

INSPECTION REPORT

Burnage High School

Burnage

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105557

Headteacher: Mr Ian Fenn

Reporting inspector: Susan Chamberlain
7661

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th September 2002

Inspection number: 249114

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 - 16

Gender of students: Male

School address: Burnage High School
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Burnage
Manchester

Postcode: M19 1ER

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Collinson

Date of previous inspection: 15th May 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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18950	Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English	
31100	Geoff Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
18453	Colin Lower	Team inspector	Science	
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology	
21954	Terry Chipp	Team inspector	Art	
10340	John Lockett	Team inspector	Design and Technology	
20497	Vernon Williams	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	History	Special educational needs
4749	Martin Ash	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
14446	Barry Simmonds	Team inspector	Physical Education	
4451	Roger Howarth	Team inspector	Religious Education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural, citizenship
15304	Reg Fletcher	Team inspector	Music	

27485	Mark Sims	Team inspector	Urdu	English as an additional language
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Burnage High School is an all male comprehensive school with 1065 boys on the roll. Its diverse cultural mix extends to include students from 15 different minority ethnic groups. Over 50 per cent of the students are of Asian heritage and about 26 per cent are white. Other groups include Chinese, black African and African Caribbean. The school contains a number of students who have joined the school late, some of whom are refugees. The number of refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia has risen of late and amounts to approximately 12 per cent of the school's population. Around 60 per cent of students require free school means and about 750 students are eligible for support via the ethnic minority achievement grant. The local education authority supports a further 173 minority ethnic students. In all, 667 students come from families where English is an additional language. Of these, more than a third are relative beginners in English. Over a quarter of the boys in school have special educational needs. Most students come from areas of Manchester which are severely disadvantaged. Overall, students' attainment, when they enter the school is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school, with some excellent features. Leadership by the headteacher is excellent. Levels of care are very good. The school represents a mini-world where many different races mix harmoniously; it sets a good example that might well be heeded by the larger world. Examination results are improving as are students' attitudes, behaviour and attendance. The school has a deficit budget but has this under control. There are massive financial implications, to ensure that students are properly included and catered for. However, the school manages to provide good value for money given the challenging circumstances it faces and it is no longer underachieving.

What the school does well

- Improving standards in GCSE examinations.
- Leadership by the headteacher is excellent; his senior team share very well his commitment to improvement.
- The good attitudes of students extend to include racial harmony amongst a diverse cliental.
- The community contributes well to students' learning.
- Educational and personal support for students are very good.
- The curriculum is very appropriate to the needs of the students and strongly promotes their social, cultural and moral development.

What could be improved

- Attainment is still well below average.
- Attendance, although rising, is unsatisfactory.
- The behaviour of a significant minority of students is unsatisfactory.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is insufficient.
- There are accommodation issues in design and technology and the toilet facilities are inadequate.
- There is insufficient in class support for special educational needs and English as an additional language.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in 2000. In 2002, examination results have improved considerably. The number of unsatisfactory lessons has reduced and attendance rates have increased. Students' levels of self-esteem have improved. Recruitment of high quality staff has been possible. Resources for ICT have improved.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	C	

Students of all abilities are present in the school. However, overall, when students enter the school, their attainment is well below average. Literacy and numeracy strategies are beginning to affect positively standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9. Improved staffing and a broader curriculum are improving the rate of improvement in Years 10 and 11.

In 2001, standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by age fourteen were well below the national average. Test results in English and science were broadly in line with other schools in similar contexts, whilst mathematics results were well above those in comparable schools. At this stage, the rate of improvement in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all the above subjects was above the national trend, indicating that progress made was above expectation.

The proportions of students gaining five or more grades A* to C, five or more grades A* to G and one or more grades A* to G in the 2001 GCSE examinations were well below national figures, as was the average point score per student. When matched against similar schools, using the free school meals comparator, the proportion of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C and A* to G was broadly in line with the average, as was the average points score per student. When compared with schools in which the students attained similar test results at age fourteen, attainment at GCSE was below average. Although achievement since the previous inspection and for some time before, has varied from insufficient to satisfactory, during the last year students' achievements have been good. This improvement is reflected in 2002 GCSE results where the proportion of 5 A* - C grades has risen by 9 per cent, without discounting the number of refugees new to the school.

Standards in the work seen are below average overall, but above average in modern foreign languages and religious education at GCSE. Bangladeshi students indicate the highest level of success at GCSE whereas white and black British students do least well. The school works hard to eradicate these anomalies.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are good. There is racial harmony and respect for differences. Students enjoy good teaching.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. However, some unpleasantness occurs, in the dinner queue for example. A significant minority of students cause low level disruption.
Personal development and relationships	Students respect each other and relate well. Personnel, social, health and religious education lessons strongly reinforce good development.
Attendance	Attendance is improving but unsatisfactory

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching is predominately good and learning is similar. However, because of the many different groups involved, learning is slower than might otherwise be expected. In around two thirds of lessons, teaching is good or better. In nearly a quarter of lessons, teaching is very good or better and is best in Year 11 where this proportion rises to a third. In five per cent of lessons, the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory or worse. However, all teaching in Years 7 and 11 is satisfactory or better, whereas, in Years 8 and 9, nearly a tenth of the lessons are unsatisfactory. Although learning follows teaching, the number of lessons where good or better learning takes place is some eight per cent lower than that of teaching in Years 7 to 9. This may reflect the differing needs of the diverse intake, particularly where a knowledge of English is concerned, some students having very little English and with some not having been through an education system before. Learning mirrors teaching almost exactly in Years 10 and 11 when most students have established themselves within the school.

Teaching in English and science is good and is satisfactory in mathematics. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and their expectations are high. However, they are not consistent in the giving of homework. Students' with either special educational needs or are gifted and talented and those with English as an additional language, learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. It provides flexible, varied and relevant programmes of study that match the interests, aptitudes and special needs of students well. All statutory requirements are met. The extra-curricular provision and links with partner institutions are very good. Links with the local community are excellent. Careers education provision is a significant strength. There is too little time for art in Years 7 to 9. More opportunities are needed for students to visit further education provision in Year 11.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. There are good individual educational plans, good assessment procedures, an excellent transition class and good resources. However, there are insufficient support assistants and insufficient resources for visually impaired students. Overall, the school offers excellent opportunities for equal access to the curriculum and is a fully inclusive school. Staff are unified in their commitment to help, support and cajole all students into achieving their best. Provision for gifted and talented students is good.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. However, there are insufficient support assistants. Monitoring indicates that the performance of minority ethnic groups is better than that of white students.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision is well structured and organised. It includes a good coverage of citizenship issues. It successfully promotes the self-esteem of students and encourages them to take newly gained life skills out into the community. A special computer course (CISCO) caters very well for disaffected students and enables them to have a second chance. Observation suggests that they are taking full advantage of this chance and are producing some good and thoughtful work.
How well the school cares for its students	The school cares well for its students. A very good integrated pastoral system offers a wide range of help and support. There is a care and commitment to the inclusion of all. Lunchtime arrangements and toilets are unsatisfactory. Whole school assessment procedures are good. There is a clear marking policy. Departmental portfolios help with identifying different levels of work. Reporting is generally good but academic targets are not sufficiently precise.

Partnership with parents is good. There is a determination to involve parents both informally and formally. There is a good range of contacts.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The Headteacher offers excellent leadership. Overall leadership and management by him and his key staff are very good. The team share a commitment to improve and have a great deal to offer. They have clear aims to care, instil self-esteem and consequently raise attainment. Middle managers represent a mixed picture that varies from satisfactory to excellent, all working to one end.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is strong, comprised of members who represent the many different groupings within the school. They are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluating of teaching is good. Performance management is in place and developing. Examination results are evaluated overall but not always by departments.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The resources are used well with the bulk of spending appropriately used on staffing. Effective plans for the repayment of a deficit have been agreed with the local education authority and are now in place.

Overall resources are good, especially in science, geography, religious education, music, and very good in drama, English and in English as an additional language. In Design and technology, resources are inadequate with insufficient space to accommodate large resources. The library is good overall with a range of both reference and fiction books. Resources for information and communication technology are good. Two technicians provide good support. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum but the school needs more support staff particular for special educational needs and English as an additional language. Staff induction and initial teacher training provision is good. There have been major improvements to the accommodation. However, playgrounds are severely limited.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. They think the teaching is good. They think their children are making good progress at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents have concerns about behaviour Some do not think their children get the right amount of homework Some think the school does not work sufficiently closely with parents.

Inspectors concur with the views of the parents except in that they do not agree that the school does not work sufficiently closely with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. Students come from many different racial groupings and represent the full range of ability. When students enter the school, overall, their attainment is well below average.

2. In 2001, standards of attainment in statutory tests in English, mathematics and science by age fourteen were well below the national average. Test results in English and science were broadly in line with other schools in similar contexts, whilst mathematics results were well above those in comparable schools. At this stage, the rate of improvement in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all the above subjects was above the national trend, indicating that progress made was above expectation, students' achievements being good.

3. The proportions of students gaining five or more grades A* to C, five or more grades A* to G and one or more grades A* to G in the 2001 GCSE examinations were well below national figures, as was the average point score per student. When matched against similar schools, using the free school meals comparator, the proportion of student gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C and A* to G was broadly in line with the average, as was the average points score per student. When compared with schools in which the students attained similar test results at age fourteen, attainment at GCSE was below average. The school contains a number of students who have joined the school late, some of whom are refugees. Although achievement since the previous inspection and for some time before, has varied from insufficient to satisfactory, during the last year students' achievements have been good. This improvement is reflected in 2002 GCSE results where the proportion of 5 A* - C grades has risen by 9 per cent, without discounting the number of refugees new to the school and 11 per cent when these students are removed from the figures.

4. Standards in the work seen are below average overall; they are above average in modern foreign languages and religious education. Bangladeshi students indicate the highest level of success at GCSE whereas white and black British students do least well. The school works hard to eradicate these anomalies.

5. Attainment in the work seen in English in Years 7 to 11 is below average for most students because writing skills mar their work. There are weaknesses in sentence work e.g. including order, punctuation, spelling and grammatical features. Achievement in this subject is good. Based on their starting point, students make good progress. Although results were below average in 1999/2001 in 2002 GCSE results in English literature showed a sharp rise to (61 per cent) and in English (41 per cent).

6. Students enter the school with variable literacy skills and on entry, most perform well below national expectations. By the end of Years 9 and 11, students make better progress than expected because of the intensive support in some lessons by support staff. The English department has made a significant contribution to promoting literacy across the curriculum. Monitoring arrangements ensure that departments use aspects of the Literacy Strategy in their teaching.

7. Speaking skills are generally weak in some subjects, as there are too few opportunities for extending students' oral communication skills. They use good listening skills and ask questions to clarify their understanding but in most subjects they are not practised in debating or articulating their views. Paired work is promoted in religious education and modern foreign languages. In geography, speaking and listening skills are

well developed. In English, drama, maths and history, students are given good opportunities to speak at length in discussion and group work.

8. Students use key words accurately as teachers reinforce them in most lessons. For example, in history, teachers embed them in writing frames and encourage students to use them in their answers. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over time based on the good quality resources and extra support from the special needs department. In science, Years 7 to 9 students read texts to match their reading skills when developing research skills whilst in design and technology, they make good use of the Internet for research. Students carry out investigative work in maths but in design and technology, they are not skilled in making notes to explain the design process. Boys have access to a wide selection of books in the library.

9. Students use writing frames in subjects such as history, modern foreign languages, and literacy support work in the special needs department. Whilst students write for a variety of purpose across the curriculum, there are weaknesses in sentence construction, spelling and basic grammar. There is no writing in music or physical education. Students edit their word-processed work in modern foreign languages and music where they make good progress evaluating their songs. Whereas display work is generally neat, presentation in exercise books is not consistently satisfactory across the curriculum. The science department is presently working on improving presentation skills.

10. Attainment in mathematics is below the national average in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 and well below in Year 11 reflecting past staffing problems, which are now largely resolved. Achievement in mathematics is now at least satisfactory for all students but was not so until recently. Improvements have taken place because of much improved teaching and departmental leadership and management.

11. Students display well below average numerical skills in their work across the curriculum but in general there is no evidence to suggest that students fail to access the curriculum because of poor numerical skills.

12. Attainment in the work seen in science by age fourteen and age sixteen is below the national average. However, based upon their prior attainment, students achieved far more than would be expected. Achievement of late is good.

13. Evidence from work in students' folders suggests that attainment in art is well below average on entry in Year 7 and remains well below average by the end of Year 9. Attainment by age 16 is close to national averages representing very good achievement in GCSE years. Music standards vary widely. Students enter with very low levels of attainment but are helped to achieve a satisfactory standard by the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 standards continue to improve significantly.

14. In design and technology in Years 7 to 9, attainment is well below the national average, but in line with similar schools. Students reaching level 5 or above are steady at about half the national average whilst those reaching level 6 or above are less than a handful. The attainment in Years 10 and 11 for those students doing full GCSE is well below national average but above standards for similar schools and in line with other subjects in school. For students doing the short GCSE course attainment levels are well below national standards and a large percentage either fail to complete the coursework requirements or withdraw from the examination. In Years 7 to 9, students' achievements are satisfactory. The trend is in line with national expectations. There has been a considerable reduction in the percentage of students attaining only low National Curriculum levels, i.e. less than level 4. In Years 10 and 11, students doing the full GCSE achieve

satisfactorily but there is an absence of A* grades due to a lack of experience of design and technology skills earlier on. Students doing the short GCSE courses fail to progress sufficiently.

15. Standards of work in geography are well below the national average at the end of Year 9. Students' achievements in work seen are well below the national average in Year 7 indicating satisfactory progress over Years 7 and 9. Standards of work seen in Years 8 and 9 currently are below the national average and indicate an improving trend over the last year. Standards of work at the end of Year 11 are well below the national average. Students achieve a satisfactory level, overall. However, work seen in classes and in students' books show improvement and standards that are below the national average indicating good achievement now made in Year 10 and 11. In History by the ages of 14 and 16, the standard of a majority of students is below national averages, with a small minority achieving the national average. By age of 16, students are entered for GCSE examinations. They achieve lower than average pass grades at A*-C and at A*-G. The examination results are lower than those for other subjects at the school. Overall, students' achievements are satisfactory.

16. In ICT GCSE results have improved of late. In the work seen, standards are below average at both ages 14 and 16. Students' achievements are satisfactory. This is partially due to the lack of guidance for assessment. By the time students reach 14 years old their attainment is below the level expected. In the work seen, they have sound communication skills and use the application well. Modelling and measurement and handling of information also at the level expected. Students have used the logo programme for control but have not had the opportunity to use more sophisticated programmes therefore this element is unsatisfactory. The overall attainment of 16 year-old students is below the expected level. Only half the year group receive a weekly lesson on ICT. Students studying GCSE and GNVQ are at the level expected and use a range of application with confidence.

17. In modern foreign languages, the general attainment of most students and their competence in English prevent many students from making rapid progress, but a few reach national expectations by the end of Year 9. However, those who choose French and German for GCSE make more rapid progress and attainment is above national for boys by the end of Year 11. Most students achieve well in lessons and make good progress. Standards in Urdu are high and students make good progress.

18. In physical education, students enter the school with levels of attainment well below those expected. Students make good progress and by the end of Year 9 students are attaining levels that are in line with national expectations. Good progress is continued during Years 10 and 11. Although GCSE A*-C grades have improved significantly since the last inspection.

19. Good progress has been made in religious education since last inspection. At age 16, attainment in GCSE is above national average for all maintained boys schools. Substantial gains are apparent in the lessons observed. In work seen, standards, by the end of Year 9, are at a satisfactory level. In Years 10 and 11 in work seen, standards are good. Students' achievements in lessons are good across the school.

20. Standards attained by the gifted and talented students are high. In 2001 the 24 gifted and talented students in Year 11 gained 44 A* and A grades at GCSE. Following the appointment of an achievement and enrichment co-ordinator in September 2001 and a year's enrichment activities, the 22 gifted and talented students in the 2002 cohort gained 71 A* and A grades.

21. The attainment of students with special educational needs is well below average on their admission to the school. Many have very low reading ages and are unable to write simple sentences or correctly spell words such as *banana* or *those*. Their writing is ill-formed and they have little understanding of how to use capital letters and punctuation marks. Few have progressed beyond basic number work. They receive extra help on a withdrawal basis to develop their very weak reading, writing, listening and comprehension skills. However, they make at least satisfactory, and sometimes good progress as they rise through the school. By the age of 14, the majority of students has developed basic literacy and numeracy skills. In Years 10 and 11, most students work towards the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations.

22. All pupils are fully included in ability grouped classes where they are sometimes supported by in-class support. They make satisfactory progress alongside their peers. The creation of a transition class for lower achieving Year 7 pupils is excellent, and the pupils make good progress in their academic, social and personal development. In extra literacy tuition lessons for 14 year-olds, pupils show a good understanding of the video, 'Castaway', by engaging in mature discussions on their observations. For example, they identify the responsibilities of different characters and discuss how well these are fulfilled. They take notes, using these to write draft comments on the plot. Where there is effective in-class support, such as in religious education, 15 year-olds participate in group work question and answer sessions with a classroom assistant. The success of this is aided by the good relationships between staff and pupils.

23. Data analysis from the department shows that 29 per cent minority ethnic students attain five or more grades A* to C at GCSE which is well below national averages but above the average for the school. Ethnic minority achievement support assistants monitor thoroughly the progress of learners with English as an additional language using the local education authority assessment system. Detailed records on EAL learners show the progress made. In some instances students have achieved GCSE English grades within three years after starting with little or no English.

2.2 Attitudes and behaviour

24. Overall, students' attitudes are good. Students often show keen and enthusiastic attitudes to work and school life, especially where teaching is exciting. Parents appreciate the emphasis the school places on personal development and many say their children enjoy coming to school. Extra-curricular activities such as African drumming and football are enthusiastically attended; boys also raise money for charity for example, by selling AIDS brooches to help a South African orphans' project. However, a significant minority of students demonstrate casual attitudes to attendance and punctuality, and a few are disaffected.

25. Behaviour and attitudes in the classroom are mostly satisfactory and often good. For example, Year 10 boys in an ICT lesson were fully involved with their individual tasks in word-processing and spreadsheets, and making good progress. In a Year 11 drama lesson on the theme of 'Discovery', boys showed effective teamwork and this contributed to perfecting their work. In a Year 9 history lesson looking at the Peterloo massacre students were very well motivated and positive, frequently volunteering answers. However, students sometimes behave less well and can be immature and silly, as in a Year 11 design and technology lesson where they had a low concentration span, or Year 9 in ICT when they behaved badly when their attention was not caught immediately. In some cases, but not all, this is linked to dull or lacklustre teaching. A Year 11 lesson in religious education looking at different beliefs within Christianity was extremely well planned to challenge students and deepen their understanding of a difficult topic, but a minority of boys behaved so badly that

both their learning and that of others suffered. This is a similar picture to that at the last inspection.

26. Around the school behaviour is usually good; for example, large numbers of students move sensibly in and out of assembly, sometimes holding doors open for others and giving way on the stairs. However, with overcrowding and narrow corridors (i.e. in the older building), there is some pushing or jostling. This occurs especially at lunchtimes. Year 7 boys feel aggrieved that they are pushed out of the way by older students, and there is no doubt that the late lunch break and long waits for the canteen are contributing factors to bad behaviour.

27. School and personal property is usually, but not always, treated with respect. For example, there is some evidence of graffiti and litter, especially after breaks, though the buildings themselves are generally in reasonable order. Students report some petty thefts of dinner money.

28. Relationships at all levels are generally good; this is a friendly and inclusive school. The many different races, ethnic and religious groups co-exist happily: for example, the numerous games of football played on the field at lunchtime appear to run alongside each other quite peaceably. Students are well used to working in groups and pairs, which helps their learning. Some Year 11 boys help in mentoring younger ones.

29. There is some evidence of bullying and minor harassment, particularly the practice of name-calling, but this is very quickly picked up by pastoral staff and dealt with effectively. This is strongly reinforced through the programme for personal, social and health education, which the school links closely with religious education (PSHRE). Students with special educational needs, and the large number who speak English as an additional language or come from ethnic minorities, are fully integrated into the life of the school. It offers a haven of peace and tolerance for many students, in stark contrast to their experiences elsewhere.

30. Throughout the school, students often listen well to each other and to teachers and other adults. For example, Year 7 boys were interested to hear what their classmates believed in and valued when this was discussed in religious education. They show tolerance and respect, both to each other and to staff, reflecting how they themselves are treated in school.

31. Students have some opportunities to reflect on their learning and the impact of their actions on others. For example, those involved in unacceptable behaviour are asked to consider what they have done and why it is wrong. This reflects the school's strong moral focus.

32. Students are very willing to take on responsibilities such as being prefects or form monitors and, in Year 9, working as office supports. The school council operates in all year groups and some members have taken part in the Manchester Youth Parliament. There are some good opportunities for more independent or unsupervised work, such as projects, but mostly for those identified as gifted and talented.

33. Attendance is now 88.8 per cent, with 1.7 per cent unauthorised absence, which is lower than the national average, despite sterling efforts by the school. However, this rate has improved since the last inspection. A few students have high average attendance of more than 95 per cent (even 100 per cent in some cases), but the figures are brought down by a number of long-term absentees and a more general laxness towards regular attendance. Students are not always punctual to school and to lessons, though this is also improving as the new computerised system allows staff to crack down on internal truancy.

34. There were 191 fixed-term exclusions last year, involving 114 boys. Two boys were permanently excluded. These figures have reduced significantly as new behaviour management systems have taken effect. The alternative curriculum, the work-related programme and learning support mentors for disaffected students in Years 10 and 11 have certainly helped a number to stay in education.

35. The attitudes of learners who have English as an additional language are very good. Many EAL learners are highly motivated and make rapid progress very quickly, for example two students discussing types of political institutions after less than one year in the school. Behaviour in lessons is very good, but students lose interest when there is no support and they cannot access the work.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

36. Teaching is predominately good. In around two thirds of lessons it is good or better. In nearly a quarter of lessons, teaching is very good or better and is best in Year 11 where this proportion rises to a third. In five per cent of lessons, the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory or worse. However, all teaching in Years 7 and 11 is satisfactory or better, whereas, in Years 8 and 9, nearly a tenth of the lessons are unsatisfactory. Although learning follows teaching, the number of lessons where good or better learning takes place is some eight per cent lower than that of teaching in Years 7 to 9. This may reflect the differing needs of the diverse intake, particularly where a knowledge of English is concerned, some students having very little English with some not having been through an education system before. Learning mirrors teaching almost exactly in Years 10 and 11 when most students have established themselves within the school.

37. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good overall. The majority of teachers can draw on a wide knowledge base and explain concepts well. Consequently, students acquire a range of skills with comparative ease. Where unqualified and supply teachers are filling gaps occurring from difficulties in recruitment, inadequate subject specification is occasionally evident. In mathematics, for example, a lack of subject knowledge led to very poor planning in one lesson. The teacher was unaware of the areas of understanding needed by students, in order for them to improve their grasp of decimal fractions. Learning was inhibited and students' gains were minimal.

38. Overall, lesson planning is good and effectively enables maximum learning to take place. Background materials are used well. Well prepared lessons are a strength in art. Good resources, for example sheets of colourful pictures, are used well. In a lesson in Year 7, the teacher took a good range of photographs, which showed patterns existing in the school environment as a very effective reference for students' work. In design and technology, a digital camera was used effectively for research and students learned how to manipulate an image on the screen to the best effect. However, in science, the teacher was unable to move students forward when inaccuracies in experimental data led to false conclusions in a lesson on pulleys.

39. In this school teachers' expectations are high. The need to do considerable remedial and basic skill work because of the differing needs of so many individual students motivates teachers to expect success however hard the challenge. For example, in an excellent geography, lessons started promptly and a brisk pace established at the outset. Clear objectives were laid down and students' responses excellently consolidated on the white board to secure whole class learning. Survey skills infused expertly into the lesson and the teacher skilfully ensured that throughout the lesson students of the many ethnic

groups were given an opportunity to contribute. Lively pace was notable in history lessons too.

40. Teachers use a variety of methods to convey their craft. In drama, for example, the teacher conducted a role play using himself as the key motivator. This was highly effective and students watched spellbound. In science, the teacher captured the imagination of students when explaining fossil fuels. The teacher took on the role of a piece of plankton, which was digested by small sea creatures, eventually leading to the formation of oil. His enthusiasm and role play resulted in very good learning about fossil fuel formation. On occasions, insufficient variation of tasks causes students to become bored, restless and to lack concentration. For example, in design and technology, students were restricted to their desks for 3 hours doing design theory. Such was their frustration that eventually relationships between the class and teacher broke down and similarly in an art lesson, the main activity was too prolonged and students became noisy towards the end.

41. Generally, students show interest in their lessons. In a Year 8 French class, the teacher had flash cards of leisure activities. The teacher hid these forcing students to guess which was top of the pile. As a result students used maximum concentration, memory training and had a great deal of fun. However, some boys can be disruptive at a low level. Learning is adversely affected when a significant minority of boys talk or fidget too much and, consequently, prevents the teacher from using the time effectively. Similarly, in a drama lesson, a lack of concentration and some unsatisfactory behaviour restricted the students' progress and hindered the smooth running of lessons.

42. Students' knowledge of their learning is enhanced by good relationships between themselves and teachers. An excellent lesson, in mathematics, occurred when the teacher engaged all the students in practical investigations. She created an excellent atmosphere for learning and encouraged very clear mutual respect. The success of the lesson was particularly notable given that the wide ranging needs of the students, some of whom only very recently entered the country.

43. The teaching of skills in numeracy is satisfactory, and is improving as the teachers begin to employ lessons learned from the National Numeracy Strategy. There is a departmental policy for teaching numeracy, which is largely adhered to. A whole school policy has been introduced this year following consultation and staff training. A staff working group continues to meet half-termly concentrating on one new skill each half term. This encourages the sharing of good ideas and practice. Some examples of good teaching of numerical skills are to be seen across the school. In science for example students are given opportunities to apply spatial concepts with three-dimensional models of molecules using construction kits. In music they are encouraged to use a variety of notations when composing. In history good use of statistics can be seen studying war losses. In other departments there is room for improvement. English does not have a numeracy policy. Design technology schemes of work are designed to avoid more difficult mathematical concepts. Opportunities exist in geography but are as yet underdeveloped.

44. Within the context of lessons and tutorial groups the quality of teaching and learning for gifted and talented students is good. The students are identified on class lists so that teachers are aware and able to set appropriate challenges. Working with the co-ordinator, subject heads have devised homework packs as extension work for holiday periods. Special assemblies with Power Point presentations on revision skills are proving popular and effective. Similar schemes are planned for Years 7 and 9.

45. All staff are aware of the students' needs and the majority makes effective use of individual education plans and subject specific targets to plan their lessons and resources.

For example, in science, English and history, the school has consciously introduced ability graded text-books which enable lower achieving pupils to complete the same topics as their more able peers. These are used well in lessons and help to alleviate the problem of insufficient support staff. This initiative is an on-going development. However, in some cases, such as in one religious education lesson, support staff are not always well deployed, and the students fail to make sufficient progress. Additionally, in Information and communication technology, a visually impaired student was left squinting at a computer screen and unaided when his support teacher left the lesson. There are insufficient resources available for such students.

46. The quality of withdrawal teaching for students with special educational needs is good, with realistic levels of challenge, which question the student's comprehension through discussion and word meanings. Students gain much from such teaching. Teachers and support staff keep detailed records of the students' academic and social progress to inform future lessons and to liaise with subject teachers. Staff have a very good knowledge of their students and relationships are very good.

47. Teaching support in EAL lessons is good. Students are given work at an appropriate level to enable them to access the curriculum work. They learn well. In many lessons specialist support (EMAS) teachers work with the whole class and not just targeted learners. These support staff are skilled and experienced language specialists.

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

48. The curriculum is very good overall and is well managed. It is regularly and thoroughly reviewed through annual subject evaluations and the school curriculum review group which is open to all members of the teaching staff.

49. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum has good breadth and balance and has improved since the previous inspection. Curriculum time has been increased to 25 hours each week. Physical education curriculum opportunities have improved with the building of a sports hall. The provision of two new computers rooms has increased the opportunities in ICT. There is still, however, a significant deficiency in the resources available for the teaching of design and technology. Drama is taught to all students in Years 7 to 9. Religious education is taught within the weekly personal, social and health education programme as PSHRE. ICT is taught as a separate subject of the curriculum and more time has been given for teaching it in Year 8. Urdu is, like French and German, taught as a main modern foreign language throughout the school. A small group of twenty of the most vulnerable students; some refugees, some radical underachievers and others from very difficult social backgrounds are taught the national curriculum separately in Year 7. They focus particularly on literacy and numeracy and most clearly benefit from this arrangement. There is limited time for the teaching of art and music in Years 7 to 9 but it is suitably compensated for in music by ensuring that class sizes are small. The timetabling arrangements in some English classes in Years 8 and 9 are detrimental to continuity and progression. The provision for literacy across the curriculum is generally good and that for numeracy is satisfactory.

50. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is very good with all statutory requirements met. The school has rectified the issues identified for action at the previous inspection. All students now have their full curriculum entitlement except a small group that study the alternative curriculum. Short courses suspended in French and German at the time of the previous inspection have been re-instated and full GCSE courses are also now available. Some students in Years 10 and 11 are disapplied in modern foreign languages. All students

except for a small number of refugees just arrived in the country take external certification courses and entry figures for the GCSE courses are now much higher. Recent proposals from the curriculum review group have been implemented with full-time off-site provision at the Longsight Centre, Moss Side being made for a very small number of students needing specialist behavioural and other support. A part-time off site provision is made for a group of students in Years 10 and 11 who require a curriculum that more directly meets their special needs. This includes in Year 10 studying on taster vocational courses at Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT) an ICT course at the City Learning Centre at Parrs Wood High School and a day's work placement as well as two and a half days studies at school. In Year 11, there is a three days work experience programme linked to studies at the North Area College, Stockport. These courses offer very good and appropriate provision for these students. However, most students take a core of GCSE subjects and an option of two pools of subjects that includes law and Urdu. Some students also study Bengali, Arabic, Persian or Somali by special arrangement. Three vocational courses were offered for the current session but due to lack of demand only the GNVQ in ICT and the applied vocational GCSE in business is taught. There is need to extend the vocational provision offered given the nature of the school intake. Overall the curriculum provides flexible, varied and relevant programmes of study across the ability range particularly for low attainers and students with behavioural and other problems. The alternative curriculum in applied practical courses run in partnership with local providers is particularly good.

51. The PSHE provision is very good. All students follow a course in personal, social and health education in all years of their time at school. This course includes sex education, elements of citizenship education and religious education which is provided in accordance with the Manchester Agreed Syllabus. The PSHE programme is separately identified from the religious education although there is some integration where learning intentions and objectives complement each other. The PSHE course is well planned and effectively promotes the personal and social development of students. The school created the PSHRE faculty in September 2002 and will evaluate its effectiveness in a year's time. A team of 12 teachers delivers the programme but not all have specialist skills in teaching PSHRE. The monitoring of teaching and learning and opportunities for the development of teacher competency is recognised but not yet in place.

52. The overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school has maintained and improved its overall provision in these aspects of students' development. The whole school policy has not been revised but the principles it promotes are well understood and accepted within the school community of staff and students. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, although the systems for monitoring how well the school is doing in these aspects needs to be developed further.

53. The school's provision for spiritual development is good. Many students bring with them a set of religious beliefs and values which inform their perspective on life. The school provides many opportunities through religious education, Personal, Social and Health Education, English, Community Studies, assemblies, the provision of a prayer room for Muslim students and its approach to pastoral care, for exploring, encouraging and developing students' personal values and beliefs. Despite their varied backgrounds students as a result show good tolerance and understanding for each other. They frequently demonstrate, in lessons, an awareness and respect for differing beliefs and values within the school community. The assemblies, with the supporting 'thoughts for the week' in tutor time, provide opportunities for reflection and are effective in developing understanding of human actions, feelings and emotions. Collective worship is well planned and organized with all students participating in one year group assembly and four tutor time sessions per

week. These were well managed and the statutory requirement was adhered to during the inspection, although not all tutor sessions were effective as collective worship.

54. Provision for moral development is very good. The school encourages students to develop a clear moral code through its code of conduct, its provision for the exploration of moral issues and dilemmas in English, PSHRE , drama, history, geography, modern foreign languages and, the outworking of its mission statement and aims. The school provides a safe learning environment in which individuals from any background, race or religion are valued and given every opportunity to contribute to the life of the school. Students demonstrate a strong moral code. They know right from wrong, respect others and most are ably practicing good personal responsibility as well as knowing their rights. The valuing of racial and religious difference is well promoted by the school and students are subsequently developing a strong commitment to ethical and religious values.

55. There is very good provision for students' social development. An excellent social history exercise for last years Remembrance Day brought together past members of the school who had survived the Second World War. This event enabled students to explore , not only the effects of war on people's lives, but also helped them to consider wider issues about morality, the consequences of political and social actions and the importance of learning from the past in order to shape the future. The School Council is an active agent for discussion about social matters within the school. A very good planned programme of PSHRE encourages students to discuss and explore social issues in a structured way. As a result many students are developing the ability to work co-operatively in groups, share their opinions openly, support other peers when they need it and be responsible members of the school and wider community.

56. The schools provision for cultural development is very good. Many opportunities are provided through modern foreign languages religious education, community studies, history, geography, art, English and drama for students to explore their own and others cultural heritages and backgrounds. As well as an appreciation for diversity of race and religion students are made aware of the richness of artistic, sporting and musical achievements which make up the cultural heritage of Britain. The school supports an Aids project in South Africa, provides work experience in different local communities and offers a community studies course. These all help to develop cultural and inter-cultural understanding. These initiatives are effective in the part they play in students' cultural development. Students of different faiths and cultural backgrounds relate very well to each other in lessons, in the playground and around the school. The promotion of the positive nature of cultural diversity is a factor that enables the school to be successful in maintaining racial harmony.

57. There is very good extra-curriculum provision. It is particularly good in music and sports. An extensive and good quality enrichment programme is provided in music with students having the opportunity to participate in different musical groups including the steel band, the swing band and the African drumming group. Many students are involved in joint productions in which the bands, choirs and drama group participate, with performances in Manchester Town Hall, the Royal Northern School of Music as well as in the local community. Sports provision is well-developed and well-supported and includes football, basketball, cricket, badminton, and table tennis. Individual students and school teams do well locally and nationally. An increasing number of students are taking the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. Several subjects including art, ICT and design technology have clubs and make their facilities available to students after school. The Study Centre and the Careers Centre are regularly open for student use. Extra revision classes, for example in mathematics and lessons in Bengali, Arabic and Somali make an excellent contribution to extra-curriculum opportunities offered. There is a very good extra-curricular activities programme of visits organised for gifted and talented students There are also many other

enrichment opportunities, including visits to theatres, museums, fieldwork trips and visits to Italy and Spain. Particularly impressive is the range of residential courses offered in Years 7 to 9 in the Lake District and at the schools outdoor pursuits centre at Buxworth in the Peak District.

58. The school has very good links with partner institutions. Links with feeder primary schools are generally well developed. The school works effectively to ensure a smooth transition for students from primary to secondary education through the pastoral transfer liaison arrangements that include an induction day. There are excellent links with local secondary schools in the area and in particular with Parrs Wood High School's City Learning Centre, Whalley Range High School for business studies and the neighbouring Levenshulme High School for Girls. Links with MANCAT and the North Area College Stockport are well established and are developing productively. There are very good opportunities for students to continue and progress their studies in a range of Further Education Colleges. Initial teacher training links with the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology and Manchester Metropolitan University provide a very good professional partnership.

59. The provision for careers education and vocational education is very good. A well considered and comprehensive careers programme exists in Years 9 to 11 provided through the PSHRE programme. The careers coordinator is experienced and well qualified and provides very good leadership. She ensures, through careful monitoring, that all students have knowledge and understanding of relevant careers opportunities and are suitably prepared for entering the world of work. The guided choice programme in Year 9 involving students and their parents with the school in deciding on options for Year 10 are especially good. The careers co-coordinator works very closely in partnership with the local Careers Education and Business Partnership Service with an increasing number of students working for the platinum and gold awards. Excellent links exist with Connexions- the Careers Education Advisory Service who provide very valuable professional guidance and advice on careers through individual interviews. All students undertake a very well organized and valuable one-week work experience in the local community in Year 10 but this needs extending to a two-week placement. The careers co-ordinator has established an impressive careers resource base in the careers centre with a very good range of appropriate materials provided including brochures, video and computer programmes that meet students' needs well.

60. The contribution of the community to students learning is excellent. The school has an extremely effective partnership with the community and local businesses and this has improved significantly in the last year or so. Representatives of different faiths and ethnic groups are regular visitors to the school. There are well-established and developing links with the Local Education Authority and the South Manchester Excellence in Cities cluster that provides support for staff and shared activities for students. There are a range of productive partnerships with neighbouring secondary schools and tertiary sector colleges as previously indicated. Links with local industry through the Education Business Partnership work experience programme and in support of the careers education programme as for example the Key Skills Challenge Day are exceptionally good and help to enrich the curriculum offered. Members of local business community and voluntary groups act as mentors for a number of students within the school and generally provide helpful and valued support. Links with the Greater Manchester Police are strong through its designation as the first school in the city to be involved in the Manchester multi-agency gang strategy. Manchester United Football Club has good links with the school in its Youth Development Programme.

61. The provision for ICT across the curriculum at the last inspection was judged to be unsatisfactory. Although this provision has now improved there are still some subject areas that are not providing sufficient opportunities for students to use ICT to support learning. Good use however was seen in modern languages with regular use of ICT to support learning. Very good use was seen in music. The department has its own suite of computers and effective use is made of the facilities to record students' performances, programmes to support students' composition skills and the internet for research. Although the mathematics department does not have a policy provision is identified in the schemes of work using spreadsheets, graph plotting and calculators. The English department uses word processing for topics and the internet for research but the improvement since the previous inspection has been limited. The special educational needs department make effective use to support learning with appropriate programmes to support spelling. Provision in the geography, history and religious education departments are all unsatisfactory. Although use has been identified in the schemes of work the overall improvement since the previous inspection has been limited. The physical education department encourage students to use word processing for their projects but the facility overall it is not well used. All teachers in the science department are confident users of ICT and use has improved since the previous inspection. There is a policy for the use of ICT in design and technology but it is not well implemented. There is, however provision in the schemes of work using digital cameras and word processing. Training of teachers is in its early stages but where teachers have confidence information communication technology is contributing positively to students' skills and learning. Access to computers has been a problem in the past but accommodation has now been increased with an additional two computer suites.

62. The achievement and enrichment programme delivers a very good range of extra curricular activities for gifted and talented students in all year groups. There are after-school clubs for each year group including a Law Society for Year 10 with visiting speakers from the profession. A good range of outings and activities are arranged for Years 7 to 9 while Years 10 and 11 are encouraged to participate in conferences at Manchester University. For Year 11 there is a public speaking club and students represent the school at the Youth Parliament. The programme co-ordinator and heads of department work together to develop enrichment opportunities for each subject. Provision for gifted and talented students is very good. The students identified accurately reflect the ethnic balance of the school as a whole. Access to the achievement and enrichment programme is broadened to include all students with the potential to gain 5 A* - C grades.

63. Since the previous inspection the provision for special educational needs has significantly improved. Departmental documentation is now very good with monitoring and assessment procedures being well implemented. Academic inclusion is successful and, in the best lessons, it is often difficult to identify pupils with additional needs. There are 115 students who have been disapplied from the National Curriculum due to weak language and literacy skills, or the students' stated need. This is based on a thorough baseline assessment on entry to the school, which also identifies higher achieving students and those whose second language is English and who are relative beginners. Individual education and pastoral plans are well constructed with targets reflecting the students' additional needs. The students' progress is well monitored by the special needs department, in close liaison with other staff and this data informs teachers' planning and ongoing target setting. All staff have and use the special needs register and a complete set of students' education and pastoral plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

64. The school is a safe, caring environment in which students' safety and well-being are high priorities, which parents fully recognise. Staff know their students well and supervise them carefully. An impressive range of help and support is available through staff working in tandem with outside agencies to ensure that all have equal access to learning. The school has maintained and improved the standards found at the last inspection, particularly in respect of tracking attendance.

65. Procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting academic progress are good. Assessment information is used to guide curricular planning. There is a whole school marking policy which gives clear guidance to teachers. Departments may develop their own policies in line with the overall policy. Work should be given grades according to the national curriculum where possible and these grades are held centrally in departments and by the school so that staff can consult them. Departments also have examples of students' work at different levels. An assistant head teacher co-ordinates all procedures effectively, including reporting to parents. There is a good level of reporting: brief reports are sent to parents each term, with a full report in the summer term. They give details of academic and other progress and the information is generally good and helpful to parents. However the academic targets set for students in some subjects are not always precise enough. Heads of year monitor the performance of students and take action if there is cause for concern. Results are not analysed by all departments with respect to ethnicity.

66. The management of behaviour is uniformly very good, and meshes seamlessly with the tremendous range of strategies offered to help students integrate and achieve. Staff work consistently to monitor and promote good behaviour using a comprehensive range of positive strategies and rewards such as good work cards, certificates and special treats. Learning mentors run supportive courses, for example in anger management and conflict resolution. There is also a clear and escalating series of sanctions which are fully understood by all, such as temporary internal exclusion. There is a larger than average proportion of children on the special needs register, some with behaviour difficulties. The patient and exceptionally dedicated staff, who work in the welfare and inclusion team, plus the opportunity to learn through the alternative work-related curriculum, have kept a number of disaffected boys within education. Good links with a variety of outside agencies, such as the police, bereavement charities and organisations for young men's health contribute to this.

67. The programme for personal, social, health and religious education also helps good behaviour and harmonious relationships, for example when students have lessons on friendships and getting along with others. Out of school activities such as work experience in Year 10 and various residential visits contribute to social development. A few students report some minor verbal harassment such as name-calling, and isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour. These are swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff, in a way which has long-term effects through deepening understanding. Exclusion is used relatively rarely, and usually for short periods. In interviews, students were confident they could talk to someone if they felt troubled and Year 7 especially reported very positively on their smooth introduction to the school.

68. Child protection procedures are good. The deputy head as designated officer has a number of years experience and is about to have refresher training. Form tutors are updated through regular pastoral meetings. There is a useful section in the staff handbook for those new to the school or supply teachers coming in at short notice. All staff work together in a strong, supportive and caring network to help each student feel secure and comfortable.

69. Attendance is extremely carefully monitored, using a very good range of methods and systems. Registers are filled in according to statutory guidelines using a computerised system, and form time is often used effectively to reinforce the school's values. The attendance officer immediately telephones all students whose absence remains unexplained, and may call on the services of an efficient and proactive educational welfare officer. Latecomers are recorded 'live' on handheld terminals, enabling staff to quickly find out who is in school but not in class. As well as constant reinforcement in all communications with parents, the computerised attendance system allows sophisticated analysis of results and trends. Individuals and form groups are targeted and encouraged both through sanctions and rewards (such as certificates and prizes for those with high attendance.) Attendance targets are set by pastoral staff and successes are celebrated, for example by displaying names on wall boards. These measures have caused the attendance figures to improve slowly but steadily over the last few years. The remaining problem lies largely with a number of parents who continue to condone truancy or holiday absence.

70. Welfare arrangements are satisfactory. Medical records and accident books are maintained and updated as appropriate, though the medical room is used only when the school nurse is on the premises. Safe working practices are observed in practical subjects, and due attention given to health and safety matters. The buildings are adequately maintained and break times are well supervised. However, toilets and lunch times are an unpleasant experience for many and the queues a focus for poor behaviour. Some designated areas for quiet activities and adventure games would improve the limited outdoor facilities. The buildings are only partially adapted for disabled users.

71. Very good links are made with the wider community through the achievement and enrichment programme. Year 8 students worked with children from a feeder primary school on an oral history project drawing on the wartime memories of local people.

72. Gifted and talented students in Years 10 and 11 benefit greatly from the Education Business Partnership which brings business people into school to act as mentors. A new post has been created in school to manage the Widening Partnership scheme. The scheme is aimed at drawing students from non-higher education backgrounds into universities and colleges. Close links have been established with Manchester local education authority's gifted and talented co-ordinator resulting in Burnage being used as a role model for other schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

73. Parents and carers have a positive view of the school overall, though there are also a few concerns. Of those who returned parent questionnaires, nearly all say that their children like school and feel that they are making good progress. The majority also recognise the good teaching, citing in particular the high expectations teachers have and the strong support for personal development. They also praise the leadership and management. Both via the questionnaire and in the pre-inspection meeting, parents were very positive about the school's achievements. Several took the trouble to write to say how impressed they were with the support and help given to their children.

74. Some parents feel the school does not work closely with them, but the inspection found no evidence at all to support this view. A similar number thought the school is not helping their children to become mature and responsible, but again inspection found the contrary to be true. A substantial minority of parents are unhappy about the use of homework, which is partially supported by the findings of the inspection.

75. The school provides a very good range of information for its parents, much of it professionally produced to a high standard. The school prospectus is attractive and readable, but lacks a few minor items such as student absence rates, national comparisons for national curriculum assessments and anything on vocational education like GNVQs. There is also an informative Governors' annual report to parents but again it needs the addition of the school's targets for Key Stage 4 examinations. Lots of written information is provided for parents, such as a booklet for parents of those in Year 10 about supporting their children through GCSE. There are regular parents' evenings which are well attended (85 per cent for a recent options evening in Year 9). A good proportion of parents attend annual review meetings for their children who have special educational needs. Most parents agree that the teachers are very friendly and approachable, and a number of staff speak minority languages.

76. Annual reports to parents about students' progress are well designed in that they give a good range of information to parents about their children's progress, often in a table or tick list which is easy to understand. However some subjects lack any reference to national curriculum levels and in English, for example, do not give a clear picture of what students know, understand and can do. Targets for improvement are not always very specific. The school puts great effort into its partnership with parents, and has improved this aspect since the last inspection. Attendance is very closely monitored and parents will be telephoned promptly if their children are absent without explanation. Special software allows telephone communication in a number of home languages, and letters may also be translated. The pastoral staff are proactive about making contact with parents-both formally and informally-over anything which matters to them. This ranges from praise for effort or achievement to a request for help in dealing with behaviour or attendance problems. Staff - including the head teacher- also make home visits, whether to pre-empt problems, deal with existing ones or even to congratulate parents on good achievement. Students also get certificates and commendations sent home for good work or behaviour, which are very much appreciated. Parents are involved, for example, in Year 7 evenings or Year 9 option choices and the school's approach is very much the 'open door'.

77. School events such as football matches are very popular with parents. However support for academic achievement is not so strong. In most academic subjects many students are achieving only modest standards. A number of students are frequently absent from school, which is condoned by parents. They need to support their children's learning more effectively by ensuring regular attendance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

78. The new head teacher is very focussed and is an excellent leader. He has picked up difficult issues like behaviour and teaching, which he is addressing well. His vision is to create a school at the heart of the community, a school which caters for all the needs imposed upon it by a number of disadvantageous environmental factors. The headteacher is dynamic, proactive, insistent, determined and open-minded. He has faced the need to take action on community issues and attainment and is always looking at inclusion issues and new initiatives to ensure that all the different groupings are catered for properly. As a consequence there are very few racially motivated problems. The senior management team is very strong and totally committed. All have a great deal to offer and share a commitment to improvement. They have clear aims to care, install self-esteem and consequently raise attainment. The governors are strong and fulfil their statutory duties. They are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Representatives from the various groupings have places on the governing body. These can offer insights into the varying needs and problems that exist. There is a good committee structure which operates

successfully. Committees are conscientious and take account of results and inspection findings.

79. The school has set realistic targets; it has managed to exceed not only its own but some rather aspirational ones set by the local education authority. Equality of Opportunity is a strength. Refugees are given every opportunity, as well as the many different groups, which are given the chance to success. They have the opportunity to take subjects like GCSE Dutch, Urdu and Bengali. The school development plan is well structured and at the centre of decision making.

80. Overall the governors and senior staff of the school make good strategic use of resources including specific grants and other funding. The auditors' report of May 2000 stated that budget monitoring would be more efficient if information was based on committed expenditure rather than historical and that there was a need to establish a register of pecuniary interests for governors and senior members of staff. Both of these recommendations have been affected so that good financial systems are now in place with appropriate procedures for assuring probity. Governors are well briefed at regular meetings of the finance sub-committee and concentrate on ensuring that moneys are dispersed to support their plans for the school's development.

81. Unforeseen extra staffing costs arising from the implementation of disciplinary procedures and covering for long term staff absence, together with expenditure incurred by flood damage and a collapsed floor in the gymnasium caused an overspend last year. Effective plans for the repayment of this have been agreed with the local education authority and are now in place.

82. Very effective use is made of information technology in the school's administration. The latest financial management software has been installed and is in use. The teachers' administrative burden is reduced by the use of computerised registration and recording systems. Ground breaking, automatic telephone systems are employed to telephone parents in their home languages with information about school events and with invitations to parents' evenings. The school's curriculum is well supported with suites of computers in each of the buildings providing a ration of one computer to every three students.

83. The governors pay very close attention to achieving best value. Examples of this can be seen in substantial savings made by employing private consultants to advise on the purchase of insurance, and by the consultation and level of consideration given prior to the bold decision to give financial support to the introduction of the new school uniform policy.

84. Considering the students' good level of achievement and attitudes, the school's satisfactory teaching, very good leadership and management and good improvement since the last inspection the overall level of the school's effectiveness is good. Weighing this against very high costs and the extremely difficult contextual factors within which the school operates this constitutes good value for money.

85. During the last few years major improvements to the school's accommodation have done much to reduce the shortcomings that were noted in the previous reports. All departments are now in suited accommodation with some, particularly English, being judged as excellent. The recently opened sports hall has made a significant improvement to the facilities that are available for physical education lessons. However, design and technology and history have rooms and workshops that are too small for the classes that are using them. Some of the older accommodation, including some of the toilets, is in urgent need of refurbishing and redecoration. In spite of the improvements in the standard of the accommodation the playground are still very limited, and the situation is made

considerably worse when poor weather prevents the use of the playing fields. The planned provision of an all-weather playing area will not only improve the facilities for physical education, but also will provide much needed extra playing areas during breaks and lunch times.

86. Students generally take good care of their school and there is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. The site manager and his cleaning staff make a valuable contribution to the high standard of cleanliness throughout the school. Good examples of students' work and photographs of school activities do much to enhance the appearance of the buildings.

87 The quality and quantity of resources to teach the planned curriculum is good. Science, geography, religious education, music and physical are all well resourced, drama very good. Resources for pupils with English as an additional language are also very good. The remainder of subjects are satisfactory. Resources however for the design and technology are unsatisfactory with insufficient space to accommodate large equipment such as lathes and metalwork apparatus. The library is well resourced with a good range of fiction and non-fiction to support pupils' literacy development. Resources for information communication technology are good. The pupil/computer ratio is above the national average. All the rooms are networked with a good range of software. There is however a lack of subject specific software. Information communication technology resources for pupils who are visually impaired are unsatisfactory with insufficient large screens.

88 Overall the provision of qualified and experienced staff is satisfactory. However whilst the number of teaching staff with appropriate qualifications is adequate, there remains inadequate numbers of in-class support staff to help those pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The ethnic diverse staff, reflect the harmonious relationships that are established throughout the school. Technical support for science and design and technology has improved since the last inspection. The induction of new staff and the provision for teacher training is good. Newly qualified teachers are assigned mentors and have weekly mentoring meetings. The induction of new staff is on-going and they are supported well by colleagues. The staff handbook is informative and provides clear guidance for all staff. The school has been recognised by the local education authority as an acknowledged centre for the graduate teacher training programme. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is good and has contributed well to the improvement in teaching across the curriculum. An effective line management system is in place for observing lessons and evaluating outcomes and teachers formulate targets for development. Performance management whilst not directly linked to this system is in place for all teaching staff. It is a satisfactory system and is developing well.

89. The leadership and management of the achievement and enrichment programme for gifted and talented students are very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has quickly established the value of the programme with subject teachers. Very well produced newsletters publicise the students' activities and successes and provide a high and positive profile for the school.

90. The special needs department, encompassing inclusion, the provision for higher achievers and those having English as a second language, is very well led by an experienced and committed co-ordinator. There is a strong element of teamwork and co-operation between all staff. Departmental documentation is very good, being clear and unambiguous in its detail. There is an effective assessment and recording system, with regular evaluations of individual and departmental procedures. The special needs register is well maintained and incorporates a register of higher achieving students. Where the students have statements of special needs, Annual Reviews and Transition Plans are up to date, although some statements for 11-14 year-olds have not been updated by the Local

Education Authority since primary school. In addition to the termly review of individual education and pastoral care plans, the progress of all students with additional needs is monitored by the experienced and specialist team of teaching and support staff. Students' targets are set in consultation with students and parents, and issued to all subject teachers as a guide to the differing levels of need. The governor for special educational needs frequently liases with staff and has a clear perception of the department's work.

91. Leadership in the department for EAL is very good. There are insufficient support teachers to meet all the needs of EAL learners in the school which leaves large gaps where new arrivals are not supported in lessons and cannot access the work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

92. In order to improve further the standards achieved by pupils, governors, the headteacher and staff should seek to:

- 1) Improve attainment further by:
 - Ensuring that students' academic targets are more precise. (para 65)
 - Analyse the results gained within departmental examination with respect to ethnicity and use the findings to target specific groups in order to improve progress. (para 65)
 - Determining the reasons why black and white British students are achieving less well than others and acting on the results. (para 4)
 - Continuing to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills. (para 6, 11)
- 2) Improve levels of attendance further by:
 - Developing strategies to ensure that poor attenders are accountable, for example, deploying a particular member of staff to greet these children in the morning. (para 33)
 - Introduction of an early morning club (breakfast club). (para 33)
- 3). Improve the behaviour of a significant minority of disruptive boys by:
 - Ensuring teachers' expectations of behaviour are uniform across the school. (para 25, 26)
 - Concentrating on eliminating low level disruption by insisting on a tighter classroom code of conduct which must be adhered to by all students. (para 25, 26)
 - Noting the names of instigators and sharing these with all staff. (para 25, 26)
 - Implement the new behavioural management initiative. (para 66)
- 4). Promote the use of ICT across the curriculum by:
 - Auditing use in subjects so far. (para 61)
 - Designing a plan where subjects make a significant contribution to the use of ICT and where all students receive an equal share. (para 61)
 - Ensuring that departments have usable plans for ICT included in their schemes of work. (para 61)
- 5). Increase the number of classroom support assistants for both students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. (para 88, 91)
- 6). Pursue ways of improving the accommodation for design and technology in order that a full programme of study can be administered, and the toilet facilities which are inadequate. (para 85)

Other Specified features

N.B Urdu is recorded under modern foreign languages.

Citizenship

93. The preparation for citizenship lessons has been thorough and the quality of curriculum planning is good. The school is analysing an audit of provision it has taken. This seems to indicate that coverage of the statutory elements at Key Stage 3 is already in place, mainly through the existing PSHRE course, although other elements are being delivered in English, humanities and areas outside the formal curriculum, including the pastoral system.

94. The culturally diverse nature of the student body has required citizenship to always have been important to the ethos of the school and has consequently always been in place but needs further revision. Currently, there are many opportunities outside of the formal curriculum, for example "Act Like a Man", "Community Studies" and "School Council".

95. The management of the introduction of citizenship has been good. The school has given management responsibility for citizenship to the head of PSHRE who has already attended in-service training on this subject. The school is planning further inset for staff in order to fully implement the requirements.

English as an additional language

96. Overall provision for English as an additional language is **good**

Strengths

- Support teaching is good which enables EAL learners to make good progress in lessons.
- There are high levels of achievement because EAL learners have very good attitude to learning
- The department is well led which leads to effective provision for students
- Student's progress is closely monitored through detailed profiles maintained by the department
- Asylum seekers and refugees are integrated well into the school because of teachers' positive attitudes to their learning

Areas for improvement

- Objectives and targets for individuals or groups of EAL learners are not routinely set in lessons
- Insufficient use of data is made by subject departments to monitor the progress of EAL learners and attainment by ethnicity
- EAL learners make insufficient progress when they are unsupported

97. GCSE data analysis from the department shows that 29% minority ethnic students attain five or more grades at A* to C which is well below national averages but above the average for the school. EMAS (ethnic minority achievement support) staff monitors the progress of EAL learners thoroughly using the LEA's assessment tool.

98. Teaching support in lessons is good. Support staff develop effective partnerships with mainstream teachers, for example in a Year 10 science lesson on diffusion. EAL learners, including recent arrivals, have access to mainstream classes. Students are given

work at an appropriate level to enable them to access the main curriculum. Support teachers use their subject knowledge well to provide effective language support. In many lessons EMAS teachers work with the whole class and not just targeted learners. EAL support staff are skilled and experienced language specialists. Curriculum materials are adapted well to give students access to mainstream subjects. Objectives and targets for supported individuals are not routinely set.

99. EAL learners' attitudes to learning are very good. Many are highly motivated and make rapid progress very quickly, for example two students discussing types of political institutions after less than one year in the school. Behaviour in lessons is very good, but students lose interest when there is no support and they cannot access the work. Detailed records show the progress made. In some instances students have achieved GCSE English grades within three years after starting with little or no English.

100. Leadership in the Department is very good. There are insufficient support teachers to meet all the needs in the school. This leaves large gaps where new arrivals are not supported in lessons and cannot access the work. Teacher support levels have recently been reduced by one full time equivalent post. Support for asylum seekers and refugees is impeded by the late payment of grant funding received after the students have been in school for some time. Available resources are targeted effectively in English, mathematics and science but there are large gaps in other subject areas. The department has a high profile in the school. The school contributes to the work of the department through the employment of highly qualified bilingual assistants. The department has a dedicated resource room where staff can meet, plan work and support small groups of students. In some instances students are in mainstream classes but isolated from other students in the class. The department has organised the provision of GCSE modern foreign languages in Arabic, Bengali and Persian. Provision for asylum seekers and other new arrivals is good including pre-admission arrangements. The department has access to a range of languages spoken at home through the skills of bilingual staff. Mainstream teachers are aware of EAL learners' levels of English in lessons. They are well informed through data provided by the department, but do not routinely monitor results in their subject by ethnicity. Extra English classes after school enable students to reinforce their learning and receive additional help with the language.

101. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. It has a well equipped resource base and the employment of bilingual support staff has enhanced the provision for support. Unfortunately there has been a reduction of teacher support. Students now have further opportunities through the provision of additional GCSE languages and extra English after school

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	152
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	88

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	29	61	47	5	1	1
Percentage	5	19	40	31	3	1	1

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	1065
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	603

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	24
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	128

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	667

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	102
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	53

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	8.45
National comparative data	8.1

School data	2.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	207	0	207

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	74	85	66
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	74	85	66
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	36 (60)	41 (42)	32 (32)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (16)	22 (34)	8 (6)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	80	84	76
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	80	84	78
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	39 (45)	41 (41)	37 (50)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	13 (8)	22 (19)	10 (13)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	178	0	178

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	39	137	153
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	39	137	153
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	22 (22)	77 (76)	86 (87)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score Per student	School	25.1
	National	39

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	308	56	1
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	27	2	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	369	56	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	117	10	
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean	44	24	
Black or Black British – African	71	9	
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	6	0	
Any other ethnic group	63	33	1
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	67.5
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	66.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y1

Key Stage 3	25.6
Key Stage 4	22.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	3,724,075
Total expenditure	3,921,210
Expenditure per student	3,755.94
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,598
Balance carried forward to next year	-149,537

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	25
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	22
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1065
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	32	11	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	51	37	7	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	40	8	7	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	36	25	7	5
The teaching is good.	53	36	7	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	28	7	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	25	5	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	27	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	48	33	7	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	65	21	7	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	27	12	5	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	35	13	3	8

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

ENGLISH

102. Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- GCSE results in 2002 were much improved on results in recent years.
- Teaching is a strength resulting in good achievement throughout the school.
- The department works very hard to meet the specific needs of students.
- Clear leadership guidance with the commitment from staff to raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- Raising standards at the end of Year 9.
- Timetabling arrangements and organisation of groups in Years 8 and 9 are having an adverse effect on students' attitudes to learning.
- The analysis and use of data to rigorously monitor the progress of students.

103. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds were well below the national average for all schools but average for schools with a similar intake. Test results from 1999 to 2000 show that results were close to the national average. The 2002 results were similar to those in 2001. They were slightly lower than the maths results but better than those in science. A few gifted and talented students reached level 7 and above. The decline in standards is accounted for mainly by instability in staffing over two years, students' low literacy skills on entry with many at the early stage of learning English.

104. In 2001, the GCSE results at A*-C in English and English literature were well below the national average and the average for boys. In English, virtually all students with special needs and those not yet proficient in speaking English gained a grade. The 2002 results rose sharply with a 7 per cent increase in English. In English literature, 61 per cent gained grades A*-C, an increase of over 25 per cent. The improvement is the result of the good quality teaching from the long serving staff, the tenacity of the staff in supporting new teachers and the high level of support given to students who would otherwise have given up. The 2001 results were much better than schools in similar circumstances. When the standards reached by students joining the school are taken into account, their progress in English is good.

105. The overall standard of work seen in lessons and students' books is below the national standard by the end of Year 9 but approaching the national average for most students by the end of Year 11. This is the result of the relentless push on teaching basic literacy skills and the very good support given to students.

106. Students articulate their ideas clearly and confidently. They speak at length when putting forward their ideas as seen when Year 8 student made suggestions about developing a playscript. Students at the early stage of learning English actively take part in oral work. Year 10 and 11 students are very opinionated and engage in discussions with zest. They follow complex lines of argument and make perceptive comments. For example, Year 11 students, from all ethnic groups, read and debated articles on using the mother tongue. They drew on a wide vocabulary and widened the discussion as they

considered issues around race relations. A Somalian boy said, 'language is one's identity' and a white boy replied, 'this is the basis on which this country was founded'. Listening skills are very good when students are engaged in their work, but a small number of boys from all ethnic groups tend to be passive recipients.

107. Standards in reading are below average and often much lower. Some students lag five years or more behind their chronological reading age. In the first three years, most lower attaining students, including students with special needs and those at the early stage of learning English, make good gains in understanding meaning that is clearly stated as well as what is implied. This was well illustrated in a Year 9 lesson where students read and made detailed notes to critically compare and analyse the poems 'Nettles' and 'Lullaby'. By the end of Years 9 and 11, many students achieve satisfactory standards when analysing both literary and non-literary texts. Lower attaining students in all year groups give straightforward commentary but with a high level of support they begin to explore themes and offer interpretations as seen in their work on Hardy's 'The Arch Deceiver' and Naughtons's 'Seeing a Beauty Queen'. Middle attaining students show a sound understanding of texts whereas the higher attaining students give a more in-depth analysis paying attention to language and the writer's purpose. Students with special educational needs, refugees and new arrivals at the early or mid stage of learning English, respond well to the extra literacy support. Comprehension skills are often less than satisfactory as lower and some middle attaining students tend to write at a superficial level. The quality of their reading and response improves when they use the Internet for research as seen in a Year 8 lesson where students selected the main points and made notes on work linked to Smucker's "Underground to Canada". A small but significant minority of students are still at the very early stage of learning to read by the end of Years 10 and 11. These students make less progress than expected because of their low attendance and attitude to their schooling.

108. Standards in writing are below average overall, and often well below for students with learning difficulties or those at the early stage of learning English. Some of the higher attaining students write confidently and with a sense of purpose and audience as seen in the work of a Year 11 Bangladeshi boy who wrote an evocative account of a trip abroad. These students structure their essays well and ideas are coherently expressed into well-linked paragraphs. Students write for different purposes but their progress is often hampered by weak literacy skills. There are weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students learning English have difficulties ordering their words. Whilst there is a heavy reliance on teachers to edit and correct their work, middle and lower attaining students respond very well to redrafting and editing their writing when specific language skills are drummed into them and they are given concrete examples. The department maintains a very sharp focus on developing students writing skills, their weakest skill in English. The emphasis on structuring work, increasing vocabulary, and recognising and correcting errors is beginning to have an impact on improving writing skills. Students occasionally make good use of word processing and manipulate images, experiment with fonts and direction of texts to present their research work. Most produce neat and cursive handwriting but students with learning difficulties and some second language learners do not produce neat handwriting. Letters are not joined up or well formed, as they have not yet mastered the fine motor skills.

109. The quality of teaching in English is good and sometimes very good or excellent. Planning is thorough and includes a very structured approach. The use of the four-part lesson ensures that students make good progress and the plenary focuses on the application of taught skills. Teachers know their students and plan to meet their specific needs. As such, support staff, when present, engage in partnership teaching and make an excellent contribution to students learning based on their explanation, use of resources and

individual support. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, the support language teacher made a significant contribution to students learning about camera shots when he dropped in useful pointers and worked with them in a group. Teachers come to lessons well prepared to deal with the wide range of boys with differing needs, temperaments and attitudes to their work. They are adept at using their expertise and experience to ensure that students complete their work. For instance, a group of white boys with poor attendance records and various special needs made very good gains in reading and interpreting a play after the teacher adapted the material and challenged them to work towards a high GCSE grade. In another example, boys worked conscientiously to complete their work on "Talking in Whispers" after the teacher assessed their reading through a series of rapidly fired questions and explanation. They made exceptionally good gains as work was matched to their needs; there was good supervision from the support staff and an analytical plenary, which involved drawing on the work of the higher attainers.

110. In the very best lessons, teachers give concise objectives, students' views are taken into consideration, talk is central to all activities and students are challenged to think critically. In such lessons, pace is brisk and methodology is matched to needs. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, students with extreme learning needs and mainly from minority ethnic groups made rapid progress in learning about clauses and phrases as the teacher took them through a series of activities before challenging them to complete different exercises. They vied with each other to complete the harder set of work. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there is inadequate support in some classes and attention is not given to the needs of higher attaining students. A minority of boys from all ethnic groups but especially in Year 9 present challenging behaviours. Negative attitudes affect teaching as time is taken up dealing with disciplinary matters. Marking is not consistent in all year groups and all teachers do not set clear targets for improvement.

111. The new acting head of department has a clear sense of direction of what needs to be done to raise standards. The new head is building on the work of the previous manager. Documentation is substantial and the department runs efficiently on a day to day basis. There is an extensive handbook to guide teachers and the good teaching is underpinned by schemes of work linked to the Key Stage 3 Strategy and the department's approach to teaching English. Assessment reflects National Curriculum levels but the rich body of data is not being used analytically to chart progress in the drive to raise standards further. The development plan is closely linked to developing literacy skills; however, the criteria lack precision and do not reflect the school priorities. Timetabling arrangements for Years 8 and 9, whereby some Year 8 classes are split and Year 9 students are taught in tutor groups for English, are having a detrimental effect on students' motivation and attitudes to their learning. There is also a lack of continuity and progression. There is now a full complement of teachers. New teachers and non-specialists are well supported by the more experienced staff. Accommodation is excellent and resources are very good. The subject enriches students' overall development through helping them to value and respect other literary heritages and beliefs. Teachers provide extra curricular support for students through booster and revision classes.

112. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Good links have been established with the drama department. Computers are still underused in teaching and learning in English. Although boys use the library and there is a planned induction programme for Year 7, very little progress has been made in promoting reading over the last two years.

DRAMA

113. The provision for drama is **satisfactory**

Strengths

- The arrangements for assessing students' skills.
- Teachers have good subject expertise, which they use to increase students' knowledge of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring greater stability in staffing as this is having an adverse impact on students' motivation.
- In order to raise standards, there is scope for further improvement in establishing high expectations

114. In recent years boys have achieved good results in drama but there has been a downward trend in examination results since the last inspection. This is because of the very high staff turnover and the negative impact on students' motivation and the quality of work that they produce. The 2001 results were below national average and the average of boys. The results for 2002 show marginally better achievement. This is a complete contrast to the high standards achieved in 1999 when results exceeded the national average. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are below average for most students as a direct result of turbulence in staffing.

115. Although most students are performing below the standard expected nationally, they enjoy the subject. The Year 11 students adopt a serious approach to drama and work well in teams. They discuss and negotiate their roles before rehearsing. They understand the importance of evaluating their work to improve their performance. The attention given to evaluation in Year 11 has a positive impact on increasing students' understanding of drama conventions. In particular, Year 11 boys are skilled at working under the direction of their peers. For example, a Pakistani boy with special educational needs and a mixed race boy both took charge of their teams to produce credible performances.

116. Students in Years 7 and 9 participate energetically in all warm up exercises and begin to acquire the skills of co-operation, communication and concentration. They use these skills as part of teamwork when improvising or using other drama conventions to portray a particular scenario. Whilst most students make satisfactory progress in drama, Year 10 students with emotional and behavioural difficulties make less progress than expected. Lack of concentration and engagement with the subject restricts their work including training how to use their voice, space and to make an impact on their audience. They do not listen very carefully or follow instructions and this affect the finer details of their performance.

117. Teaching is good, overall, in drama. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject, which they use skilfully to assess pupils understanding of the work and to demonstrate new skills which students can emulate. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher demonstrated the purpose of delivering a monologue and hotseating before students successfully began developing these skills. Expectations are appropriately high in some groups and most students' respond well to the set challenges. In some lessons, students are taken through a series of warm up exercises, which teachers use to instil a disciplined approach to working. These exercises give students an opportunity to perform in front of

the class and build up their confidence as seen in the Years 7 and 9 lessons. Teachers ensure that all students irrespective of their ability take part in the subject.

118. Teaching is less than satisfactory when expectations of behaviour and work are not clearly established. When this happens, there is low-level disruption, which affects the flow of teaching, and students fail to achieve the planned objectives of the lesson. There is insufficient time for the plenary and there is a tendency to curtail students' contributions during evaluation.

119. The new head of department recently joined the school and is in the process of revising the schemes of work to meet the needs of boys. Arrangements for assessing drama skills are good and students' evaluation shows an increasing awareness of setting personal targets to improve their work. Plans are presently being made to introduce extra-curricular activities including productions and a drama club. The subject benefits from having good quality accommodation and resources. The department now has a full complement of teachers but the temporary arrangement is detrimental to continuity and progression and is affecting students' motivation to the subject. The uncertainty surrounding the temporary appointment does not provide security for a fully staffed department in the near future.

MATHEMATICS

120. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Strengths

- Standards are rising.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection
- Some teaching is excellent.
- The department is now almost fully staffed after a period of turbulence.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are below national norms in earlier years and well below in year 11.
- Some teaching is unsatisfactory and some dull.
- Attendance is low in lower ability sets particularly

121. In recent years the department has been through difficult times. The last inspection in May 2000 identified very substantial weaknesses. Chief among these was the shortage of qualified and competent staff. Only two teachers remain from those days both of whom are experienced and effective. A new hard working head of department, with a clear vision of what needs to be done to secure improvement has been appointed. New teachers, almost all of whom are fully qualified to teach mathematics, have also joined the team. The situation has therefore improved markedly and is set to improve further.

122. Students scored well below the national average in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2001. Their results were, however, well above those of students in similar schools. There is a rising trend over time which is increasing faster than that nationally and appears to be continuing to judge from results for the 2002 examinations.

123. The work of students aged between 11 and 14 seen during the inspection was better than is reflected in the tests although still below that seen nationally. In part, improvement stems from better departmental organisation and improving teaching standards. These

standards are well above those obtained in similar schools and represent good progress over time in that students are working at well below national standards on entry to the school. By the age of 14 higher achieving students can produce investigative work including good description but do not always support their arguments with appropriate algebraic expressions. Average attaining students do good project work using pie charts, graphs and tally charts but show misunderstandings of these in tests. Current Year 9 students in the lowest sets can find the area of plane shapes constructed from rectangles and triangles by counting squares but make mistakes when adding fractions of a square. Nor do they always use the correct units to give their answers.

124. Results in the 2001 GCSE exams mathematics were well below national levels both for all schools and for students in similar schools. These results also compare unfavourably with other subjects in the school. They, nevertheless, represent a rising trend over time which is continued for 2002 results. Results are weaker for older students and those who have recently left because it is they who have been most affected by the staffing difficulties referred to earlier. Many became disaffected because of the poor quality of teaching they were receiving. All achieved less than they should.

125. The work of the students currently in Year 11 seen during the inspection was well below national standards. Students in top ability sets do good work on inverse proportion but find solving written problems using Pythagoras more difficult. Middle attainers find difficulty eliminating one of the unknowns from simultaneous linear equations. Students in lower sets can construct a tally chart and draw bar or line graphs, but show little understanding of correlation.

126. There is no obviously significant difference between different ethnic groups or for those with special educational needs. The department does not, as yet, analyse its results closely enough to be able to state with certainty that these groups do not vary in their attainment.

127. The progress that students make and their achievement in relation to their prior learning is satisfactory overall. Students at Burnage High School come from a wide range of backgrounds and have varying levels of prior knowledge and ability. Many do not have English as the first language of the home. Of these, a proportion has recently come to England. Those that attend regularly achieve well but many do not attend as often as they ought. This is reflected in the fact that in all but three of the lessons in mathematics seen during the inspection, there were four or more students absent. In at least one case half of the class was away.

128. The full range of teaching quality was seen during the inspection. Taken as a whole, teaching is satisfactory. This global judgement spans, however, lessons that were very good and excellent and one that was very poor. In most lessons teaching was satisfactory. Just two were less than satisfactory. The weakest was taught by a teacher new to the school who is not a specialist mathematician. The teacher was not sufficiently aware of the students' ability, nor did he realise which elements of the work they would find difficult. This meant that the lesson was disorganised and taught at a very slow pace so that the students learned little. In contrast an unqualified teacher who is following the training programme for registered teachers taught an excellent lesson on number bonds to year seven low attainers. A support teacher for students with English as an additional language provided excellent assistance. The students were enthralled and excited as they were taken through a series of demonstrations, exercises and discussions helping them to understand adding on in tens and hundreds. The use of the overhead projector and visual aids was a strong feature of this lesson.

129. In all lessons what the students were enabled to learn was closely associated with the teaching. Teaching now compares very favourably with the last inspection when one third of the lessons seen were adjudged unsatisfactory and none were better than good.

130. With regard to literacy, in the lessons seen the students were encouraged to use mathematical language carefully, when speaking to the class or answering questions. There were lists of key mathematical vocabulary posted on classroom walls and in students' books. Overall, therefore the position with regard to teaching the basic skills related to numeracy and literacy is satisfactory.

131. Departmental leadership is satisfactory. The relatively new and inexperienced head of department has made a very good start. She has identified the key areas in need of improvement and has begun to draw the teachers together into a team. She is very well organised, has a genuine care for her staff as well as for the students in her charge. The teachers' work is supported by classroom observation on at least one occasion per year and by monitoring of marking and record keeping. Arrangements for support for newly qualified teachers and for those new to the department are satisfactory and are being improved. Enhanced levels of lesson observation would be valuable, particularly in view of the excellent practice existing in the department. Peer observation would also provide more mutual support and good staff development if provision could be made.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The teaching is good.
- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- The procedures for assessing student's attainment and progress are good.
- The progress made by most students is good.

Areas for improvement

- The standards of student's attainment are below the national average.
- Student's are not yet sufficiently involved in setting their own subject specific targets.
- Information communication technology is not sufficiently developed in the area of data-logging.

133. At the end of Year 9 students' performance in the 2001 National curriculum tests was well below the national average. The proportion of students who obtained level 5 and above was well below the national average and the proportion obtaining level 6 and above was below the national average. Students did less well in science than in mathematics and English. However the proportion of students obtaining level 5 and above was in line with similar schools. The most recent results for 2002 show a significant increase in the proportion of students obtaining level 5 and above and the results for the last three years indicate a clear trend of improvement which is at least in line with the national trend. In the most recent tests, students achieved better than expected based upon their attainment on entry to the school which was well below average. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an acquired language enjoy the same rate of progress as their peers.

134. In 2001 the proportion of students who obtained A*-C grades was below the national average and the proportion who obtained A*-G was close to the national average. The proportion of students obtaining higher grades was below the national average. Students' performance in science was similar to that in English and better than that in mathematics and was better than students' performance in similar schools. The proportion of students obtaining A*-C has increased steadily over the last three years at least in line with the national trend. Students' performance in the 2002 GCSE examinations showed a significant increase in the number of students obtaining grades A*-C and indicates that students are generally achieving higher grades than would be expected based upon their attainment in Years 7 to 9. This rate of progress is reflected for those students who have special educational needs and for those for whom English is an additional language.

135. The standard of work seen overall was below the national average but better than expected, confirming the identified trends of improvement in both key stages. Students in Years 7 to 9 are achieving well. The highest attainers in Year 9 are able to identify some useful chemical reactions such as those involved in the operation of a fire extinguisher and in the manufacture of fertilizers and a few are able to work out the word equations correctly for themselves. The lowest attainers in Year 9 are able to appreciate the effect of a lever and identify the pivot and forces acting at various points. They are able to apply this knowledge to every day objects such as scissors and pruning shears. In Years 10 and 11 the majority of students are achieving well. The highest attainers in a Year 10 know the process of diffusion in gases and liquids but some cannot apply this knowledge to explain the flow of substances in and out of a living cell. They understand the nature of transverse waves but few know the terms compression and rarefaction. The lowest attainers in Year 11 are able to identify series and parallel electrical circuits, understand their operation and measure and record voltages and currents accurately.

136. The quality of teaching seen was good in all years and has contributed well towards students' achievement. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Lessons were well planned with clear objectives and students were in no doubt as to what was expected of them. Students with special educational needs, those with language problems and the gifted and talented were identified in lesson plans and appropriate work was set for them. In very good lessons, science was brought to life by the enthusiastic delivery of the teacher which inspired students and by the teacher adopting innovative approaches to motivate and increase student interest in the subject. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on fossil fuels, the teacher enthusiastically gave a graphic account of an individual entity of plankton experiencing all the changes necessary to turn it into a fossil fuel. As a result students were well motivated and rapidly gained the knowledge of what fossil fuels are and how they are formed. In some lessons expectations were extremely high and the acquisition of confidence by students was the key to success. For example in an excellent Year 11 lesson on electric circuits with challenging objectives, students developed the confidence to carry out the tasks and obtain meaningful results because the teacher constantly made them believe that they could do it and kept them totally on task. In the lessons that demonstrated satisfactory teaching, students would have made more progress if they had been kept more focused on the tasks by sharper timing and discrete manageable objectives for each activity. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and support learning in the subject. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily by both students and teachers mainly for presentation purposes but is not yet sufficiently developed to include data-logging. Teachers enjoy good relationships with their students and are concerned for their welfare. Health and safety considerations are a key feature of all lessons. As a result of good teaching, students enjoy science and sometimes find it exciting. Students work together well, generally behave well and demonstrate respect for each other and their teachers. Teachers monitor student progress effectively, carrying out

purposeful assessment. Although a system for identifying general student progress targets is in place it has not yet been fully developed to include individual subject specific targets.

138. The leadership and management of science are good. The department is led by an effective teacher whose vision of providing the best possible science education for the students is shared by a dedicated team of teachers and support staff. The monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out well by the head of department and mutual lesson observation and the sharing of expertise is encouraged. As a result teaching skills are continually improved. Effective teamwork is a strong feature of the department and highly valued technical support staff often support students with practical aspects of the lesson in addition to the preparation of practical resources. Comprehensive schemes of work are in place for both key stages which include specimen lesson plans. These together with a well organised departmental handbook and induction ensure that new members of staff enjoy a smooth transition into their roles. Accommodation is generally good although some laboratories are a little restricted for practical work for larger groups. Resources are mainly good, well stored and maintained. Hazardous substances and radioactive materials are stored in accordance with statutory regulations.

139. Since the last inspection the achievement of students has improved in both key stages. Several factors have supported this improvement. The teaching is now good, lesson content is more imaginative, more problem-solving takes place in Years 7 to 9, more technical support is available, resources have improved, information communication technology is being developed and students now enjoy science.

ART AND DESIGN

140. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management of the department.
- Students' very good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Good procedures for assessment of students' work.

Areas for improvement

- Clarify links between the school's assessment grades and National Curriculum levels.
- Raise standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9.

141. The standards attained by students in art and design by the end of Year 9 are well below average. This represents satisfactory achievement overall given that, on entry to the school, their attainment was similarly well below average for their age. Numerous changes of temporary and permanent teachers have disrupted the continuity of teaching in art and design over the last two years. The standards of average and lower attaining students in Years 7 to 9 have been adversely affected by this. Although involved in a good range of observational, imaginative and design activities, their painting and drawing skills develop slowly. Higher attaining students appear more resilient to changes and make good progress in developing technical skills and understanding how they can express their ideas through their art. By the end of Year 11 standards of attainment are close to the national average. GCSE results for 2001 show three out of five students gaining the higher A* to C grades which is slightly above the national average for boys and represents very good achievement across Years 10 and 11. Students at this age sustain their efforts well to produce more complex and complete work than in earlier years. They show strengths in

still life and portraiture work where the original observed image is enhanced by a confident use of colour or manipulated by computer to create new starting points. Weaker work at this stage relies heavily on copying from secondary sources and pays more attention to subject matter than technique. On average students taking art and design at GCSE in 2001 gained almost a complete grade higher than in their other subjects. Aspects of literacy and numeracy are taught as required for the projects rather than as a structured programme and standards are below average. Standards in ICT are satisfactory with an emphasis on individual students across the age range using the department's computers to enhance or inform their art work. Standards of behaviour and students' attitudes are satisfactory overall. They were good in half of the lessons seen and poor in one Year 9 lesson. In most lessons a small minority of students presented challenging behaviour though this was largely contained by the teachers' patient, non-confrontational approach which allowed others to keep working. There was no consistent pattern to link any particular groups with the poor behaviour.

142. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the age range. Projects are well planned and teachers give very good support to individual students and small groups, matching the teaching to their abilities and needs. The teachers are aware of the students with special needs and the gifted and talented in their groups and give appropriate individual support as required. Lessons are well prepared with good resources. Year 7 students rose to the challenge of showing pattern in their surroundings through good quality line drawings based on photographs specially taken by the teacher. A very good homework booklet links closely with current classwork and involves students and parents in the evaluation of work. The structure of some lessons is too simple with no time limits or short term targets to stimulate students' effort and introduce a sense of urgency. In lessons where the central activity lasts most of the lesson, some students lose concentration and become restless.

143. The time allocation for art is below the national average and impacts on the number of range of projects that can be covered in Years 7 to 9. The teachers set a good social and moral example through their care and concern for students even in the face of challenging behaviour. Students have good opportunities to express their views on social and moral issues through poster designs about smoking, drinking and drugs. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 includes a good range of references to western and non-western art forms reflecting the rich cultural mix of the school's population. Artists work in the school from time to time and higher attaining students on the achievement and enrichment programme have visited galleries and museums in the area for workshops including African textile printing. Provision for students' spiritual development through art and design is unsatisfactory, with few planned opportunities for reflective or expressive work.

144. Procedures for assessing students' work in the earlier years are good. All work is regularly marked using the school's A – E grades and recorded onto project evaluation sheets where different aspects of the work are profiled. The conversion of the accumulated grades to National Curriculum levels for the end of year reports is not secure as they are based on different criteria. In Years 10 and 11, work is regularly assessed against GCSE criteria though there is scope for more openness and sharing of the grades awarded to help students visualise their targets more clearly.

145. The leadership and management of art and design are very good. The department is very well ordered and managed. Although too small for the largest groups the two art rooms are tidy, well organised and present a good working environment. The present staff are both experienced and committed to helping all of their students to achieve their potential. The rooms are well stocked with basic materials and equipment and good ICT stations. The art and design section of the resources centre has good quality books but they are few in number and little used.

146. Improvement since the last inspection is good. All the issues raised have been addressed and GCSE results have improved. The unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 has been eliminated but a period of stability in staffing is needed to raise standards at this age.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

147. Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths.

- Commitment of the teachers in the department
- The planning of the lessons, especially the coursework booklets.
- The management of the department.
- The improving quality of teaching.

Areas for improvement.

- To improve standards in both Key Stages.
- To consider alternative strategies so that students who do the GCSE short courses are more committed and successful.
- To improve the storage facilities and the resources within.
- To timetable group sizes more suitable for the size of the rooms.
- To target the work set for the gifted and talented students.
- To improve the environment in the food technology room.

148. The schools results in the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 were well below average but better than at the time of the previous inspection. They were above the average for schools taking their students from similar backgrounds. The percentage of students reaching level 5 and above on the national curriculum has been steady during the last few years at about one half the national average and only a handful of students reach level 6. The results have followed a rising trend, in line with national trends, almost wholly due to a considerable reduction in the proportion of students attaining the lowest levels of the national curriculum. This represents satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9.

149. GCSE results in 2001 were well below average in terms of grades A*-C and A* -G. These results were better than those in similar schools and in line with the average in other subjects. Graphic products results were better than resistant materials or food technology but there are indications that the students choosing the food technology option came mostly from low ability groups. The students taking a full GCSE in design and technology only represent about one-fifth of the students in the year, which is very low, compared to the proportion nationally. The rest of the students studied a half GCSE course but only a fraction of these actually sat the examination. Many students did not fulfil the coursework requirements whilst others withdrew to concentrate on the more 'important' subjects. The progress made by students taking the full GCSE course was considered satisfactory but for those who took the half GCSE course progress was unsatisfactory. In the present Year 10 it is possible for students to choose not to study a design and technology subject.

150. Current standards are well below average in Year 9. Student's satisfactory achievement is a consequence of the quality of teaching they receive. Students in Years 7 and 8 do not have the opportunity to take food technology. They only get one hour per week for half a year in Year 9 and this leaves them at a considerable disadvantage compared to students in other schools who usually get an experience of food technology each year.

Where there is a timetable clash the students in Years 10 and 11 get priority in using the specialist classrooms. As a consequence some students in Years 7 to 9 have not been getting their full experience of practical skills. The strengths are in the 'make' elements and their increasing drawing skills. Students enjoy the practical aspects of the course and in a number of lessons students were disappointed when the lesson ended. Some good quality work was seen in a cam-operated toy and in a 'steady hand' electronics game, although the wooden box containing the game was not of the same quality. The project booklets used in Years 7 to 9 are of good quality and stimulate the students. They are suitable for all abilities including students with special educational needs and those with difficulties understanding English but they do not stimulate the gifted and talented students sufficiently. There are some extended task sheets available but not all lesson plans recognised these students and no evidence was seen of their use.

151. Standards are also well below average in Year 11 but somewhat better than those represented by the 2001 GCSE results. Achievement so far is satisfactory. This is because teaching is effective in enabling students to master the GCSE topics they study. Good standards were seen in a graphics products lesson using a digital camera linked to a computer. Designs and construction techniques are simple. Butt jointed and nailed half lap joints were often seen in GCSE projects. No examples of dovetail joints or the use of metalworking techniques such as brazing or screw thread cutting were seen. This lack of knowledge and ability inhibits design and contributes to the absence of any A*-A grades at GCSE. The students studying the electronics products course do not have sufficient access to information technology programmes, which would enable them to understand electronic circuitry better.

152. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Many begin their studies of design and technology in Year 7 with poor handwriting and presentation abilities and few skills with a pencil and ruler yet by Year 11 they are able to access the GCSE at the lowest grades with some success.

153. Students with English as an additional language work well but some find it difficult to articulate their questions. Some have a very limited technical vocabulary. There was an absence of any ancillary help for these students and this had a detrimental effect on both their progress and attainment.

154. Student's attitude to their work in design and technology was satisfactory. The majority of students concentrated on listening to the teacher and their attention span, when working on a practical task, was good. A minority of students was not punctual, had few writing and drawing implements with them, and took little pride in their folder work. When the teaching did not fully engage them some became restless and disruptive. The attitude of a minority of students to homework could be better.

155. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school and an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching is good or very good in a quarter of the lessons. In only a small percentage of lessons was it found to be less than satisfactory. The quality of teaching is linked closely to students learning and attainment. Teachers constantly work at improving students design and practical skills through explaining the processes in technology. However, in some lessons the pace is too slow and the teachers expectations inappropriate, especially for the most able. Although teachers explain carefully how to set out written and drawing work in a logical manner, they do not always ensure that the student's work contains sufficient detail. Marking varies from being very good and helpful to students to being insufficiently detailed, although all work is marked. In the best lessons teachers manage their classes well and there is a real pace about the work. Explanations

are clear and careful questioning identifies areas that need further emphasis to ensure that the students master them properly.

156. There has been an improvement in the ICT facilities and teachers are more confident in its use. However, teachers do not use ICT sufficiently to support and extend work in design and research. In some lessons there is too much talk and explanation from the teacher leaving the students with insufficient time to practise and consolidate what they have been learning. In others, especially Years 8 and 9, students become restless and slow the rate of learning. There is a lack of exemplar material in the classrooms. Students are quite teacher dependent and many are not confident of their abilities. They need more concrete examples of good and bad practice so that they do not start each new project trying to re-invent the wheel. The coursework booklets do address problems of literacy with word searches but extended pieces of writing, which would benefit the most able, were not seen. There have been some links with the mathematics department to teach graphs, chart and questionnaire design but opportunities have been missed to integrate numeracy more fully into the schemes of work. The department's literature does mention SMSC issues but very few of them are translated into the actual projects. There are some examples of ethnic patterns but little consideration of the social, economic or environmental problems caused by 'technology'.

157. The management and organisation of design and technology is good. The head of department leads his team by example in the classroom. Monitoring of teaching is effective and assessment is used to predict attainment at the end of Years 7 and 9 and Years 10 and 11. However assessment is not used sufficiently to plan for change in the future. Staff morale is good and teachers are particularly keen to ensure that students give of their best. Attendance is still a problem especially in Year 11. The department has taken inclusion seriously and commendable efforts have been made to integrate new comers and teachers give a lot of individual help where needed.

158. The rooms are too small for some of the large groups who are timetabled in them. There is a serious lack of storage space and storerooms. This means that classrooms have to be used, taking up more valuable space. If the school decided to offer a full GCSE course in technology to all students it would have neither the rooms nor the teachers to cope. The food technology room is only occupied for just over half of a week. This is a serious waste of a valuable resource.

159. Practical lessons in this room are difficult with a limited number of food preparation stations and cookers. There is a potential health and safety problem if a large class is expected to do a practical lesson. There is no extraction system and the room gets very hot. There is exposed pipework all round the room, which collects dust and grease. Monies are spent wisely but the variety, size and amount of resource material within the department is very limited mainly due to lack of storage space. There is no place for a department library. There are no lathes or mortisers; few portable power tools; a lack of heat treatment facilities for metal; no facilities to study textiles, or beaten and sheet metalwork. These inadequacies inhibit design and hinder research and the 'make' element of projects.

GEOGRAPHY

160. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**

Strengths.

- Standards of work and GCSE examination results in 2002 show clear improvement.
- Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good for students of all attainment levels.
- Teaching and learning is good overall.
- The subject is very well led and competently managed.

Areas for Improvement

- Achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is not high enough.
- Increase the fieldwork provision in Years 7 to 9 as planned.
- Provide and implement a coherent programme of ICT over Years 7 to 11.
- Improve learning through the use of more film, video, atlases, local maps and examples in teaching especially in Years 7 to 9.

161. Standards of work are well below the national average at the end of Year 9. Students' achievements over Years 7 to 9, in relation to the well below national standards at entry in Year 7, are satisfactory. However, evidence from classroom observations and the analysis of students work show that the current standards in Years 8 and 9 are better and are just below the nationally expected levels. By the end of Year 9, students have a sound grounding in geographical skills. Most are able to use and interpret Ordnance survey maps well. Knowledge of location is satisfactory except for low attainers where it is less secure. Students of all attainment levels have an inadequate understanding of spatial patterns and processes. In Years 7 to 9, able students especially the gifted and talented, are now being given good challenge in their work. Average attainers, however are not being stretched enough especially in the written tasks provided to consolidate their learning. Low attainers progress is satisfactory but some learning support assistants do not use their time in lessons well. Students with English as an additional language are provided with very good support in lessons. There is a variation in the standards of work produced by students of different ethnic backgrounds in some classes. Asian Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys generally produce higher standards of work than both Black African and Caribbean or White British boys.

162. Standards of work at the end of Year 11 are below the national average. In the work seen, standards are improving and are higher than recent GCSE examination results would indicate. Given that the standard of work at the end of Year 9 was well below the national average this shows good achievement by boys of all attainment levels over Years 10 and 11. This is due to good teaching and many students more motivated to do well. High-attaining students produce very detailed and thorough work. The best independent study projects for GCSE, based on local fieldwork, are of very high quality and show a good grasp of enquiry and thinking skills. However, some students have difficulty in meeting deadlines and in organising their work. This leads to underachievement and their GCSE examination results suffer. There is need to support the taught course with a more rigorous targeting of progress over Years 10 and 11, with mentoring, monitoring of deadlines and the updating of the study skills and revision handbook.

163. Recent GCSE A*-C grade results, as in 2001, have been well below the national average. The proportion of students attaining the highest grades is very low but can largely

be accounted for by the attainment levels of these students on entry. The subject is more popular as an option than at the time of the last inspection and than it is nationally. When compared with other GCSE subjects, geography results have varied from below to close to the average. Recent GCSE A*-G results have been below the national position. The 2002 GCSE results showed a noticeable improvement on recent results and more in line with the standard of work seen in class.

164. Students' attitudes to learning are mostly positive and some boys display a real interest in their work. Most students' work conscientiously but some find concentration for long periods difficult. These students find it hard to work without chatting. Behaviour is usually good and at times very good. Occasionally a minority of students seek attention and call out in class distracting others and reducing the pace and progress of the lesson. Experienced teachers deal extremely effectively with potentially difficult students through skilful management and good rapport. Relationships with teachers are almost always very good. Boys also relate well to each other when working in pairs or groups and relationships across ethnic groupings are very harmonious.

165. Teaching and learning are good overall and there was some very good and excellent teaching observed in very challenging circumstances. Subject specialists communicate subject knowledge well to students and place emphasis on their understanding of what they learn. They are very committed, caring and supportive of students in their charge. Classroom management and control is usually good and built on a foundation of very constructive relationships. On the few occasions that it was less secure it was the result of regular interruptions of the flow of the lesson resulting in a lower work rate. Lessons are well planned, structured and have a clear focus that provides a helpful framework for learning. Lesson aims are always shared with students and tested for the effectiveness of learning at the end of the lesson. However, at times, the aims do not identify precisely enough the knowledge, understanding and skills that are to be taught. Where there is good dialogue between teacher and students, this extends students knowledge and there is greater understanding of the topic taught. Best teaching occurs when lessons are practical in form and use visual aids, such as sketch maps, diagrams, photographs, and video extracts well as they clarify lesson aims and have a significant impact on the quality of students' learning. Teaching presentation is mostly lively, enthusiastic with brisk pace and appropriate expectations. The excellent teaching, as well as showing the best characteristics of teaching in practice, also ensured that students of differing attainment levels and ethnic groupings were appropriately stretched. They all learnt equally well and all participated in the lesson and their own development.

166. Learning is overall good with students acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills well. Students' productivity and pace of work is much better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9 where there is insufficient challenge. Learning would be improved if there were greater use of local Ordnance Survey maps and local examples rather than theoretical models in Years 7 to 9 and more use of atlases to ensure a greater understanding of spatial patterns and processes. Literacy skills are well developed overall although there is scope to use writing frames more in Years 7 to 9. Numeracy skills are not satisfactorily developed in Years 7 to 9, as students do not have enough practice in the application of number in the presentation and analysis of statistics in their course work. ICT work has been curtailed by access difficulties to computers and there is need to plan a coherent programme of study over Years 7 to 11 linked to curriculum topics. Fieldwork undertaken in the local area, the Peak District and Lancashire greatly enriches study and stimulates students' interest in the subject. However, the additional fieldwork planned for this year needs to be implemented to widen the physical geography base of the existing provision.

167. The subject is part of the well-managed humanities faculty. Leadership of the subject is very good. The department is effectively run and managed with curriculum planning of good quality. Documentation is thoughtfully prepared and presented with a clear focus. The head of subject is enthusiastic, talented and ensures a clear direction for the subject. Staff work together very well as an accomplished team. The assessment policy is good overall and understood by student so that they are aware what progress they are making in the subject but now needs to involve students more in setting jointly agreed targets for improvement. The accommodation is generally satisfactory although there are limitations for independent resource based learning in specialist rooms. Resources overall are good but there is need of a suite of computers for teaching ICT and more film and video resources to facilitate and extent visual learning.

168. Overall there has been good progress with most noticeably the improvement in standards of work in GCSE examinations in 2002. However, further progress is needed particularly in raising the standards of student work over Years 7 to 9. The subject specialists, who are a real strength of the subject, have the capacity to improve standards further and to implement the points raised in this report.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Homework is well incorporated into lessons and effectively extends the students learning.
- The promotion of literacy is well embedded in all lessons.
- The department caters well for students with additional learning needs.

Areas for development

- The department makes insufficient use of computers to support learning.
- The department must raise the students' level of attainment in history.
- The department must raise the standards of white students, who achieve less well than their ethnic minority peers.

170. History is taught in all years and at examination level to 15 year-olds. The standard of work is below national averages for their ages. Nevertheless, the majority make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of historical events. By the age of 14, the majority of students' are below the national averages for their age. A small number of higher achieving students is at or above the national average, while lower attainment by students with additional educational needs is mostly linked to weak literacy and language skills. By the age of 16, all students are entered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). The results for 2001 are significantly below the national average and the average for similar schools. Early indications suggest that the examination results for 2002 are improved, but the results still fall well below the national average and other subject areas within the school. However, ethnic minority students achieve significantly higher standards than their white peers, with a ratio of six to one being identified as higher achievers.

171. The department does not offer a Certificate of Achievement examination for its less able students, and, therefore, all students are entered for the full GCSE. This is instrumental in influencing the overall examination results in history, and is an issue for the department to address.

172. An analysis of the students' work over time and their learning during lessons indicates that their achievement good overall. By the end of Year 9, there is evidence that they have completed topics ranging from mediaeval times in Year 7 to the Tudors in Year 8. For example, they have a clear understanding of Henry VIII's thirst for power and money, and a good understanding of the religious turmoil of his reign. Year 9 students make good use of their local environment when looking at aspects of the Industrial Revolution, and there is a good spiritual, social, moral and cultural element in their work on the Peterloo Massacre, which they debate very well in lessons. For example, they show a clear understanding of the rights and wrongs of the government's actions as they reflect upon the plight of the common people. All students have individual targets linked to the National Curriculum levels of attainment and have a good awareness of how they these may be achieved.

173. The achievement of 15 and 16 year-olds is good. Within lessons their achievement is often very good or better, however, an analysis of their work over time, indicates that they make good gains overall. In Year 10 for example, they consider the life of a World War 1 soldier under the leadership of Earl Haig, and research into the good and bad aspects of his command. By the end of the year, they make comparisons with World War 2, and there is some excellent research work where Year 11 students have traced and contacted former students of the school who served in the armed forces at that time, inviting them to a Remembrance Day service at the school. They develop note-taking skills, using these to inform their written observations, such as when looking at the development of the United States. However, their presentation skills are under-developed and, in all years, there is little evidence in the students' work to indicate their use of computers either for presentation or research. A small group of Bengali students have conducted local research into the history of their people in Manchester. This effectively allows comparisons in the different cultures as well as supporting their studies of life in 20th century England.

174. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Seven of the eleven lessons observed during the inspection were very good or excellent. One lesson was unsatisfactory because the teacher lacked sufficient behaviour management skills to retain the students' interest and motivation. Well-planned, structured and balanced lessons are lively and fun, promoting the students genuine enthusiasm. For example, in the best lessons, good use is made of an overhead projector and whiteboard to aid and reinforce various aspects of George Cruikshank's cartoon on the Peterloo Massacre. The students' individual needs are well catered for through ability set classes and graded textbooks and worksheets. Extension work is provided for higher achieving students. Literacy skills are well promoted at all times through the good use of key historical vocabulary and frequent reminders on handwriting, grammar and spelling. There is very little in-class support for special needs and only occasional support for students with English as an additional language. Nevertheless, the teachers' good classroom controls and student management ensure that no time is wasted and maximum learning takes place. Effectively targeted question and answer sessions at the end of lessons promote the students' awareness of their learning, and this is further supported by linked homework tasks. The quality of marking is good, with constructive and helpful comments, which indicate that teachers have a good knowledge of students' abilities. Teachers keep efficient records, using these to inform future lesson plans, and regular assessment testing at the end of each topic identifies the students' levels against national standards.

175. The head of history is enthusiastic and hardworking. His monitoring programme has highlighted areas for improvement, which have been built into the departmental development plan. A subject policy, schemes of work and assessment procedures are in place and are used well as working documents to inform both the curriculum and lesson planning. Staffing levels are satisfactory overall, but there are insufficient classroom assistants to support

students with weak basic skills. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The overcrowded rooms are severely cramped and stuffy and are not conducive to learning. Although most classrooms have two computers, the lack of space prohibits their use. The walls are attractively decorated with the students' work and motivating posters as well as examples of their assessment modules showing the target's reached. Resources are good overall, although there is insufficient access to computers. Occasional visits to local historical sites and to the battlefields of France further support the curriculum.

176. The department has maintained the strengths of its previous inspection, and this is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

177. Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Specialist teachers good subject knowledge
- Teachers, good relationship with students.

Areas for improvement

- Raise the overall standard of attainment
- Improve the assessment procedures and develop a portfolio of moderated work
- Allow sufficient time for plenary sessions to ascertain students' progress and learning
- Develop the use of control technology
- To ensure that the text on worksheets is appropriate for students with learning difficulties

178. Teachers' assessment of 14-year-olds in 2002 showed that standards were well below the national average. However, direct observation of students' work in Year 10 indicates that the department under estimated students' attainment. This under estimation is partially due to the lack of guidance for teachers to accurately moderate work. The results of the 2002 GCSE examination were slightly below average when compared with similar schools. These results are an improvement on the previous year's results.

179. By the time students reach age 14 the overall attainment is below the expected level. A contributory reason for this is that not all the elements of the national curriculum have been studied. However, students' understanding of the other strands of the national curriculum is well established, in particular the communication element. Students have a good working knowledge of the word processing application using all the appropriate procedures to edit and present their work. Students enhance their documents using desktop publishing techniques, adding art graphics and adjusting the size to fit their publication. Students are developing a clear understanding of the use of a multi-media presentation using the Power Point programme. An example of this was in a Year 7 'Myself' topic. Here students presented a series of slides, using procedures to move the text and animate graphics. Students have knowledge of the use a spreadsheet, noticeable in the Year 9 topic 'Alton Towers'. Here students have used a spreadsheet to present the cost of a visit to Alton Towers, using the appropriate formula to calculate the cost of the journey.

180. Students have a basic understanding of data handling using a database. They can enter the data but their understanding of how to filter specific information is limited. Although

students are developing a basic understanding of control technology using the *Logo* programme, (a simple control programme) students have not had the opportunity to use more sophisticated programmes therefore this element is unsatisfactory. Students' knowledge of the use of information communication technology in its wider sense is too narrow. Few are able to give examples of where it might be used.

181. The overall attainment of 16-year-old students is below the level expected. The reason for this below average attainment is that only half the students in the present Year 11 have the benefit of regular of information communication technology (ICT) lessons. This has been remedied for the future with all students in the present Year 10 having the opportunity to study either a long or short examination course. The attainment, however, of students presently studying the two offered examination courses are at the expected level at this point in the academic year. Students are beginning to use a range of programmes in their individual projects and are developing an understanding how they can be used in different ways. This is evident in a GCSE Year 11 'Sports Day' project. Here students successfully use desktop publishing techniques to design a booklet using word processed text with placed digital photographs to produce a well balanced programme of events.

182. Students studying the GNVQ course are also developing an understanding of how information communication technology can be effectively used in a business producing logos for letter heads and business cards, fax headers and business letters. Students have developed and designed their individual websites using hyperlinks, a technique used to link pages to select further information, to support their topics. Students are developing an understanding of the use of a data handling. They know how to enter the data into separate fields, (an area in the programme where the data is placed) and appreciate the benefits of being able to quickly select and filter information using the query facility. Students are confidently using spreadsheets and are beginning to appreciate how they can be used beyond school. This was evident in a Year 10 class. Here students, in a bank account topic, are beginning to use more complicated formulas and functions to calculate and automatically adjust the data in successive cells. Students have not had the opportunity to visit places where ICT is widely used or visits from guest speakers to talk about the use of ICT in the commercial world. As a consequence their knowledge of the use of ICT in the wider sense is not as developed as it should be.

183. Although there is limited support in class for students with special educational needs and those with English and an additional language they generally make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriate targets. The overall attainment has not improved since the previous inspection. However there has been improvement with most elements but control technology is still below the standard expected.

184. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, three lessons were judged as good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to explain procedures contributing to students learning and progress. Better lessons begin with a clear explanation of the task with individual targets. This approach, however, is not consistent and there are occasions when the explanation is muddled, the task not explained clearly. This results in students being unsure of the task leading to slower learning. Teachers have good discipline and manage students well, dealing firmly with unacceptable behaviour, however in some groups there are a significant number of students who are disruptive demanding their teachers' attention and slowing the pace of learning.

185. Relationships are good and students show respect for teachers' knowledge. Students respond well to this approach, in particular students in the GCSE and the GNVQ groups who are confident to seek help when required contributing positively to their learning.

Teachers circulate well during lessons keeping students on task. The planning is generally satisfactory with defined objectives but there is an over emphasis on the use of worksheets that is restricting students independent enquiry and learning. Although teachers plan tasks that are appropriate for students with special educational needs the text on some worksheets is not always suitable for students with language difficulties slowing their learning. Although lessons conclude with a plenary session insufficient time is given to highlight good work and assess students' progress and learning. Where teaching was less effective the organisation and the objective of the lesson were not clear, resulting in students unsure of the task. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

186. The overall management of the subject is satisfactory. The acting head of department has been in position for a short period and is yet to have an impact on the subject. He does, however, have a vision for future developments and the need to raise standards. The procedures for assessing students' progress are unsatisfactory as they do not provide guidance for teachers to accurately assess students' attainment. The overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The quality of teaching has improved and the attainment with some elements has been raised. With the increased hard and software and the additional accommodation the subject is well placed for future developments.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

187. Overall the quality of provision in Modern Foreign Languages is **good**.

Strengths

- Overall quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership by head of modern languages is good.
- Teachers work well as a team, producing good materials for learning.

Areas for improvement

- Some teachers need to use more pair work and the foreign language in the classroom.
- Students need to check their written work more carefully to avoid basic errors.
- The department lacks sufficient resources.

188. When students enter the school they choose to study French, German or Urdu, and continue with it to the end of Year 9. In recent years the arrangements in Years 10 and 11 have changed each year. In Years 9 to 11, some students are disapplied from studying a modern language. Details of standards and the teaching of Urdu are in a separate section after the general summary about French and German.

189. Students may choose to take a full GCSE course in French, German or Urdu to the end of Year 11, and there is usually a group of students for all three languages.

190. In 2001 for GCSE there were; 19 students who took French; 1 student who took German; 22 students who took Urdu; 6 students who took Bengali; 3 students who took Arabic; 4 students who took Persian. Standards were above those achieved by boys nationally in all languages. There were A* passes in German, Bengali, Arabic, and Persian.

191. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below national standards in French in 2001. In comparison with national standards for boys, French GCSE results were above

in 2001, and GCSE results in French were higher than standards in similar schools in 2001. They were also higher than most other subjects in the school. Provisional French GCSE results for 2002 were again above national standards. Performance in the lessons seen in Years 7 to 9 showed students working below national standards. However, by Year 11 standards were higher than those for boys nationally. Students are stronger in listening, speaking, and reading, and weaker in writing. Year 8 students were able to listen to a French tape, and understand which activities various people had undertaken. Year 10 students could say which school subjects they liked and disliked, and explain the reasons in French. Year 11 students were able to read a text about a French boy and understand details about his personal life. Year 9 students could write about their leisure activities in French, using the past tense to say what they had done.

192. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below national standards in German in 2001. German GCSE results were above national standards in 2001. Results in German were above standards in similar schools in 2001. They were also above most other subjects in the school. Provisional German GCSE results for 2002 were again above national standards.

193. Performance in the lessons seen in Years 7 to 9 showed students working below national standards. However, by Year 11 standards were higher than those for boys nationally. Students are stronger in listening, speaking, and reading, and weaker in writing. Year 10 students were able to listen to a German tape, and understand whether young people liked their jobs or not. Year 8 students were able to talk in German about their timetable for school subjects. Year 9 students could read German texts and understand why people liked or disliked their local area. Year 11 students were able to write a conversation between a doctor and a patient in German.

194. Overall, there is a good amount of written exercises and sustained writing in French and German: however, students make too many errors in grammar and spelling. Students do not check their written work carefully enough: the errors students make in written work are preventing students from achieving higher standards. There are no significant variations between students of different ethnicity, background, or ability. Students do not have regular reading sessions. Students spend most of their time using the foreign languages in listening, speaking, reading and writing: this contributes to their literacy skills, but these are at lower levels than they would be in English. Numeracy activities have been incorporated successfully into schemes of work, and are used by teachers. At present students have good access to computers: they enjoy using them, and produce good quality work.

195. Some students took Spanish short course GCSE in 2002. Provisional Spanish GCSE results for 2002 were below national standards for the short course. Some Year 11 students are studying Spanish short course GCSE. One Year 11 lesson was observed. Students were able to understand various holiday activities on tape and in reading texts. They could also say which activities they did and write about holidays in Spanish.

196. The overall quality of teaching in French, German and Spanish is good. All of the lessons seen were satisfactory or better, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

197. In all languages the quality of teaching is improving standards: students are achieving well and making good progress.

198. In French, German and Spanish teachers are proficient in the foreign language, have good accents, and project their voices clearly. They use the foreign languages for parts of the lesson to develop students' listening skills. Most use a little English to check understanding or explain grammatical points, but sometimes they use English too much.

They plan a well organised sequence of activities, which involve the students in their learning. They exploit overhead projectors and other resources effectively to increase learning, but could use overhead projectors more. Standards of discipline are good, but a few students find it difficult to concentrate sufficiently. Time is used well, and some teachers are good at encouraging oral work in pairs: this improves listening and speaking skills, and develops confidence in the students. However, some teachers could use pair work more. Staff display students' work, maps, posters, and other authentic material, which increase the students' knowledge of the languages and countries concerned. However, more maps and display are needed in some classrooms. Students' work is assessed regularly, and results inform subsequent teaching. Useful homework, which consolidates learning, is set regularly. The teaching of students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good, and meets their needs well. Teachers manage classes well, and give students a variety of experiences, including songs, role plays, videos and class surveys, which extend and consolidate their learning. Teachers ensure that all students make appropriate progress. They provide challenging tasks for the higher attainers, and give support to those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Most students, including the higher attainers, those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in lessons throughout the school.

199. Almost all the students behave well. They show interest in their work, sustain their concentration, and develop good study skills. Their response is usually good throughout the school. Many students show an obvious sense of enjoyment in lessons. They work well when in pairs, and sometimes have opportunities to use their initiative in creating role plays and working independently. Their positive attitudes are enabling them to improve their performance. However, a few students find it difficult to concentrate and achieve their potential.

200. The organisation of the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The head of modern languages monitors the progress of students in French, German and Spanish. The department is well led and organised, has prioritised development plans, and works well as a team to produce resources for effective learning. The department lacks text books, readers, magazines, and computer software. Blinds and electrical sockets are needed in some rooms, and the windows should be replaced. A visit to France is planned, and this will encourage social interaction and personal responsibility, and improve language competence. The text books and other materials used, together with visits abroad, help develop awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures. The quality of teaching, the attitudes of most students, the visit abroad, and the leadership of the head of modern languages have a positive effect on standards. However, insufficient use of pair work and the foreign languages by some teachers, lack of additional text books, readers, magazines and computer programmes, and the errors students make in written work are preventing students from achieving even higher standards.

201. The department has made good progress on the issues raised in the previous report. The quality of teaching and take up in Years 10 and 11 have improved. Students are given more information about their progress, and are set targets. However, there is still insufficient classroom support for students with special educational needs or with English as an additional language.

Urdu

202. Overall the quality of provision in Urdu is **very good**.

Strengths

- Leadership is very good which leads to students working with very good resources and facilities
- Students have an excellent attitude to learning because they are highly motivated
- Standards are well above national averages because teaching is good
- The provision of Urdu from Years 7 to 11 enables students to make very good progress in the subject

Area for development

- There is no provision for students to use information and communication technology in lessons

203. In 2002, 91 per cent of students achieved grades A* to C at GCSE. This is an increase of 27 per cent compared to 2001 when 64 per cent of students achieved A* to C grades, which was well above national averages. 100 per cent of students achieved A* to G grades as they did last year.

204. In the work seen during the inspection standards that the students achieve by end of Year 9 are well above average. Students achieve well despite entering school in Year 7 with very little knowledge of Urdu, particularly in reading and writing. By the end of Year 9 students can give details about themselves and their daily routine through extended conversation. They can read extended passages of text related to familiar everyday routines. They can provide written information about their school day. Lower attaining students rely heavily on gap filling exercises in writing. Higher attaining students can write freely, for example composing letters, when they are given the opportunity.

205. Standards seen in Year 11 are well above average. By the end of Year 11 students can give details of future career plans and understand details about different types of jobs. Most written work consists of controlled exercises and does not give sufficient opportunity for independent writing although students are able to produce it when required. Students' presentation of work is of a very high standard. They take great care in how they set out their work. Standards of spelling in written work by the end of Year 11 are high. Students develop their numeracy skills through studying numbers, telling the time, shopping and presenting information through charts and tables.

206. All students make very good progress. The provision of Urdu from Year 7 onwards, the introduction of short courses in Years 10 and 11 and the appointment of an additional member of staff to the department have enabled students to achieve well.

207. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are some excellent features in many lessons. Teachers have an excellent subject knowledge and enthusiasm for Urdu. Large classes with wide levels of attainment are well managed. Classroom control is excellent in most lessons. Lessons are well prepared on high quality resource sheets and are designed carefully with lower attainers in mind. Teachers make some use of role plays and group work but much of the oral work is formal whole class teaching. Teachers make good use of their time to check students' progress in lessons. Lesson objectives are

not always clearly laid out to students. Displays are well used in one classroom and through signs around the school. Relationships with students are good humoured. Lower attaining students are given additional work to support their learning but there are fewer extension activities for higher attaining students. Students do not have the opportunity to use ICT in Urdu lessons, although teaching materials have been produced to a high presentational standard on an Urdu software programme. Books are regularly marked, and feature positive comments and reward stickers. Comments giving areas for development and targets are fewer.

208. Students' attitudes to work are excellent. They are responsive to instructions, listen attentively in lessons and maintain excellent standards of behaviour. They are respectful to staff. They are highly motivated and want to achieve well. They have a clear sense of purpose in lessons and concentrate on tasks without distraction. Students listen to each other without interruption. They are very enthusiastic about their learning.

209. Leadership is very good. The department is well organized and very well resourced although ICT resources for students are very limited. There is a suite of two rooms dedicated to Urdu located within the Modern Languages Faculty. A good scheme of work is in place. Urdu has high status in the school and signs, notices and examples of the language are visible throughout the building. There is excellent provision for students from Year 7 onwards and a choice of full or short course from Year 10. Monitoring is at an early stage of development to ensure consistency of approach to teaching throughout the department.

210. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Examination Results have continued to improve. The department has expanded to two full time teachers and there is a greater take up for the subject since the introduction of the short course from Year 10.

MUSIC

211. Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards have improved significantly.
- Teaching and learning is good, overall.

Areas for improvement

- There is a need to establish reliable assessments of students' levels of prior attainment when they enter the school.

212. Standards are improving very significantly. At end of Year 9, they are now broadly in line with national expectations. The examination results of GCSE candidates have risen rapidly in the last two years. Of 13 candidates entered in 2002, 8 gained B or C grades (61.5 per cent, which is close to the national averages) and *all* gained grade E or better, which is well above national averages. Some 64 students (6.1 per cent of the school's population) take a variety of instrumental lessons including steel drums, Asian music and African drumming as well as guitar, brass, woodwind, percussion and keyboard/piano lessons. Some of these take public examinations in which they gain creditable results. All of these and more sing in the choir or play in the swing band and other ensembles and produce performances of a good standard.

213. Standards seen in class music lessons in Years 7 to 9 vary very widely in the range poor to very good. In Year 7, standards are at first very low: commonly less than the National Curriculum levels of attainment expected at Key Stage 1. The school's schemes of work are designed to remedy this as quickly as possible: basic understandings of high and low, long and short, loud and quiet together with the ability to maintain a steady beat are all concepts which the staff quickly establish, reinforce and develop. Students are encouraged to sing in each lesson with increasingly good intonation and sense of style, using songs carefully chosen from a wide repertoire. They learn to play a variety of instruments in class: to accompany their singing; to perform individually and in groups; to improvise and compose their own melodies and accompaniments; to use piano keyboards and ICT with increasing dexterity. Students engage in a wide range of music of different periods styles and cultures from many different parts of the world. By Year 8 there are signs of significant improvements, which are consolidated in Year 9 and lead to the satisfactory standards that are now being secured.

214. In Years 10 and 11 standards continue to improve. Current GCSE groups are on track to maintain or extend the standards recently attained. Early in Year 10, students of widely differing backgrounds and experience are drawn together in the improvisation of a blues, each taking an individual part. The drummer, who has been learning percussion for only one year, is particularly expert in his use of the kit and maintaining a steady foundation for the rest of the ensemble. Two players at the piano, one a novice, sustain their independent parts well against the amplified sounds of rhythm and bass guitars whilst two more play separate parts on pitched percussion. Standards of ensemble playing quickly improve, supported by teacher guidance, which leads the group to organise an extended performance of more than six minutes in which each person takes a solo part. This example serves to illustrate the growing commitment of students and teacher alike in striving to bring everyone to high standards of attainment. Similarly high standards of commitment are seen in the more individual work of Year 11 students using the music department's ICT Suite. For example, standards of work in progress are checked by the teacher using headphones dividers whilst students are careful to save the different versions of their work in their personal files on the schools main server. In this way, the process of refinement and re-drafting composing tasks is quickly able to compare and contrast different editions and select those components that may best form a completed piece of work. Such developing study skills are clearly valued by students and are transferable to other contexts.

215. Teaching and learning are good. The commitment and conviction of very well qualified staff, who are dedicated to the support of the students, carries them forward where others might be deterred or simply give up. The schemes of work and lesson plans support students of a wide range of abilities at every stage in their school career. Teachers make high demands of themselves in the planning, preparation and presentation of lessons in which they also have high expectations of students' positive attitudes, good behaviour and prompt responses. Such good teaching is generally seen to inspire comparably good learning although it is sometimes hard-won, especially in Year 9, when the occasional misbehaviour of a small number is disproportionately disruptive of the majority. When teaching and learning are good they are characterised by dynamism on both parts, a keen focus on the task in hand and a clear satisfaction in the realisation of a job well done.

216. All these several attainments represent significant improvement since the last inspection.

217. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum in music is broad, balanced and carefully matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum and in Years 10 and 11 to the GCSE syllabus. There is an appropriate concentration on composing and performing without neglecting the musical knowledge gained through critical listening to music. However, there is a shortage of time in Years 7 to 9. Currently music is given only four per cent of the curriculum time compared to the recommended minimum of 5 per cent. Opportunities are readily taken for discussion of students' music-making. This offers enrichment of students' basic skills of literacy and numeracy: word-walls enhance literacy skills, explaining musical terminology whilst discussions of proportion, shape, balance and symmetry help students' understandings of numeracy. Similarly, the conduct of music lessons reinforces values of right and wrong, respect for others and their work and engages students in a variety of group activities that promote good social standards. The cultural diversity of the music encountered is wide and is further enriched by music from parts of the world beyond the experience of this ethnically diverse population. The spiritual dimension of music lessons is less well developed and is not overtly addressed in the schemes of work. All the lessons observed involved a good deal of oral evaluation by teachers and students alike that, as students grow in confidence, becomes more critically self-evaluative. Teachers are actively seeking more thorough systems of assessment that will not impede the essentially practical lessons seen. The wide range of extra curricular opportunities in music is well supported by parents when concerts are presented within the school or in the surrounding community.

218. The department's commitment to the welfare of its students is good. Health and safety issues, which abound where there is so much equipment including electronics and electrical resources, are carefully addressed as students are introduced to the proper use of unfamiliar items. Portable appliance testing is regularly undertaken and logged. The local education authority currently makes all necessary checks on visiting music staff.

219. The music department is well led. There is a good spirit of partnership and purpose amongst both the full-time staff and visiting instrumental teachers, which promote the sharing of ideas. Current levels of staffing are only just adequate for present needs. The timetable and extracurricular commitments of the staff allowing insufficient time for their wider responsibilities to the community of the school and the wider community it serves. The music accommodation is mostly sited in a relatively new building and is cramped for both the nature and range of activities undertaken. It is also separated from important rehearsal and performance spaces in another building, creating management and supervision issues involving valuable resources. The band room in the old building is poorly sited and has recently suffered damage to its fabric and contents as a result of flooding. The newer accommodation is freshly decorated and good use is made for display for purposes of information, although more could be made of display that celebrates and illustrates students' achievements. Generally, the quality and range of resources for music is good. However, the many small and pitched percussion instruments in room 207 are heavily used and in need of urgent repair and / or replacement whilst the new ICT Suite in room 209 tends to become overheated for want of adequate ventilation. It will also quickly become overcrowded as additional software and peripherals make more demands upon its use. Again, the successes of the department will aggravate these problems unless they are recognised and addressed promptly.

220. The music department is very efficient and represents good value for money, especially given the currently low capitation allowances granted to it. It particularly values the school's considerable capital investment in its new computer suite but that will bring its own on-going costs. The music department staff is currently overstretched, especially in relation to its wider responsibilities to the community of the school and the general community it serves. It presently copes very well. However, it may not easily sustain its present role without continuing investment in resources of every kind. These are needed to

support it in the invaluable contribution, which the head teacher, senior management team and governors recognise that it makes to the ethos and reputation of the school is a whole.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

221. Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Strong leadership of the department.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good quality teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Involve students in the planning and evaluation of their work
- Increase the number of activities in the curriculum offer, especially outdoor and adventurous activities

222. Although the number of students gaining A*-C grades in the 2001 GCSE in physical education is below the national average, there has been a significant increase in the number of students gaining these higher grades since the time of the last inspection.

223. Students arrive from their primary schools bringing with them a range of physical education skills. Many are below the levels that are expected of students who are eleven years old. They respond quickly to the good quality teaching and by the end of Year 9 most have progressed to the point where they are attaining levels that are in line with national expectations. In game activities, particularly in soccer, basketball and hockey, they demonstrate good levels of skill, showing good ball control and being aware of simple defence and attack strategies. However some students find it difficult to apply these skills when the element of competition is introduced. In gymnastics a minority of students demonstrate a range of good quality movements both on the floor and on apparatus, but the majority of students' gymnastic ability is limited and their movements lack quality. Students have a satisfactory understanding of how to prepare for physical education and do so conscientiously at the beginning of each lesson.

224. Good progress is continued throughout Years 10 and 11, and by the time they are sixteen years old their attainment levels, particularly in games activities, are at least in line with national expectations, with a few, especially students in the examination groups, doing even better. Many have a good understanding of tactics and strategies, and are able to apply the skills that they have practised when playing full games. They can undertake a range of tasks including acting as officials and coaches. Students in the examination groups are developing understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject, although some find success in the theoretical aspects of the course difficult to achieve.

225. Students with special educational needs are well integrated and are given much support by teachers and most reach very satisfactory levels of attainment. Teaching is sensitive and there is no evidence of students with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum that is on offer. Talented students are identified and encouraged to extend their skills both in school lessons, and with outside clubs.

226. Many school teams take part in inter-school competitions and gain much success, especially in soccer, table tennis and cricket. A number of students have represented Manchester schools in a range of activities and a few have gone on to represent Lancashire.

227. The quality of teaching is good. All the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, and the majority was judged to be good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide clear demonstrations and explanations. In lessons aims are made clear, content is appropriate and the relevant resources well organised. Relationships between teachers and students are sensitive and positive. Teachers show a care and concern for their students whilst encouraging the best in fair play through both co-operative and competitive experiences. Some opportunities are given for students to evaluate each other's performances, but in order to meet the demands of the National Curriculum this aspect needs to be further developed. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject, and their students respond very positively to this enthusiasm both in lessons and in out of school activities. Students generally behave well and work hard. Their enjoyment of the subject is very evident.

228. The range of activities that the department has been able to offer has been limited by the poor on-site facilities. The curriculum offer is biased towards games activities. However with the opening of the new sports hall there will be the opportunity for an expansion of the activities that are on offer. The department might investigate the possibility of introducing an outdoor and adventurous activities component into the curriculum. Students in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to take a GCSE in the subject, and this offer has been taken up by an impressive number of boys.

229. Staff, including some non-specialists, give very freely of their time to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities and inter-school competitions which are very well supported by large and enthusiastic groups of students. Students also have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme and to join outdoor trips to the school's residential centre in the Peak District.

230. The accommodation for the subject has been much improved by the opening of an excellent sports hall. Given the interest and ability of many of the students in hockey the provision of an all-weather surface would both help the development of this activity and provide a much needed increase to the playing areas available to the students.

231. Strong leadership and a positive ethos characterise the management of the subject. Documentation on all aspects of the work of the department is of a good quality and helps in the delivery of the subject. Talented teachers work effectively as a team, support each other and demonstrate a strong commitment to the improvement of the department.

232. Since the last inspection the department has continued to provide good quality physical education for all students. There has been a significant improvement in the number of students gaining the higher grades in the GCSE in physical education. The department's on-site facilities have been much improved by the opening of the excellent sport hall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

233. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **good**

Strengths

- Achievement of students in GCSE examinations
- Quality of learning in lessons
- Teaching at Key Stage 4
- Contribution of the subject to students SMSC development

Areas for improvement

- Provision for ICT
- Quality of students' written work

234. Results in the 2001 GCSE religious studies examination at the end of Year 11 are above the average of similar schools and above the national average. This standard has been maintained with the 2002 GCSE religious studies results. Although students enter the school with below average attainment they make considerable gains in their learning in religious education over the Years 7 to 11 and this contributes to their achievements at GCSE. Attainment at the end of Year 9, for the least able students, is below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. All students, however, in Years 10 and 11 follow a GCSE religious studies course which is modular and builds on the agreed syllabus content for Years 7 to 9. This approach enables students to consolidate their learning about religions and be provided with numerous opportunities to practice evaluating the effect of religious beliefs and practices on social and moral issues.

235. Students make gains in their knowledge and understanding of religions at both key stages and this is a strength of the department. Many students bring with them personal experience and knowledge of belonging to one of the major religions represented in Britain. This effectively supports their learning in religious education. Year 7 students beginning their religious education course could provide an example and explain the difference between 'knowing' and 'believing' whilst Year 8 students competently recall many key facts about Buddha's life and Year 9 students explain the significance of Guru Nanak to Sikhs. For Years 7 to 9, learning in the majority of lessons observed was satisfactory or better. Years 10 and 11 students follow a GCSE course which builds on the agreed syllabus objectives for Years 7 to 9 of learning about and learning from religion. Students discuss well the differing beliefs about God and tackle issues of morality and decision-making from a religious believer's perspective. The previous inspection indicated that students' oral contributions were stronger than their written work and this is still the case, particularly for the less able. Most students are making gains in their knowledge and increasing their ability to relate religious beliefs to everyday living. In Years 10 and 11, the learning was good in all lessons.

236. Students are generally well behaved in lessons and have a positive attitude to their work. They find it easy to talk about religion and religious practices. There is a high level of respect for each others beliefs and students work co-operatively together in pairs and groups. Although there are many students who find it difficult to concentrate for long periods the attitude of students to religious education in the majority of lessons observed was good. Student attendance and punctuality to lessons is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

237. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons and in Years 10 and 11 in all lessons observed it is good or very good. Teachers plan lessons well with a clear structure and good pace to maintain motivation and interest. In all the good lessons observed the teachers relationship with students; their management of the lesson activities and their classroom control made a significant contribution to students' progress and learning. Teacher expectation of students is high. Special educational needs and EAL students are being well supported and make satisfactory progress in a way that was not the case in the previous inspection. In one Year 7 lesson, with the least able group, personal artefacts special to the teacher were very effectively used to stimulate students thinking about what matters to them. Good subject knowledge combined with good classroom management skills provides students with effective lessons which develop their knowledge as well as their all round understanding. The use of timed-tasks and well-focused questioning on moral decision-making in Islam, in a Year 10 lesson, was effective in capturing and keeping their interest and motivation. However, in another lesson where there was a lack of specialist knowledge in the subject the breadth of students' learning was limited. With a large team delivering the subject in both key stages this needs to be addressed. There is currently limited use of ICT in religious education. Assessment procedures are in use and are being further developed in accordance with the levels identified within the agreed syllabus. Students are well informed about what they will be learning and the levels they can achieve. Homework is provided through a well structured homework booklet for each topic being studied.

238. Religious Education is part of the Personal, Social, Health and Religious Education Faculty which was formed in September 2002. The Head of Department has produced an action plan identifying the appropriate priorities for development and is effectively managing and leading the department. The action plan format, however, is not yet effective in identifying how the targets will be achieved. The subject makes a significant contribution to students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The statutory requirement to teach religious education to all registered students is met at both key stages and is supported by good schemes of work and policies for aspects of teaching religious education. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, especially with the current policy of acquiring different texts targeted at the differing abilities in the school. Since the last inspection the subject has made good progress.

Vocational Courses.

239. Business Studies is studied by a small number of students at GCSE and a comparison with the national average is not meaningful. Standards of work vary but are overall satisfactory. In the 2002, of four students who took the GCSE examination two attained the highest A* grade and only one did not gain an A*-C grade. In the lesson observed students were making steady progress. Teaching was sound with the teacher making every effort to engage students in their own learning but with limited success. Law is studied to GCSE level and standards of work seen are below the average. Students make good progress overall on the course and in the lesson observed use their prior knowledge well in discussion. Teaching and learning were satisfactory and students developed their problem solving skills appropriately in the context of the laws of intestacy.

240. The Year 10 CISCO course visited at Parr's Wood High School was part of the alternative curriculum sampled. This group of students has had fundamental problems with many having been excluded from other schools. When observed they were enjoying the course and all were working towards a target of producing a cover for "Of Mice and Men". There was some clever use of software to produce good results. Teaching and learning was good overall. This is a successful initiative. The school and the City Learning Centre

have staffed the course with experienced and committed teachers and this investment has helped to ensure the success of the project.