing "smart clothes". They find modern deliberate mistakes in a picture of a classroom in 1900. In work on ancient Egypt they create their own masks and mummies.
141. Pupils in Year 7 produce personal timelines and develop investigation skills by looking for clues in

the Bayeux Tapestry. They use ICT to record details of the wives of Henry VIII. By the end of Year 9, pupils acquire more depth in their knowledge of past societies. They illustrate and describe life in Roman times in town and country. A higher attainer writes about life in a cottage in a medieval village. All pupils compare life in England in 1750 with life today including travel, food, jobs and population size and location. They explain the importance of factory location in the early industrial revolution. Year 10 pupils complete projects on World War 1, with both lower and higher attainers achieving good standards of presentation. They examine artefacts. They use sources to draw conclusions about conditions for soldiers in the trenches and write imaginary letters home.

142. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils respond with good attitudes and behaviour. In a Year 7 lesson pictures and diagrams are well used to explain the development of castles. Pupils' learning is then enhanced through model-making activities and time is very well used to complete these activities during the lesson. In a Year 8 lesson writing activities are well matched to the needs of lower attainers, with both teacher and support assistant working well with each pupil so that writing skills are developed as well as understanding. In the same work with higher attainers there is insufficient emphasis on developing skills in interpreting sources. In Year 9 lessons about the early years of the industrial revolution, resources are very clearly presented to enable pupils to tackle project work systematically and in stages. In a Year 10 lesson on World War 1 a very clear explanation of events leading up to the armistice engages pupils' interest very well.
143. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Programmes of work have been recently established and resources are being carefully developed and extended. Assessment and the role of the co-ordinator in the primary phase remain underdeveloped. The curriculum is well planned overall, although the one year course for Year 10 pupils is limited in the topics it covers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

144. The provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory, This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was too little time devoted to teaching the subject, and achievement was unsatisfactory. Pupils' achievements are now satisfactory across the school. The school has been hampered in its efforts to boost staff confidence and skills in teaching ICT by the interruption to training that is provided by the local education authority (LEA). This has now started again, and the capacity for further improvement is good.
145. In the primary classes, achievement is satisfactory. Teachers are still acquiring skills in teaching the subject, and whilst they are confident users of ICT to help pupils learn in literacy and numeracy lessons, inspectors found few examples of its use as a learning tool in other subjects. There are no discrete ICT lessons in Years 1 to 6. Nonetheless, pupils show growing confidence and increasing skills in using computers. Records show that by the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of what a computer is and how to shut it down and restart it. Higher attainers use a mouse to select an icon, to open and close a program, and click and drag an object. Pupils understand that devices can be turned on and off, and controlled using instructions such as *forward* and *back*. They use CD-ROMs to listen to talking stories, open and close programs from CD-ROMs and know how to eject a CD-ROM. Higher attainers type words and sentences correctly, and draw a picture accurately using a paint or draw program. Good records are kept showing pupils' achievements, and these show at a glance what the next steps should be.
146. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is satisfactory. As pupils come from other schools, teachers continue to plan from the programmes of work for Years 3 to 6, as pupils' skills are not yet secure. This limits achievement for one or two higher-attaining pupils. The co-ordinator recognises the need to plan with the Programme of Study for Years 7 to 9 in mind and plans to move towards this as teachers in Years 3 to 6 become more confident in developing pupils' ICT skills.

147. In lessons for secondary pupils, teaching and learning are good. Teachers' skills and confidence in ICT are good. Pupils have sound opportunities to use ICT as a learning tool in secondary classes. In discrete ICT lessons, secondary pupils extend their knowledge, skills and understanding of word processing, keyboarding, painting, drawing and graphics, control, information handling and information systems. Teachers plan tasks that have immediate relevance, and these interest and motivate pupils. For example, pupils in Year 7 used a graphics package to design an advert for the school, and pupils in Year 8 created a database to find a suspect for an imaginary crime. Good resources in the ICT room, and clear instructions from the teacher, ensure that pupils are able to work at their own pace. In one lesson, pupils worked together, one helping the other to identify where she had made an error in entering information in to a database. The teacher maintains clear records, but whilst these show clearly what higher-attaining pupils know, understand and can do, entries for lower attainers indicate that they need support to do any tasks. Some smaller steps need to be included to show what these pupils can do unaided. By the time pupils reach Year 9, they are able to use different media to present information, and create and use a database for answering questions.
148. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve satisfactorily and receive external recognition for their achievements. In the Summer of 2001, nine pupils were able to achieve two or three units in the Certificate of Achievement. In the Word processing unit, for example, pupils could all input text, save to an appropriate file name, then print. They are able to delete, alter text by adding paragraphs, present text in a suitable format, alter margins, and justify text. The good number of computers enables pupils to work at their own pace, and they are well motivated by the recognition they receive for their efforts units. However, in Year 11 a small group of pupils are poor attenders, and this affects their achievement.
149. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in ICT lessons. Teachers explain new terms carefully, and key words are displayed on a board in the ICT room. Pupils also learn how they can handle numerical information and present it graphically using ICT.
150. A weakness of the accommodation is the amount of space in the ICT room, which makes practical tasks difficult to organise. For example, when programming a 'roamer', it was necessary for the class to divide into two groups, one of which had to work in the corridor outside the ICT room. Although the teacher and support staff managed this well, it was not ideal. The teacher was careful to include a session at the end of the lesson when pupils came together, reviewed their achievements, and celebrated successes. This was good inclusive practice.
151. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear plan of how to improve provision and achievement in the subject and has secured good improvement in standards, teaching and resources since the last inspection.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

152. French has been well established since the last report and pupils' progress is now good by the end of Year 9, and satisfactory by the end of Year 11. This is satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
153. Pupils start to learn French in Year 7. At this stage many have limited language skills. By the end of Year 9, pupils greet each other, staff and visitors, which they do enthusiastically. They consolidate their vocabulary carefully and respond accurately to simple instructions and commands. They participate in simple role-play games, playing shopkeeper and customer. In this role-play they greet each other, order food and drink, express their likes and dislikes, pay for their purchases and calculate the change they require, in new Euros. This work enhances pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, as well as giving them a taste of French customs and life.

154. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in Years 7, 8 and 9. No lessons were seen at Years 10 and 11. From pupils' records and files, teachers' records and planning, plus photographs and other evidence, it is possible to say the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. Planning is detailed, ensuring all pupils, including those with additional special needs, participate fully. Care is taken to match work to individual pupils' needs. This ensures pupils are motivated, concentrate well and persevere to complete their work, even when they find some aspects difficult and challenge them. Teachers use praise, encouragement and humour effectively, which is appreciated by the pupils; as a result, they respond well and have positive attitudes to the subject. Teachers use the target language well, complemented by good body language and gestures, and well prepared learning resources, many made in-house, matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils enhance their number skills by counting in French and consolidate their literacy skills by recording their work.
155. Because of the high quality teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning in French and their behaviour in lessons is good. They respond well to staff requests, instructions and commands. They are prepared to attempt new words and phrases, to build upon existing knowledge, extend their vocabulary, practise and improve their accents, and raise self-esteem and confidence. Pupils have the confidence to come to the front of the class and speak to their peers in French. In all lessons, learning support was well planned into the lessons. The assistants team work with teachers was very good and they used their experience and detailed knowledge of the pupils to avert situations arising, thus preventing small incidents becoming major ones.
156. French makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal, social and moral development when taking turns in role-play, and in the way they support and encourage each other and are quick to celebrate each other's successes. They discuss and compare French and English customs and traditions, which enhances their cultural development.

## MUSIC

157. The provision for music is good for primary aged pupils but unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9, where too little time is devoted to teaching of the subject. This was a criticism in the last inspection report. Primary pupils achieve well, but achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. At this stage, higher-attaining pupils who join in extra-curricular music activities, or whose parents invest in instruments and books that enable pupils to learn to play an instrument at home make satisfactory progress. However, lower-attaining pupils who only have access to music lessons for an hour a week for one term out of three lose the skills they have learned and their enthusiasm for the subject, and they make patchy progress as a result. Although music is not taught in Years 10 and 11, pupils do have musical experiences as part of units of work they complete for the Diploma of Vocational Education, and they continue to acquire skills, and perform, as part of extra-curricular clubs and school performances. Extra-curricular provision in the school, for music, is very good, with a range of opportunities to sing, play instruments, perform in outside competitions and participate in musical productions.
158. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6. Here, pupils are taught music weekly and their enthusiasm for the subject is obvious. Lessons are well planned to provide a good variety of activities for pupils to listen to music, sing, play instruments, and perform both individually and in groups. Music and songs are well selected to appeal to young pupils, and they voice their enthusiasm when a song title is announced by the teacher by exclaiming, *Yes!* The youngest pupils begin to learn the words of some songs; some make actions as they try to join in and they begin to clap or shake an untuned percussion instrument along to music, although not always in time. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils sing tunefully, and listen carefully to music, to spot a noise made by an animal, for example. They begin to think about how music makes them feel. One described *Cat's Cradle* as making her feel 'giggly inside'. Pupils beat tambourines and shakers in time to the music, and higher attainers identify how many beats there are in a pupil's name. Higher attainers enjoy singing on their own and are able to play a short phrase on a glockenspiel. They distinguish between high and low sounds and those that are loud or quiet. Teachers write good evaluations of each lesson, showing clearly what went well and what needs

to be revisited next time, and this promotes learning well. Some individual achievements are noted, but records do not show the achievements of every pupil, making records less useful than they might be.

159. In Years 7 to 9, although teaching and learning in lessons are good, the restricted time available means, that over the years, not all pupils make sufficient gains in music. There is nothing like the same enthusiasm in lessons at this stage as there is amongst primary pupils. Nonetheless, the teacher ensures that pupils have opportunities to listen to a good variety of music, appraise, perform and improve their performance. They are encouraged to listen with eyes closed and to reflect on how the music makes them feel. They record their thoughts and feelings in listening diaries that are set out differently for pupils of different abilities. Music from different cultures is introduced, and pupils show interest in unusual instruments, such as African drums, asking whether they are covered in real skin, for example. Pupils are not reticent when it comes to performing and they have the confidence to improvise. Lessons give them choices, too. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils could select to practise playing the ocarina, use an electronic keyboard or use a software package for making music and improvising on the xylophone. Each was invited to share their composition with others, and all were suitably applauded for their efforts. The teacher has high expectations of what pupils might achieve and makes music accessible by adapting it and by using simple notation, such as colour coded methods, to help pupils read music independently.
160. The room used for teaching music at this stage is unsuitable. It is an ordinary classroom, which doubles as an art room, and is very cramped. There is insufficient storage space for instruments in the room, so they have to be collected from a cupboard outside. There is too much furniture in the room for groups to perform together, and the hall is not available when music is timetabled. These limitations make music lessons difficult to organise and manage.
161. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has made several improvements since the last inspection, in an attempt to ensure that the subject meets requirements. The subject is to be a priority area in next year's development plan. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.
162. The co-ordinator demonstrates her commitment in organising a weekly music club at lunchtimes, and this enables pupils to play tenor recorders and ocarinas, sing in a choir, sing solos and participate in musical competitions. Pupils' musical achievements have been recognised externally; the school won a cup in an annual inter-schools festival and received high praise for a number of its performances from the adjudicator.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

163. Since the previous inspection, physical education (PE) has made satisfactory improvement and maintained its high standards. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress across the school. Teaching is consistently very good. Pupils of all ages and those with additional special educational needs are improving their sense of direction, body awareness, balance and concentration span, as well as the ability to relate to staff and peers during lessons and games.
164. In the primary classes, pupils change promptly for lessons, listen carefully to instructions and are very aware of safety requirements in lessons. Pupils identify and use various parts of their body to stretch and balance. They play small games and show a good understanding of simple rules. Pupils use apparatus well in the hall. They climb, balance, stretch and jump and are challenged to go high and low, over and under apparatus, extending their ability and confidence. By the end of Year 6, pupils participate in small games, such as rounders, which develops their throwing and catching skills as well as introducing them to the 'team' element of games.
165. By the end of Year 9, pupils participate in a 'carousel' of small games. They show a good understanding of the rules when touring the range of activities. Before the lesson starts, pupils design their own score sheets and record their achievements as they go round. They improve their



skills at skittles, hockey, throwing and batting. Acquisition of throwing and batting skills is important as these skills are used as they progress into the final years.

166. By the end of Year 11, pupils participate in cricket. They build on their previous knowledge of throwing, batting and fielding. New skills are introduced, such as bowling at a wicket, and batting with a proper cricket bat. Good team work is developed when fielding, throwing the ball to each other, supporting and backing up team-mates.
167. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently high. As a result of good relationships pupils respond very positively to all staff and each other. Good use is made of praise and encouragement and this ensures all pupils try their best, perform well and increase their skills and knowledge of physical education. Lessons are well planned, so no time is wasted. All staff change and are very well dressed for lessons; as a result of this role model, pupils are very well dressed and this adds to the quality of the lesson. Very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants is a strength of PE in the school. As a result, this enhances pupils' achievement and progress. Pupils use their mathematical skills well when counting and measuring in PE. Very good use is made of language in lessons. Pupils listen well and follow instructions carefully and this enhances their literacy listening skills. Teachers are skilled at questioning pupils. They challenge pupils to extend their answers. Staff are skilled at managing behaviour and lessons run smoothly.
168. Although there is a good sized field, accommodation indoors is unsatisfactory. Although staff are vigilant when pupils are in the school hall and safety is stressed at all times, the hall is too small for secondary age pupils.
169. The subject is well led and managed, involving several members of staff across the school. The curriculum is well planned to cover a good range of activities, which ensures each pupil develops his or her skills to the full. Great care is taken in planning to ensure pupils with additional special needs or health problems are suitably catered for. Physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development and is a strength of the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

170. Achievement is good. Improvement from the last inspection is good with an improvement in pupils' achievement. Pupils' learning about different religions develops well. Skills in reflection and response show good progression in Years 1 to 6 but are less well developed in the subject in Years 7 to 11.
171. Younger pupils decide where to put the animals in Noah's Ark and whom they would take with them. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils are developing skills in reflection in developing writing their own prayer about the rain and describing their favourite day. Less able pupils, work closely with the support assistants and discuss their ideas and the assistants write down their ideas for them. By the end of Year 6, they know some key beliefs in Islam and higher attainers can draw conclusions on the meaning of the Good Samaritan story.
172. By the end of Year 9, pupils develop an understanding of symbolism, for example in illustrating new life at Easter and the symbols of Sikhism. They illustrate and describe suffering in the world as seen by the Buddha. By the end of Year 11, lower attainers use Bible references to identify key words in the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion and higher attainers explain the symbolism of bread and wine in the communion service. They show an increasing awareness of moral and social issues. They compare material possessions with the idea of happiness and produce their own rules for living, although opportunities for writing about their personal responses are limited.
173. Teaching and learning are good. Planning is good and time is well used to ensure that activities are completed within the thirty-minute lessons. Lessons have a brisk and challenging pace and pupils respond well with good attitudes and behaviour. In a Year 7 lesson about the life of Father Damien, role-play was well used to enable pupils to recognise the difficulties that people with leprosy have. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils' understanding that belonging to a family means sharing

and caring was enhanced by a discussion about their own experience and by a well-chosen story. The support assistant gave good support to individuals during writing tasks. Resources were well used. In Year 10 lessons there was good challenge with pupils reading about the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion. In one Year 10 lesson the well-illustrated text engaged pupils' interest. It was also challenging, with a clear explanation of each event from the teacher to allow pupils to follow the sequence of events well. In another Year 10 lesson the use of highlighters was effective in enabling pupils to scan text quickly to identify key points. In a Year 11 lesson pupils worked in groups to match statements about marriage to symbols so that their understanding of symbolism in marriage was enhanced.

174. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has been very effective in identifying key priorities, including centralising and extending resources for the subject and supporting staff with plans for units of work. Assessment procedures still require further development and the monitoring role of the co-ordinator remains underdeveloped due to time constraints.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

175. Achievement is very good. The curriculum is planned so that pupils "revisit" major topics as they progress through the school and thereby consolidate their learning very effectively. Improvement from the last inspection is very good. In topic work younger pupils learn about keeping healthy, caring for others and "all about me". There is a very good emphasis on reinforcing learning in informal situations such as washing hands, choosing a biscuit and thanking staff. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed good self-awareness and awareness of others. In circle time they take turns in describing things that they are good at. By the end of Year 6, pupils give reasons for different rules, make choices and show awareness of the consequences of breaking rules.
176. By the end of Year 9, pupils use appropriate terminology in their study of drugs and show an informed awareness of changes in adolescence for both girls and boys. They look at themselves in terms of influences upon them and show an increasing awareness of risks that people face in life. Pupils identify hazards both in the home and in the wider environment. By the end of Year 11, pupils explore decision-making, for example, 'should young people live together or get married?' They reflect on their own qualities and the qualities of potential partners. Pupils review their work experience from the perspectives of feelings, skills acquired, and confidence gained. They explore risk-taking again, for example in looking at the effects of alcohol and the risks from smoking, and make very good gains in their understanding of relationships including sexual relationships.
177. Teaching is consistently good. Pupils display very good attitudes and behaviour. Younger pupils are given very good opportunities in circle time to develop their speaking skills and self-esteem. In a lesson including pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 discussion is combined very effectively with a video to enable pupils to learn the value of rules and the consequences of breaking them. In a Year 7 lesson, circle time is effective in reinforcing turn-taking, in which pupils develop skills in expressing both their own feelings and each other's. The use of outside agencies is a strength of the very good provision. In another Year 7 lesson pupils make good gains in learning about resuscitation from a St John's Ambulance member. In a Year 8 drugs education lesson artefacts are very well used in a choosing activity so that pupils learn the differences between the concepts of safe and dangerous, legal and illegal, and addictive and non-addictive.
178. The teaching of sexual relationships is very effective, with very good use made of outside agencies. Pupils have very good opportunities to deepen their understanding and develop their personal responses. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils rehearse role-play situations about relationships problems. The support assistant makes an appropriate personal contribution to the discussion and this is very effective in building pupils' confidence and encouraging them to participate. They subsequently take part in group discussions with professionals from outside agencies. In a follow-up lesson they discuss their "clinic" experiences and what they have learned. Pupils gain valuable "real life" experience from a very well planned sequence of lessons.

179. Leadership and management are very good. The curriculum is very well planned to enable pupils to develop a wide range of personal skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of key issues.