

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PHILIP HOWARD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Glossop

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112972

Headteacher: Miss W Steciuk

Reporting inspector: ID Thompson
12271

Dates of inspection: 16 -20 September 2002

Inspection number: 250629

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Mary's Road Glossop Derbyshire
Postcode:	SK13 8DR
Telephone number:	01457 853611
Fax number:	01457 852830
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Very Rev. D Bowdren
Date of previous inspection:	8 -12 December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12271	I Thompson	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9724	B Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8341	W Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics	
19913	R Garrett	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
3735	A Webb	Team inspector	Science	
15051	L Kauffman	Team inspector	Design and technology; information and communication technology	
18261	A Hill	Team inspector	Art and design; provision for pupils with special educational needs	
8197	D Jones	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30427	F Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	History	
3793	J Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
4757	D Morris	Team inspector	Music	
2141	J Oxley	Team inspector	Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA

Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
DT2 9PU

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The St Philip Howard Catholic School is a voluntary aided, 11-16 mixed comprehensive school serving the town of Glossop and the surrounding area. The school is smaller than most secondary schools and has 403 pupils on roll. Numbers are rising slightly. Pupils come from the full range of social and economic backgrounds but the school's catchment includes areas of severe deprivation. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about average. The majority of pupils are white. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English or has a home language other than English. School data and test results indicate that pupils' standards when they join the school are below average overall. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average, but the proportion with Statements of Special Educational Need, most of which refer to moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties, is above average.

The headteacher took up her post at the beginning of the month in which this inspection took place. Over recent years the school has been faced with considerable staffing difficulties as a result of long-term absences through illness.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, with many strengths, that cares well for its pupils. Teaching is good, standards are improving and pupils do well in relation to their standards when they join the school. The new headteacher has already had a positive effect on the life of the school. She provides good leadership and has a clear vision for further improvement. The long term strategic management of the school, particularly its finances, is not as good as it should be. Nevertheless, given its costs, the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by pupils, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils achieve well at the school.
- Relationships are very good and the school provides high standards of care.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good and provision for moral development is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

What could be improved

- Achievement in design and technology in Years 7-9 and in physical education in Years 10 and 11 is not good enough.
- Long-term financial planning is unsatisfactory and does not support the school's priorities well enough.
- Much of the school's accommodation is in a poor state and does not provide a stimulating working environment.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well enough to support learning across the curriculum. New technology is not used effectively to support the work of the school.
- Attendance is below average, mainly because of a high rate of authorised absence.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in December 1997. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and led to higher standards. Although the school development plan is now linked to the budget, there is still a need for more stringent management of finances linked to strategic planning. The environment of the school remains an issue, despite the school's efforts and some new building.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A	B	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The majority of pupils achieve at least as well as might be expected overall as they move through the school and many do better. Both boys and girls do particularly well in English. Standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. In comparison with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average overall. Results in 2002 show an improvement in English and mathematics but a slight fall in science. Girls did better than boys in English and mathematics but not as well in science.

In the GCSE examinations in 2001, the proportions of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C and five or more grades A*-G were average. The proportion of pupils gaining one or more grades A*-G was above average, representing significant achievement for many pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' overall average points score was above average. In comparison with schools taking their pupils from similar social and economic backgrounds, results were well above average. Results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend over the last four years; comparison of pupils' achievements at GCSE with their standards at the end of Year 9 shows that overall they did much better than might be expected, particularly lower attaining pupils. Pupils' best results, compared with other subjects studied, were in English, English literature and history; worst results were in computer studies, French and physical education. The average points score improved further in the 2002 examinations. The school sets challenging targets based on analysis of pupils' performance. The target was met in 2002.

Standards of literacy and numeracy are average overall.

Standards in work seen during the inspection:

	Years 7-9	Year 10 and 11
Above average	English	English; art and design; music.
Average	Mathematics; science; art and design; geography; history; music; physical education.	Mathematics; science; design and technology; geography; history.
Below average	Design and technology; information and communication technology (ICT); modern foreign languages.	ICT; modern foreign languages; physical education.

Achievement

	Year 7-9	Years 10 and 11
Very good	English	
Good	Mathematics; science; art and design; geography; history; music	English; art and design; design and technology; history; music
Satisfactory	ICT; modern foreign languages; physical education	Mathematics; science; geography; ICT; modern foreign languages
Unsatisfactory	Design and technology	Physical education

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are well motivated and proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The great majority of pupils behave well both in and out of classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond well to the school's provision for their personal development. Relationships are very good, which helps learning.
Attendance	Attendance is below average, mainly because of the high proportion of authorised absence.

Christian values, upon which all the work of the school is based, support good personal development and very good relationships.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Year 7- 9	Year 10 - 11
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall and pupils learn well as a result. Teaching is very good in English and good in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. A higher proportion of teaching is now good or better. Pupils are more often involved in lessons and more is expected of them. Work is more closely related to their needs. These improvements reflect the effort put into development of teaching and learning to ensure consistency of quality. Only one lesson seen during the inspection was unsatisfactory, and teaching of high quality was observed in all but two subjects. Teaching is particularly effective in English, art and music. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

Teachers manage their pupils very well. They reflect the caring philosophy of the school in their classrooms. In the great majority of lessons teachers combine their good subject knowledge with a good range of teaching methods. They conduct well-planned lessons that are effective in meeting the needs of their pupils. Some teaching is not as effective as it could be. Not all teachers plan for the difficulty some younger pupils in Years 7-9 have in remembering what they have learned. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall but the use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is not as good as it should be. Gifted and talented pupils are not consistently challenged sufficiently, mainly because they are not yet specifically identified by the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Increased opportunities are being developed in Years 10 and 11. Provision for extra-curricular activities and careers education is good. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is not well developed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive effective support that enables them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good. Good provision is made for spiritual and social development. Provision for moral development is very good. Cultural development is satisfactory but better provision is needed to develop pupils' appreciation and understanding of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Procedures to promote pupils' welfare are good. All pupils are very well known to members of staff and feel secure in their care.

Parents' involvement in their children's education and their contribution to learning are satisfactory. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified and consequently are not always sufficiently stretched in their work. Careful monitoring of academic and personal progress, especially in Years 10 and 11, gives good support and guidance which helps all pupils to do better.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher provides effective leadership – she has had an immediate impact on life of school and has a clear vision as to where the school should be moving. She is well supported by senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Statutory responsibilities are met but the governing body needs to play a stronger role in shaping the direction of the school through sharply-focused financial and strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school reviews its performance against basic national data but the principles of best value are not well applied because the school does not make comparisons about costs and performance with those of similar schools.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory within departments but unsatisfactory overall because of the need for more stringent control and better planning on a whole-school basis.

The match of teachers and support staff to the school's needs is unsatisfactory because of a lack of subject specialists and insufficient administrative and support staff. Much of the school's accommodation is in a poor state, which does not help learning. The provision of resources to support learning, particularly the library and for ICT across the curriculum, is unsatisfactory but improving. Day-to-day financial management is efficient and spending is properly controlled.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils are expected to work hard.• Progress is good.• The school helps pupils to be mature and responsible.• Information about progress is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision for extra-curricular activities.• The consistency of homework.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school's expectations of its pupils and how it helps them to develop. They also consider that parents are kept well informed about progress but the amount and usefulness of other information varies considerably. The team believes that the range of extra-curricular activities provided is good. The amount of homework set is broadly satisfactory, but could be more consistent in the level of challenge and set more regularly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- Overall standards are above average and well above average in comparison with similar schools.
- Pupils achieve well as the result of good teaching.
- Standards of literacy and numeracy are broadly average.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.
- Gifted and talented pupils do not always achieve to their full potential.
- ICT skills are not as well developed across the curriculum as they should be.
- Standards in design and technology in Years 7-9 and in physical education in Years 10 and 11 are not as good as they should be.

1. The majority of pupils achieve at least as well as might be expected overall as they move through the school and many do better. This is best seen in English where both boys and girls do better than in their other subjects. Pupils who enter the school with overall below average standards achieve so well that their standards by the end of Years 9 and 11 are above average and well above average in comparison with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds.
2. A number of factors contribute to the school's success in raising standards. The school is small and its Christian values underpin all its work, giving staff and pupils a commonality of purpose. Pupils benefit from teachers knowing them well. Teachers build upon very good relationships to manage their classes very well – because attitudes and behaviour are good, little lesson time is wasted in dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour. Teaching is good overall, improved since the previous inspection, and reflecting the effort that has been put into staff development and the regular monitoring of the quality of teaching in lessons. Pupils' performance is also monitored regularly. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through regular assessments and provides mentoring when pupils are identified as underachieving. Parents acknowledge that they are kept well informed as to how their children are doing through this system. The records of assessment are paper-based. They could be improved by the use of ICT to make the results of assessment more accessible, and thus more useful, to departments.
3. Only two common factors hinder progress. Attendance is still below average, with a higher than average proportion of authorised absence – sanctioned by parents. There is an inevitable effect on the completion of coursework and the continuity of learning that affects standards. Many pupils have difficulty in retaining, or recalling, previous learning. A number of departments, notably English and mathematics, are tackling this effectively through the adoption of lesson patterns and teaching methods, developed through the Key Stage 3 Strategy, that promote the reinforcement of learning. There is scope for further development of this work across the school.
4. Where standards are not as good as they should be - in design and technology in Years 7-9, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education in Years 10 and 11 – the common factor is the difficulties the school has faced in dealing with long-term absences of key members of staff and the consequent discontinuity of pupils' learning.
5. The school has an above average proportion of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The great majority make good progress towards their learning and behaviour targets. The school's high level of GCSE grades A*-G and the very small proportion of pupils who leave the school with no qualifications are indications of the effort put into supporting pupils with special educational needs.
6. At present, the school does not identify gifted and talented pupils in all departments as it should. Although it is clear that pupils of all levels of attainment are doing well overall, there are occasions when the highest attainers are not stretched to their full potential. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting, and some who responded to the questionnaire, expressed the view that although higher-attaining pupils are doing well, they are not always doing quite as well as they might. The inspection team agrees with this view.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- Pupils are keen to show the school in a favourable light: their attitudes are good.
- Pupils behave well, both in lessons and as they move around the school.
- Pupils respond well to the school's provision for their personal development.
- Relationships in the school are very good, which helps learning.
- Attendance is below the national average, although it has improved during the past year.

7. Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to the work they do there. Pupils interviewed all commented that they like the small size of the school because they know everyone and everyone knows them. Pupils are well motivated and well mannered. In lessons, they listen, concentrate and maintain high levels of interest. These good attitudes are particularly evident when pupils are enjoying the teaching. This was especially noticeable among boys in a Year 8 English lesson who responded warmly to their teacher's lively approach to the topic – looking at tenses and tense changes to show how it affects the tone of voice in creative writing. Pupils also work well when given praise which they consider that they have deserved. Most have the confidence to ask questions in lessons. On occasion, some pupils can become passive and lose concentration. Others lack a sense of inquiry and urgency in lessons, preferring to be handed information than to find it out for themselves. Pupils are keen to take part in other activities run by the school. Clubs at lunch-time and after school are well attended.
8. Standards of behaviour are good. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are polite, and almost always well mannered in response to their teachers' expectations that they will be. Behaviour is also good as pupils move around the school, even in the corridors which become very crowded when lessons change. Pupils have considerable freedom to use the school at break and lunch-time. This freedom is respected and rarely abused. Some bullying does occur, but pupils interviewed considered that it is reported and is dealt with quickly. There were no permanent exclusions during the past year, but the level of fixed-term exclusions was higher than might be expected for a school of this size. Mainly boys were involved, more than once in a few cases. The main reason for the high level of exclusions was a single incident which resulted in several boys being excluded for a two-day period. Most exclusions were for short periods, rarely long enough to affect attainment for the pupils involved.
9. Pupils respond well to the provision for their personal development. They respect the Christian moral values which the school seeks to inculcate. They are aware of the effect that their actions can have upon others, though this sensitivity is to some extent marred by the amount of litter they drop and some inconsiderate behaviour. In contrast, a number of Year 11 pupils contribute to the community through their work with the Society of St Vincent de Paul, helping with reading in primary schools and making regular visits to a residential home for the elderly. The quality of relationships in the school, especially between pupils and members of staff, is a particular strength. These good relationships encourage hard work and help pupils to do well. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility have not been extensive. However, pupils do accept those available to them, such as helping in the library and serving on the school council or as prefects. More opportunities will be available this term. Prefects will now receive training and there is a newly appointed head boy and head girl.
10. Attendance for the academic year 2000/2001 was 90.1 per cent, below the national average of 90.9 per cent. Authorised absence was 9.5 per cent compared with a national figure of 8.1 per cent. But unauthorised absence was 0.4 per cent, lower than the national average of 1.1 per cent. Figures for the year 2001/2002 show an improvement in the overall rate to 90.6 per cent, which is closer to the national average. No particular patterns of absence affect specific groups, apart from some evidence of increased absence among older pupils.
11. Overall, standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, though the amount of litter continues to be a problem. The question of independent learning, both the amount provided and pupils' willingness to respond, has not been completely resolved, except in the English department.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- Teaching is good overall in all years.
- Classroom management is very good, based on very good relationships.
- Teachers know their subjects well and plan interesting lessons that meet pupils' needs and involve them in learning.
- Students with special educational needs are well taught by the specialist teaching and support staff.
- ICT is not used consistently to support learning across the curriculum.

12. Teaching is good overall and pupils learn well as a result.
13. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. A higher proportion of teaching is now good or better. Pupils are more often involved in lessons and more is expected of them. Work is more closely related to their needs. These improvements reflect the effort put into development of teaching and learning to ensure consistency of quality. Only one lesson seen during the inspection was unsatisfactory, and teaching of high quality was observed in all but two subjects. Teaching is particularly effective in English, art and music.
14. A strong feature of the good teaching is the fact that the great majority of teachers manage their pupils very well. They reflect the caring philosophy of the school in their classrooms. They get to know the pupils as individuals and establish very good relationships with them. They establish clearly what is expected in terms of classroom behaviour. As a result, most pupils co-operate, are interested and attentive in lessons and learn well. This applies equally to those pupils just starting school and those in their final year. Pupils in a Year 7 mathematics lesson successfully followed the teacher's 'rules' for answering questions. They listened attentively, were keen to answer and behaved very well. Consequently they made very good progress in understanding an important mathematical idea about prime factors. A Year 11 English class learned much about one of their GCSE poems from well-managed 'rotating' group discussions followed by searching questioning from their teacher. Such progress was possible because of the already well-established attitudes to work and very good relationship between teacher and pupils.
15. In the great majority of lessons teachers combine their good subject knowledge with a good range of teaching methods. They conduct well-planned lessons that are effective in meeting the needs of their pupils. In a very good Year 10 history lesson, for example, the teacher's knowledgeable and colourful description of working conditions in cotton mills was combined with activities like 'brainstorming', 'ideas boards', and selecting and extracting information from information sheets. The sequence of activities was carefully arranged so that pupils ended the lesson with a clear and memorable picture of such work. A Year 9 art lesson began with a very good demonstration of distortion techniques and continued with pupils practising these independently with support from the teacher. She reviewed progress at intervals and by the end pupils had a very good understanding of the process. These features of good teaching and its effect on learning are also particularly well displayed by teachers in English and music.
16. Some teaching is not as effective as it could be. Not all teachers plan for the difficulty some younger pupils in Years 7-9 have in remembering what they have learned, particularly of course after the recent summer break, but also from lesson to lesson. This was the case in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, for example, where pupils' rate of progress was slowed because they could not easily recall some of the information required to tackle their work on circles. One Year 7 history lesson lacked clarity of explanation and organisation: delays occurred when some pupils began the wrong task, and the rate of learning slowed to an unsatisfactory level.
17. Teachers are aware of the importance of developing pupils' literacy skills because of the very good work that has been done by the literacy coordinator to improve the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. Subject teachers in art, history, design and technology, ICT and geography are putting training to good effect, particularly in areas like the use of frameworks for writing and the correct use of vocabulary. The mathematics department, however, has not yet planned its contribution to literacy, and more emphasis on the development of these skills is needed in science and physical education. The overall picture is therefore satisfactory rather than good.

18. The teaching of numeracy in subjects other than mathematics is satisfactory overall. An excellent policy has been developed for numeracy across the curriculum. Although the policy is not yet fully implemented, or monitored, it is beginning to show results in subjects such as design and technology, geography and science.
19. Teachers' use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, mainly because of the difficulties of access to appropriate equipment and software but also partly because at present nobody is responsible for co-ordinating the development of cross-curricular teaching. The result is that opportunities are missed to support learning through the use of ICT.
20. When pupils with special educational needs are provided with the support of education care officers (ECOs), they learn well and make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. When they are withdrawn into special support groups for accelerated learning or 'booster' reading sessions, they often make very good progress. Pupils on a 'school action plus' programme of support, and those who have a statutory statement that guarantees specific provision, have appropriate access to specialist services such as education welfare, social and education psychological services. They benefit from the provision of those services and generally make good progress under the focused specialist provision.

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

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Provision for personal development is good overall and very good in the area of moral development.
- Careers education is good.
- Opportunities are missed to promote pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

21. Overall, the curriculum provision is satisfactory. The imbalances noted in the last inspection report have been eliminated.
22. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory in Years 7-9 and the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Curriculum provision is satisfactorily broad and balanced. Programmes for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes drugs awareness and sex education, citizenship and the additional provision of German in Years 8 and 9 enhance this aspect of the school's work.
23. The diocesan requirements for religious education in all year groups will be the subject of a Section 23 Inspection Report to be published separately.
24. The quality and range of learning opportunities in Years 10 and 11 is good. The school provides a core curriculum of GCSE courses in English, religious education, mathematics, science and social science for all pupils. This latter course includes modules in careers, citizenship, personal and social education, health and sex education and ICT. Pupils select up to four subjects from a choice of eleven GCSE courses that include two vocational educational courses provided by on-site by tutors from two different further education colleges.
25. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory overall and meet statutory requirements. Correct procedures are followed for the small number of pupils who do not follow the full National Curriculum.
26. Overall, the particular strengths of the curriculum provision include English, mathematics, science, music, art, geography, history and the development of citizenship. There are some weaknesses in design and technology that result from long term staffing issues but these have been mitigated by the good development of a vocational engineering course for Years 10 and 11. The use of ICT to enhance the teaching of other subjects in the curriculum was a weakness noted in the last report.

Aspects of this problem still exist and relate to issues of access that have recently begun to be tackled.

27. The provision that the school makes for PSHE is very good. Its strength lies in a well-constructed and wide-ranging programme which is appropriate for pupils' needs as well as reflecting the aims of the school. The school has a well-established tradition in its teaching of citizenship to all pupils. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the GCSE Social Science course and all topics on the citizenship syllabus are in place. Pupils' achievement is assessed at the end of each topic and exercise books indicate that most pupils appreciate the insights they are developing. A growing number of pupils are involved in some form of voluntary support for the community, either inside or outside the school, although this has not yet been systematically recorded as part of their citizenship achievement. Opportunities for pupils to exercise citizenship and become involved in the day-to-day running of the school are limited. Prefects take responsibility in several areas and a head boy and girl have recently been appointed. Pupils are not involved in this process, however, and lower down the school there are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility other than through charity fundraising.
28. The provision for improving standards of literacy through subjects other than English is satisfactory overall. There are very good strategies in place thanks to the work of the literacy co-ordinator. All staff have received training and guidance on such matters as lesson organisation, spelling, and approaches and activities designed to support writing, reading, speaking and listening. These strategies are only satisfactorily effective as yet because not all subject areas are carrying them out as a planned part of their work. In mathematics, for example, though an individual teacher may use a writing framework to support investigations work for GCSE, there is no departmental policy for literacy and no planned approach to tackle literacy in schemes of work. Those limitations also apply in science. Some key scientific vocabulary does appear on laboratory walls but the word list is too small both in size and number and largely concentrated on Year 7 vocabulary. Pupils in Years 7-9 have insufficient opportunities for writing. Though the standard of theoretical work for GCSE physical education pupils reaches national expectations, more emphasis is needed on development of their literacy skills in teachers' planning. In other subjects good practice is more often evident. History teachers provide good opportunities and support for reading aloud, 'skim' reading and selecting evidence from texts. They help pupils develop essay-writing skills with writing 'frames' and provide opportunities to write in different styles. Art, music, geography, modern languages and design and technology teachers are also developing pupils' literacy skills, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening and subject vocabulary.
29. The provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills is good. An excellent policy for numeracy across the curriculum is resulting in an effective contribution being made by subjects other than mathematics to developing pupils' numeracy skills. In geography pupils in Year 9 make good use of graphs to display results of information collected from fieldwork. In design technology pupils are able to measure lengths and weights accurately in practical work. In German, pupils make calculations in Euros. In science pupils can use scales confidently and measure accurately during experiments.
30. Provision for careers education is good. It has been developed as part of the well-balanced PSHE programme. Pupils are shown how to access the information about careers available in the library. They also have an interview with a member of the senior management team about their choice of options for Years 10 and 11. In Year 11, interviews are arranged for all pupils with an outside careers specialist. Information and an open evening are provided about continuing education and job and careers opportunities. Suitable work experience opportunities are provided in the local community at the end of Year 10.
31. The schools' provision for equal opportunities is satisfactory. The school has a clear commitment to the concept and works hard to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. A brief policy statement in the staff handbook contains useful information and confirms the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all. The school's curricular and pastoral structures are designed to ensure equal opportunities and the measured development of vocational education in Year 10 and 11 has dealt with the curriculum shortcomings noted in the previous inspection report.

32. The school's buildings are not currently suitably designed for those with physical or visual impairments, including those in wheelchairs, and much needs to be done to comply with the requirements of the Disabilities Rights Act.
33. Overall, there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) has worked hard to introduce the new Code of Practice for special educational needs and many subject departments are fully aware of the new requirements, which see every teacher as a teacher of special needs. Where the departments are preparing materials and devising methods and strategies for teaching the range of abilities they face in their classes, the provision is developing very well. The English, geography, modern foreign language and design and technology departments offer examples of good practice in responding to the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. The design and technology department has very good links with Stockport College, from which tutors came last year to teach a GNVQ course to a group of lower-attaining boys. This year the tutors are teaching a GCSE course in engineering at the school, as a follow-up exercise. Pupils who achieve well in their GCSE will be invited to continue engineering studies at Stockport College. This is a school initiative that is currently being followed by four other local schools. A small number of disaffected boys in Year 11 attend the High Peak Training Agency's adult education centre for a certificated course in the application of ICT. Where the provision is enhanced by the learning support teacher (LST) or by education care officers (ECOs) the provision is strengthened by their skills and firm commitment to their work.
34. Gifted and talented pupils are not always sufficiently stretched in their work, although good provision exists in English and positive developments have been made in history and geography in Years 10 and 11.
35. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular opportunities for its size that is appreciated and well supported by pupils, in spite of the distance some travel to school. There is a wide range of games and sporting activities provided by dedicated staff; school teams and individual pupils enjoy a personal success. A variety of music and drama clubs offer pupils the opportunity to take part in school productions and workshops, and also theatre visits. Fieldwork, museum and gallery visits are arranged by departments who also provide study classes, either at lunchtime or after school, which are particularly helpful for revision as examinations approach.
36. The school has developed satisfactory links with the local community, which enhance the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for pupils throughout the school. Members of the diocesan and local community visit the school and contribute to learning through school assemblies, the programme of PSHE, and the curriculum in several subjects. There are satisfactory links with partner institutions and those with primary schools are improving. Formal links with Stockport and Tameside Colleges have significantly helped strengthen the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, as has the school's links with the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales Learning Consortium. There has also been some joint training with schools in the consortium.
37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and good provision for their social development. The school's Christian principles are the foundation of the way that pupils are encouraged to respond to each other and expectations of behaviour are very clear. Teachers are good role models and clearly support the school's mission statement. In departments a moral stance is made over topics studied; for example, the principle of care for the environment in geography, conservation of resources in design and technology and in history pupils consider the development of nuclear armaments and their threat to life today. All pupils follow a course in citizenship and this provides good opportunities to respond to the question, 'What makes a good citizen?' As a result, pupils respond to the needs of others. The work of the St. Vincent de Paul volunteers within the school, in their support of needs of asylum seekers from Rwanda, provides a focus for activity. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to support the needs of others not only through fundraising, but also through volunteer work in schools and with older people. As a result, they develop social skills and confidence in their dealing with people from different backgrounds. Pupils benefit from the variety of visitors who support their studies and from their group visits and fieldwork experiences.
38. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their understanding of their own culture through local investigations and

musical performances at local events, such as the summer fairs. A significant number of pupils are involved in musical activities; the annual musical production is well received and achieves a high standard. Music and drama workshops have enabled pupils to benefit from the insights of professional artists. The wider culture of Europe is experienced by pupils visiting France, Austria and Germany, and in several subjects pupils are encouraged to consider their position as part of the European Union. Opportunities to benefit from the cultural diversity within Britain are less frequent. In art and music there are good examples of pupils' studying culture of Africa, Asia and America, and in geography and history the choice of topics extends pupils' knowledge of different cultures. The school is aware that this is still an area for development, however, and is considering opportunities to enrich pupils' experience.

39. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and values and the respect and care shown to pupils raises their self-esteem. Teachers encourage pupils to develop Christian beliefs through assemblies, voluntary mass, confirmation classes and the periodic prayers throughout the day, but they are also encouraged to respect the beliefs of others. Some subjects enable pupils to experience spiritual moments through reflection on the significance of what they have learned, and by providing opportunities such as the visit to the Holocaust Centre in history. Teachers seek to foster the spiritual growth of their pupils and share with them their own feelings and experiences. The relationships between pupils and with staff indicate the positive feelings that pupils are developing about themselves. The accommodation of the school, however, detracts from this provision. The outside areas are stark and unwelcoming. There are no areas that would encourage pupils to be still or meditate, and the beauty of the surrounding countryside is not reflected in the grounds. Within the building, although the art department in particular celebrates the work of pupils in display, there are few areas that are spiritually uplifting outside the classrooms.
40. The improvement in curriculum provision since the previous inspection report is good, with strengths in PSHE, careers, citizenship, extra-curricular opportunities, the social science core provision for Years 10 and 11 and the development of vocational education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- Procedures to promote pupils' welfare are good.
- All pupils are very well known to members of staff and feel secure in their care.
- Careful monitoring of academic and personal progress, especially in Years 10 and 11, gives good support and guidance which helps all pupils to do better.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory.
- Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are good.

41. Standards of care in the school are good. Members of staff know pupils and their individual circumstances well. They use this knowledge carefully and sensitively to guide pupils. They help pupils to feel secure and develop their confidence and self-esteem. In consequence, pupils achieve better results. Both the pupils and their parents appreciate this. Procedures to promote good behaviour and discipline are effective. Standards of behaviour during lessons and around the school during the inspection were good overall. Any bullying is picked up quickly and handled effectively. Over the past year, the school has worked hard to improve levels of attendance, and to reduce the amount of authorised absence. Procedures are now good. The school telephones parents when their children are not in school without prior notification. A senior teacher monitors records of attendance. This is done carefully. The overall rate of attendance has improved to a level closer to the national average. Child protection procedures are good. Some health and safety concerns were pointed out to the school during the course of the inspection. These arise mainly from the condition of the school buildings and grounds.
42. The school's procedures to monitor academic and personal progress are good overall. Individual review sheets appear four times a year. Successively, these build up a clear picture of how pupils develop and the progress they make during their time at the school. In addition, the school compiles a profile of each year group and adds to it as the group moves up the school. It is a useful and effective method of noting progress. These procedures are strengthened still further in Years 10 and 11 where pupils are set subject targets early in Year 10 which they discuss and

review in small groups. Involving pupils early in their GCSE courses, asking for their perceptions of progress and requiring them to review these during the course all help them focus on their progress and raise their ultimate achievement. These procedures combine to provide good educational and personal support and guidance for the pupils in the school.

43. The school's procedures to care for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The procedures for statementing follow the Code of Practice, flowing as they do from school action that has been taken to address the pupils' needs to the point where additional specialist support is required. Statements and individual education plans (IEPs) drawn from the recommendations made in the statement involve both parents and pupils fully in the processes of setting up and reviewing them. Annual reviews of statements are held to Code of Practice guidelines and IEPs are reviewed termly, to determine whether or not targets in them have been reached and to re-set targets for the next term.
44. Standards of care have improved since the previous inspection but the condition of the buildings and grounds continues to cause concern.
45. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory. End of Year 6 National Curriculum test results and nationally standardised tests are combined to build up a clear picture of pupils' attainment when they arrive at the school. This information is made available to teachers so that they have a clear picture of the attainment of the pupils they are teaching. The information is not yet recorded using the schools' information technology and, as a result, is not easily accessible by teachers. Targets are set for pupils for the end of Year 9 and for GCSE examinations, and these are reviewed regularly. Most subjects have satisfactory procedures in place to assess pupils against National Curriculum standards. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Arrangements in English and art and design are very good but are unsatisfactory in physical education and ICT.
46. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are good. The school has established an effective system for reviewing progress by setting targets for individual pupils and monitoring pupils' progress towards those targets. Most subjects are using the data they have to monitor pupils' progress effectively as they move through the school. The use of assessment information to guide the planning of the curriculum is satisfactory. Assessment information is used well enough in most subjects to plan for individual needs, to inform lesson planning or to review the curriculum. Departments use the information well to monitor their subjects' performance in external tests and examinations.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- Parents take a favourable view of the school and what it provides for their children.
- The school has satisfactory links with parents.
- The overall quality of the information which parents receive is satisfactory.
- Parents' involvement in their children's education and their contribution to learning are satisfactory.

47. Parents have a favourable view of the school. They believe it helps their children to develop confidence and self-esteem while reflecting those Christian values which are its declared aims. A substantial proportion of those who returned the parents' questionnaire, and/or attended the parents' meeting before the inspection, consider that the school expects their children to work hard to achieve their best and that they make good progress in the school. Almost without exception, these parents say they would feel comfortable contacting the school if they have questions or concerns. Parents believe that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. They also consider that they are kept well informed about the progress their children make. The inspection team shares the parents' good opinions. The review sheets give parents a good idea of how their children are getting on during the year. However, the amount and usefulness of the information on progress given in the annual reports varies too much between subjects.
48. Some of the parents who attended the meeting and returned the questionnaire do not consider that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, and had concerns about

whether their children receive the right amount of homework. The inspection team thinks that there is a good range of activities outside lessons for a school of this size. The amount of homework set is broadly satisfactory, but could be more consistently challenging and set more regularly.

49. Parents' involvement is satisfactory. Parents generally support the school and the work it does. They come to musical and sporting events. Attendance at consultation evenings and the annual presentation evening is good. Parents sign the home/school agreement and homework diaries.
50. Considered overall, the links that the school has developed with parents and carers are satisfactory, though not extensive. Each year group does have a consultation evening, with an extra one for Year 7 with tutors in November. The presentation evening brings all parents together. But although parents are expected to sign homework diaries, there is no space for them to be used as a home/school dialogue. The quality of information provided by the school, both about itself and about pupils' progress, varies considerably. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents omit some important information. Parents are not given much information about the curriculum. There are four review sheets each year for all pupils, which give parents a succinct view of the progress, both academic and personal, that their children make. These are good and popular with parents because they keep them in touch. However, the full annual reports differ in what they tell parents. Some are extremely informative. They tell parents exactly what their children know and can do and set this in a broader context with National Curriculum levels or GCSE predicted grades. Others tell parents very little. On balance, however, information for parents is satisfactory.
51. Standards are similar to those reported at the previous inspection. Parents' views have improved, but the quality of information is worse, mainly because it has not kept pace with changing requirements. There is now only one consultation evening but more short reports, the review sheets.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- The headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by senior staff.
- The school's Christian values underpin all its work and support a good climate for learning.
- The staff have a common purpose and the school has a good capacity for further improvement.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well.
- Governors support the school well but financial and strategic planning need a sharper focus.
- The school does not make effective enough use of new technology.
- The match of teaching and support staff to the school's needs is unsatisfactory.
- Although teachers make the best of it, much of the school's accommodation is in a poor state which is not conducive to learning.
- The provision of resources for learning is unsatisfactory overall but improving.

52. The school is well led by the headteacher and senior staff. Although only in post for a very short time before the inspection, both staff and pupils acknowledged the impact she has had on the atmosphere in the school. She has a clear vision for how the school should develop, while appreciating what has already been accomplished. The overall good quality of teaching seen during the inspection, and the improvement since the previous inspection, reflect the effort that senior staff have put into monitoring and supporting the development of teaching over recent years. By quickly gaining the support of the staff, the headteacher has reaffirmed the school's common sense of purpose; it was clear during the inspection that staff morale was high and that teachers felt well supported. The school has an effective climate for learning, which very clearly reflects the Gospel values that guide its work, and a good capacity to succeed.
53. The headteacher is well supported by the two deputy headteachers who have worked together to manage a smooth transition of headship. Their oversight of the pastoral system and the procedures for monitoring pupils' performance have contributed much to the school's rising standards. Nevertheless, gifted and talented pupils are not identified as they should be. The deputy headteachers have a role in monitoring quality of teaching and providing support where necessary, the success of which is seen in improved standards. Both have also taken on a heavy

burden of additional responsibilities in order to minimise the effects on pupils' learning of the long-term staffing difficulties that the school has suffered for a period of years.

54. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and routine administration is efficient. However, the school's administrative support staff are over-stretched. The school has yet to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by new technology to support administration and the processing of data and information, for example about pupils' performance.
55. Governors are well informed about the work of the school and are keen to support it. Although they review targets rigorously, adjusting them if they are thought to be insufficiently challenging, their roles in shaping the overall direction of the school and in holding it to account have not been sharply enough focused. Faced with a considerable budget deficit, some years ago, the governors and the school management were successful in reducing it and returning the school's finances to a balance in 2000. Since then, the school's accounts show an accrued contingency balance more than twice what might be expected as a prudent reserve. Other funds attached to specific grants, for example to develop ICT, are also unspent. Given the unsatisfactory level of resources in some areas of the school, for example the library, this is not good enough. A closer monitoring of finances and spending is needed, coupled with more effective strategic planning, in order to raise standards further and to meet targets in the school's development plan. Although the school's performance is routinely measured against national data, the principles of best value are not fully applied, for example by comparing its differential costs, results and proportionate spending with those of similar schools.
56. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) leads an experienced and committed team of education care officers and a learning support teacher. She is hard working and determined in her efforts to ensure that the school becomes fully inclusive, within the terms set out in the special needs Code of Practice. At present she and her staff are working under very difficult conditions whilst awaiting the completion of the new special needs suite of rooms. The very good resources are stored in boxes and there is no stable base from which to work and in which to meet as a staff. The new accommodation has been well planned and will enable rapid progress to be made in the management and administration of the department. A new computer suite is planned that will extend the opportunities for learning and enable the department to be networked and in full contact with subject departments and the school's administration. The SENCo has led training sessions on the new Code of Practice for all education staff. Her many commitments leave insufficient time for her to carry out the considerable management and administrative tasks that the new Code of Practice outlines. The department development plan is very good and outlines the stages of planned improvement over the next five years. The level of staffing, although adequate for pupils with statements and those benefiting from additional and different provision, such as the support groups, is not sufficient to provide a first line of support for the large numbers of pupils with low levels of literacy and numeracy in some classes. Several class teachers have indicated a need for more general support with classes where there is a concentration of lower attaining pupils. This is especially noticeable in the science department, where practical and safety considerations require a great deal of supervision.
57. Management of equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall but policy and practice across the school are inconsistent. The interim school policy statement ensures the school has examined equality of opportunity legislation affecting learning. The school stresses the importance of equality of opportunity through its revised curriculum statement and planned work in PSHE on equality of opportunity issues. Few departments have a monitored policy or statement, which reduces the strength of the approach to equality of opportunity across the school. The school has recently started to revise its equality of opportunity policy. There is a clear and coherent statement by the headteacher and the governors but this has not yet gone to wider consultation.
58. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Long-term absences and the consequent need to employ temporary staff have affected the continuity of learning in design and technology, science and physical education, despite the school's efforts. Plans are in place to make permanent appointments of specialist staff. The monitoring of teaching has improved in many departments since the previous inspection but in a few, such as mathematics, further improvement is required. Induction and support for teachers new to the school is inconsistent. In physical education the process has worked well but in modern foreign

languages, the induction of a French teacher was unsatisfactory. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are good. The long-term benefits of training are monitored by departments or on a whole-school basis, as appropriate. The performance management process and associated staff development are leading to improvements in teaching and learning.

59. Although adequate for its curriculum needs, the standard of the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory overall and does not provide a pleasant environment for learning; much of it is dispiriting. Provision for departments varies from very good in music to unsatisfactory in food technology. The unsatisfactory standard of accommodation for food technology was noted in the previous report. The school's entrance is obscure and is still without a named sign, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The interior décor is drab and unwelcoming. Toilet facilities are poor. The floors, particularly the hall and sports hall, are dirty and in need of resealing and remarking. The lighting around the school is dull and the walls require repainting. The school has limited provision for non-ambulant pupils to access all areas of the school. The school is in the process of producing an accessibility plan, but with major modifications required, a longer-term plan for improvement is necessary. A number of health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the school's management during the inspection and are being dealt with. Some improvements, through replacement of worn-out, temporary buildings, are in hand but the main body of the school shows little improvement since the previous inspection.
60. The provision of resources for learning is unsatisfactory overall but improving. There are very good resources in music and good provision in English, mathematics, history and geography. Resources are unsatisfactory in design and technology and ICT. The library resource is underused for much of the day because librarian support is only available at lunchtimes and the opportunity for independent learning is missed. Provision of books to support learning in some subjects, such as science, is inadequate. There are not enough computers in the library to meet pupils' needs. Many of the older books in the library have been removed and new books of good quality are beginning to appear.
61. There has been little improvement in the quality of the school's accommodation or in the provision of resources for learning since the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the school should:

- a. Improve achievement in design and technology and physical education.
Paragraphs 4,26,45,58,60,96,97,99,125,143,145.
- b. Improve financial planning so that the school's long-term objectives are supported and the resources available to the school are managed effectively.
Paragraph 55
- c. Improve the quality of the school's accommodation so that pupils and staff are provided with a stimulating working environment that promotes learning.
Paragraphs 32,39,41,59,61,87,94,103,148,149.
- d. Improve the use of new technology to:
 - support learning across the curriculum and improve pupils' skills;
 - improve access to records and information about pupils' progress;
 - assist efficient administration.Paragraphs 2,19,26,54,76,100,108,111,119,125,148,149.
- e. Continue efforts to improve attendance, particularly by seeking the co-operation of parents to reduce the rate of authorised absence.
Paragraphs 3,10

Point 1 is part of the school's planning.

The following should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Identification of gifted and talented pupils to ensure that they are appropriately challenged in all subjects.
Paragraphs 16,34.

Improvement of library resources.
Paragraphs 55,60,61,87,103.

Improving provision for pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity.
Paragraph 38.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	96
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	19	51	24	1	0	0
Percentage	1	20	53	25	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7-Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	403
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	46

Special educational needs

	Y7-Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59

English as an additional language

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.5
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	44	46	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	25	25	26
	Girls	36	33	32
	Total	61	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	68(73)	64(69)	64(54)
	National	64 (63)	66(65)	66(59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	38(39)	42(43)	16(20)
	National	31(28)	43(42)	34(30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	28	24
	Girls	42	36	29
	Total	74	64	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83(76)	72(81)	60(65)
	National	65(64)	68(66)	64(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	45(45)	37(35)	24(29)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2001	41	41	82

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	15	35	40
	Girls	22	38	41
	Total	37	73	41
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	45(52)	89(99)	99(100)
	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 pupil	School	41.5
	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	398	32	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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)	24.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	189.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.3
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Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	1389072
Total expenditure	1317167
Expenditure per pupil	3260
Balance brought forward from previous year	28615
Balance carried forward to next year	100521

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	23.5

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
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)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

403

Number of questionnaires returned

80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	53	11	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	51	39	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	43	11	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	45	10	10	4
The teaching is good.	46	41	6	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	34	8	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	41	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	30	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	38	43	13	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	44	43	10	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	4	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	30	19	10	15

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The department is very well led and managed.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.

Areas for improvement

- Occasionally teachers miss an opportunity to include quieter or less confident pupils in class discussion or questioning.
- Gifted and talented pupils are not specifically identified within the department.
- The level of general support for teachers with large numbers of lower attaining pupils in the classroom could be improved.

62. In 2001, pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 was above average, and well above average in comparison with similar schools. Performance in English was better than in mathematics and science. Girls did better than boys, and the difference between them was greater than the difference nationally. Pupils' average points score has fluctuated year by year but showed a declining trend over the previous three years. Provisional results for 2002 indicate continuing above average performance compared to national results and well above average compared with similar schools. The department came close to meeting its very challenging target of 75 per cent of pupils reaching Level 5 or higher. Given pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school, the picture is one of at least good and often very good achievement by many pupils. Indeed, almost half the Year 9 pupils in 2001 and 2002 showed gains of two levels or more over their standard on entry, reflecting the very good provision for lower attainers and those with special educational needs.
63. English and English literature GCSE results for A*-C and A*-G grades in 2001 were above average. All pupils entered in both subjects obtained a pass grade, a particularly noteworthy achievement because almost all pupils in the year group were entered for these examinations. Girls did better than boys at the higher grades in both subjects, but the difference between them disappeared at grades A*-G. The performance of both boys and girls was significantly better than their performance in other subjects, a notable and unusual achievement for boys in particular. Compared with their average points score at the end of Year 9, pupils' results indicate that they achieved at least as well as should be expected, though there were no A* grades in English. Provisional results for 2002 suggest further improvement, with school figures showing eight A* grades in English. A*-C grades were well above average for English and above average for English literature and again all pupils entered obtained a grade in the range A*-G. Compared with their average points score at the end of Year 9 in 2000, pupils' provisional results indicate good achievement.
64. In work seen during the inspection, standards are above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. This judgement represents very good achievement by many pupils in Years 7-9, bearing in mind their overall below average attainment on entry, and sustained good achievement in Years 10 and 11. Much good work is done by teachers, special educational needs staff and educational care officers (ECOs) to support the needs of pupils who enter the school with low reading ages, very low results in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6, and very low scores on cognitive ability tests. Many of these pupils make very good gains in attainment, improving by two levels or more over Years 7-9. Some (about ten per cent in 2002) remain below level 3 at the end of Year 9, indicating the level of support in terms of general help in the classroom that teachers require and do not always have. Standards of attainment and achievement have risen as a result of full implementation of the national strategy for teaching English in Years 7 and 8, targeting of individual pupils, the introduction of 'progress classes', the use of optional tests and careful preparation for tests in Year 9. The effects are apparent at an early stage where pupils in Year 7,

for example, listen carefully, can recall previous work, identify examples of alliteration, repetition and onomatopoeia, and speak confidently using good vocabulary. In Year 8, a substantial proportion of pupils are already producing above average written work, and making gains in knowledge and understanding of literary effects such as the use of the present tense for telling stories. By Year 9, many pupils have above average speaking skills. They can articulate ideas and express opinions clearly. They can select examples from a text to illustrate a point. Written work throughout Years 7-9 demonstrates pupils' ability to cope with a wide range of reading and writing tasks. Effective use is made of ICT to draft and present written work accurately and attractively. Pupils are confident users of word-processing, publishing and presentation software. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' written coursework is above average overall. Lower attainers can write at some length. They obviously benefit from the carefully structured frameworks for writing that teachers provide, despite difficulties with over-conversational expression and sentence punctuation. Middle attainers show a strong grasp of character and key issues raised by their set texts. Higher attainers write fluently, accurately and with personal involvement. In the classroom, too, higher-attaining pupils studying William King's poem 'The Beggar Woman' showed above average analytical skills in identifying poetic form and examining issues of ambiguity and attitude arising from the poem's social context.

65. Pupils have a good attitude to their English work as a result of interesting, enthusiastic teaching. Their behaviour is very good, and well managed by teachers through attention to individual needs, good humour and a lively approach. Pupils respond particularly well when teachers make demands on them to work in pairs or groups and make a positive contribution to the lesson. In a Year 11 class, for example, pupils responded with enthusiasm to working in a series of 'round the class' discussions of a pre-20th century poem from their GCSE anthology. They shared information and ideas that enabled them to respond successfully to their teacher's intelligent and thoughtful questioning. She expected and received answers that showed attention to the social context and the subtle argument of the poem. As a result, pupils made very good gains in understanding and spoken confidence. Occasionally, because there are frequent and regular volunteers in English lessons, teachers miss an opportunity to include quieter or less confident pupils in class discussion or questioning.
66. The quality of teaching in English is very good, and pupils learn very well as a result. Well-planned lessons provide interesting and varied learning activities within a secure framework. Teachers often begin lessons with a reminder of previous work, and this not only helps pupils remember important information but also prepares them for the next stage in their learning. Teachers are particularly good at preparing and using supporting material for writing so that lower-attaining pupils can do justice to what they know and understand. Teachers' careful preparation and attention to individual progress ensures that pupils are used to working to examination requirements and approach these occasions with confidence. Teachers' knowledge of their subject and their thoroughly up-to-date awareness of suitable teaching strategies give pupils additional confidence in and enjoyment of their learning. Their enthusiasm and interest generate positive attitudes to the subject. They receive good support from ECOs who contribute much to the learning of individuals and to the pleasant learning atmosphere in classrooms. Though making very good provision for lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs, teachers are quite often stretched by their demands and would benefit from more general support in the classroom. Although very good provision is also made for higher attainers, the department does not yet specifically identify its gifted and talented pupils.
67. Individually, members of the teaching team make significant contributions to pupils' learning. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils benefited both from the teacher's very good reading of Michael Morpago's 'My Father is a Polar Bear' and her own vivid personal accounts of two significant memories. They thus had three 'models' of striking narratives to imitate and use to enrich their own accounts told to a partner. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher helped pupils to understand how writers create tension by inviting them to question her as the author Ray Bradbury. Her replies provided a very good model for them to imitate when conducting similar 'interviews' themselves about his short story 'The Whole Town's Sleeping'. Year 8 pupils were introduced very effectively to 'ironic' writing by the teacher's use of personal whiteboards for practice, good examples to refer to on an overhead projector, and her personal anecdotes (about teenage bedrooms). These mutually supportive teaching methods helped pupils' understanding admirably. Collectively these

teachers form such a like-minded, consistent and committed team that any pupil would learn much from any one of them at any age.

68. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment are higher by the end of Year 11. Achievement is now very good overall compared with the mixed picture of progress recorded in 1997. Though girls' results continue to be better than those of boys', boys are now far from underachieving. Teaching quality has also improved. All these improvements arise from very good leadership and management by the head of department. Her determination to keep the department looking forward and embracing the best strategies to raise standards provides a model of clear direction. Her teaching team shares that commitment, and pupils reap the benefit.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good.
- Good leadership gives a clear direction to the department.
- Achievement is good in Years 7-9.
- The whole school numeracy policy is excellent.

Areas for improvement

- The marking of pupils' work to provide feedback on what they need to do to improve.
- The use of computers to support learning.
- The quality of information in reports.
- Policy statements to support the work of the department.

69. When pupils enter the school their standards in numeracy are below the national average. Levels of attainment are average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes result in pupils making good progress as they move through the school.
70. In 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above and Level 6 or above at the end of Year 9 in National Curriculum tests matched the national average. Pupils' test results matched teachers' assessments. Results have risen in line with national trends over the last five years. Girls performed better than boys and the gap between boys and girls was wider than that found nationally. Results have continued to improve in 2002 with the gap between boys and girls narrowing. The average points score is in line with the national average for all schools and above average for similar schools. The average points score in mathematics is better than in science although not as good as in English. Given that attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with the national average and is above the level of pupils' attainment on entry to the school, the department is providing good value over Years 7-9.
71. In 2001, the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C was above average compared with all schools and well above average compared with similar schools. Girls performed better than boys. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-G was below average. These results represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9. The average points score was not as good as in English but similar to science. Pupils' performed as well in mathematics as they did in most other subjects studied. Results in 2002 have improved slightly with boys achieving better results than girls.
72. The standard of work seen in Year 9 during the inspection is average, with some work above average, particularly by the highest attaining pupils. This represents good achievement by the majority of pupils in Years 7-9. Standards improve as pupils move through the school. There are clear examples and complete exercises with working shown, which enable them to refer to and practise newly taught skills. The standard of recorded work by the lowest attaining pupils is overall below average. Examples of extension work for gifted pupils are common. Elements of all the

National Curriculum attainment targets are represented. Year 9 pupils demonstrate good data handling skills and have a satisfactory understanding of the concepts of shape and space. In a lesson about the circle, average attaining pupils were seen developing well their understanding of the formula for calculating the area of circles. Problem-solving skills are developing well. Number skills are generally satisfactory although algebraic skills are not yet as well developed as they should be. The highest attaining and gifted pupils are achieving above average standards.

73. The standard in the work seen in Year 11 is average. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils cover a range of topics in line with the GCSE scheme of work. Work by the highest attaining Year 11 pupils is above average. Pupils' work illustrates good use of previously taught skills, such as square and negative numbers to develop an understanding of using power notation. By the end of Year 11, number skills are average for most pupils. Algebraic skills are still not well developed for many pupils; average and below average attaining pupils are still not confident in using formulae and equations. Data-handling skills are good; in geography, for example, pupils confidently use a variety of graphs to represent collected data. Pupils' problem solving skills in GCSE coursework are average with most pupils able to find rules, use formulae, predict and test results.
74. Teaching and learning are good overall. As a result, all pupils make good progress in lessons and achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Pupils are acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding well. Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures they are able to explain skills and concepts clearly. They question pupils well and provide a variety of activities, including mental and practical activities, to help pupils learn. The activities usually meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers plan well for lessons. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher used the available support staff well to cater for the wide range of attainment levels in the class. The National Numeracy strategy is an integral part of all lessons. Objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and starter activities are being used well to develop pupils' mental skills, review learning and introduce new topics. Plenary sessions are used well to review pupils' learning and to prepare for future lessons. Homework is used effectively to support classroom learning. Key words are displayed in some classrooms, although there is no planned policy to support pupils' literacy skills. Teachers provide good feedback in lessons to help pupils overcome their difficulties and identify how well they are doing. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, it does not have enough comments about what pupils should do to improve their work. The teaching of gifted pupils is good, which ensures that they make good progress. Insufficient opportunities are provided at present to use computers to support learning in lessons.
75. Pupils show positive attitudes in their lessons and these good attitudes to learning make a very important contribution to their achievements. Pupils' behaviour is generally good. Teachers set clear expectations that pupils will work hard, which results in a good working atmosphere. Pupils usually listen well during discussions and appear interested in what they are doing. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. The presentation of work in books is generally good.
76. Leadership and management are good. Leadership provides a clear direction for the development of the subject. There is a clear commitment to raising standards by all teachers, who work well together to share good practice. The department is working hard to implement the numeracy strategy and this is beginning to have an impact on the achievement of pupils. The schemes of work are still being developed to match the needs of different groups of pupils and to incorporate the new numeracy strategy. The use of ICT is not yet included in lesson planning. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment are good. Targets are set and pupils' progress towards those targets is well monitored. Teachers make good use of the results to encourage pupils' progress as they move through the school and to monitor the subjects' overall performance in external tests and examinations. The information reported to parents, however, does not provide sufficient information about what pupils can and cannot do and need to improve in relation to attainment targets. Although an excellent policy for numeracy is in place, other policies are lacking in detail.
77. Improvements since the previous inspection have been good. Standards at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are now average. All groups of pupils now make good progress as they move through the school. More opportunities are now provided for pupils to do investigational and problem solving work.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Good teaching that shows teachers' subject knowledge and expertise together with commitment, enthusiasm and patience.
- High quality relationships between staff and pupils.
- The level and quality of technical support provided to teachers.

Areas for improvement:

- All three laboratories are in need of modernisation and refurbishment.
- The level of non-teaching support for lower-attaining pupils.
- Further provision of appropriate materials for both higher and lower-attaining pupils as the new schemes of work are developed.
- Provision of replacement textbooks for Year 10 and 11 pupils.

78. Pupils' achievement in Years 7-9 is good. The results of tests in Year 7 show that pupils arrive at the school with below average standards and with a wide variety of earlier experiences in science. By the end of Year 9, standards are broadly average.
79. In 2001, results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were close to the expected standard at Level 5, for both similar schools and for all schools nationally, but in both comparisons, fell below expectations at the higher levels. The 2002 results were better than those for 2001, and the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has been closed. In 2002 boys' and girls' results were equally good. This has been achieved, at least in part, by a major change of teaching style and by employing better revision methods.
80. GCSE results in 2001 maintained the school's record of 100 per cent passes for grades A*-G and reflect the hard work done by teachers and pupils alike in lower attaining groups. The A*-C results continued the steady improvement of recent years, matching the results expected of similar schools and of all schools nationally. Girls' results were slightly better than those of boys. In 2002, the 100 per cent A*-G record was maintained while the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C rose again. For the first time, the results of boys matched those achieved by the girls. The 2002 results in both Year 9 tests and GCSE are especially pleasing in view of the absence of a permanent chemistry teacher for a year, and the difficulties that arose from the need to use whatever teachers were available – specialists or not – to supervise the work of one third of the classes. The additional effort that was put into overcoming deficits in pupils' knowledge and coursework in the revision periods has produced gratifying results.
81. The standard of work seen in Year 9 is average overall, with high-attaining groups working above this standard and some middle and low-attaining groups falling below it. It is in the written work of these groups particularly, that the long-term effect of the disruption of continuous teaching is seen. Pupils are taught in mixed-ability groups in Year 7, but for the remaining years are grouped according to their earlier attainment. Achievement in the classroom therefore varies widely between groups. Despite the support of the class teacher, and sometimes of non-teaching support staff as well, poor literacy skills hamper the progress of pupils in lower-attaining groups. Pupils in higher attaining groups make faster progress, and can be given additional challenges. In general, there are no perceptible differences between the work of boys and girls. Unusually, much of the boys' work matches girls' for neatness of handwriting and presentation. Sometimes a particular topic or technique seizes pupils' interest and they work at a higher level than the teacher might otherwise expect. An example was a Year 9 group investigating renewable energy sources using computers and the Internet. They put their ICT skills to good use and gathered information from a wide variety of sources effectively, making much better progress than anticipated. In practical work, hesitant use of unfamiliar equipment soon becomes confident handling and by the end of the first year, pupils experiment competently and safely and record their results in a clear and logical way, guided by their teachers.

82. The standard of work of pupils who have just entered Year 11 is broadly average and matches the expectations generated by their Year 9 tests and the Year 10 examination. Again, pupils in higher-attaining groups work at an above average level, while lower-attaining groups often fall below this. At this early stage in the first term of the year, motivation and interest are high and pupils' intentions good, but there are signs in middle and lower-attaining groups that pupils are not bothering to consolidate their work by re-learning what they have done in lessons, and recall of recent work is sometimes disappointing. Test results are therefore sometimes lower than might be expected from pupils' performance in the classroom.
83. The previous report commented that pupils were given too few opportunities for investigative work; this is no longer the case. No entire investigations were seen during the inspection, but early attempts at planning were observed. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the majority have absorbed the advice given them and can plan, execute and analyse an investigation competently. Some work showed a high standard over a wide variety of topics, and many pupils had used ICT resources to produce scripts that were impressively neat and detailed. In all years, the emphasis on improving literacy has given pupils greater scope for describing their own work in writing, and both here and in oral work, every encouragement is given to the correct use of scientific vocabulary, and to its meaning and spelling. Little numerical work was seen in science, but readings were made accurately and recorded in a logical and sensible manner.
84. In all years, pupils with special educational needs usually match their classmates in oral and practical work. Their written work is of a lower standard and records are sometimes incomplete; they have difficulty in reading texts. When they are provided with support, these problems are minimised, but with relatively high proportions of such pupils in lower-attaining groups, more general support, better distributed than at present, is needed.
85. Pupils come to lessons expecting to enjoy their science, and they settle quickly. They are well mannered and well motivated. They look forward to practical work and they co-operate well and help each other over minor problems – especially in reading and spelling. Laboratory discipline is good, and safety rules are observed carefully. There is healthy competition to achieve acceptable results and pupils willingly take responsibility for their own apparatus, for the task set, and for clearing away afterwards.
86. The standard of teaching is good. Most lessons seen during the inspection were judged to be good and occasionally very good. The best teaching happens in Years 10 and 11 when staff are at home in their own specialisms. Staff know their subjects well, and their enthusiasm and expertise are communicated to pupils, resulting in raised interest and motivation. Knowledge of individual pupils allows teachers to involve personal interests and hobbies, and to give unobtrusive extra support where it is needed. The patience shown by staff to lower-attaining pupils is commendable and helps them to make steady, if slower progress. Lessons are well planned, use the available resources well and contain plenty of practical work with frequent challenges of recall, thinking and of handling equipment. Changes of pace and of activity help to maintain concentration, and the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils means that pupils are keen to succeed and to meet teachers' expectations. The department has recently changed its style of teaching. This has resulted in greater involvement for everyone, in more opportunities for discussion and question and answer, and more freedom to seek help or answers when they are uncertain. Pupils are used to end-of-module tests every few weeks, and are kept aware, informally, of their progress and of the National Curriculum level or the expected GCSE grade that they have achieved. In Years 10 and 11, individual targets are set based on previous attainment, but this has not yet been incorporated in the work of Years 7-9. Test results also provide the basis for examining the success of teaching methods and for forward planning, and have illustrated the improved results that have been achieved as a result of the recent changes. Good teaching is invariably supported by good technical support.
87. Leadership is good and the department is well organised and managed. Colleagues share the commitment of producing the best results for each pupil, as well as for the continuing revision of schemes of work and the production of appropriate material for classes of different levels of attainment. Gifted and talented pupils have not yet been formally identified and so are not always sufficiently challenged. Working conditions are depressing in all three laboratories, despite the cheerful displays of reference material and pupils' work. The entire science accommodation is

desperately in need of modernisation and refurbishment, and the present ambience does nothing to encourage good learning or teaching. Staffing is now back to the correct level, and resources are adequate to support the curriculum. The number of science books in the library is insufficient to support pupils' individual research and learning.

88. All the issues mentioned in the previous report have been tackled and only one remains outstanding – the continuing problem of inaccurate spelling and poor quality diagrams by lower-attaining pupils, despite the attention given to these by staff. Examination and National Curriculum test results have improved steadily and the quality of teaching has risen. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore good.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- The leadership and management of the department.
- The quality of teaching in all years.
- The achievements of pupils that lead to GCSE results above national averages.
- The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils.
- The improvements made since the previous inspection.

Areas for improvement:

- The use of computers and digital technology in the subject.
- Three-dimensional studies on the curriculum.
- The quality of accommodation.

89. Standards by the end of Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement from entry at Year 7, when standards are generally below average. The very good teaching and the high standards expected of pupils are the key factors in the progress they make. Pupils learn to take notes on the work of well-known artists and are required to research artists from books or the Internet for class and homework, thereby supporting their literacy and computer skills. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in GCSE examinations in 2001 was above the national average. Results have shown a strong upward trend over the past two years and the provisional results for 2002 continue this trend. The numbers taking GCSE have risen steadily and the current Year 11 year group is the largest for at least five years. Because of the low number of boys who opted for GCSE, it is not possible to make a meaningful comparison between the performance of boys and girls. However, the few boys who took the examination in 2001 achieved very good results, which improved significantly over the results for the previous year. The gap between the performance of boys and girls is similar to the national gap, having narrowed steadily over the past three years. Pupils who are on the register of special educational needs work to the best of their ability and achieve standards of work in line with, or above others in their classes. Their rate of progress is also similar to others in their classes and they attain good results in the GCSE examination.
90. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are average. Higher attaining pupils use well-developed drawing and colouring skills and produce fine, well-observed detail in their natural and architectural drawings. The research skills of lower attaining pupils are weak and they lack the imagination to develop their work much beyond what they see. This is particularly noticeable when pupils are challenged to distort a given portrait, where the wide range of perceptual and practical skills can be seen clearly in finished work. Pupils with special educational needs are not disadvantaged in the lessons and make the same rate of progress as others in their class. The written work of boys is generally of a lower standard than that of girls and they are generally less patient in developing their work. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrate a wide range of drawing skills, with a small number able to use shading to convey form, but the majority draw in outline only. Observational skills are generally weak and progress with research is held up by the poorly developed literacy skills of the majority. By the end of Year 8, pupils contribute well to the regular introductory discussion in lessons. The well planned and taught fine art aspects of art enable pupils to analyse famous paintings effectively. Pupils are skilfully drawn into the paintings they study and are imaginative in describing the subject environment, including sounds that might

have been heard by the painter as he worked. They comment on the brushwork of Van Gogh and how it adds to the stormy subject of some of his landscape paintings.

91. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 11 are above average as pupils prepare their GCSE examination portfolios and sketchbooks. Their basic art skills are reinforced in Year 10 and they are challenged by the widening base of research and the higher standard of work expected in different media. Very good progress was seen during one well-taught lesson, in which pupils had to observe and draw a selection from the interesting range of buildings that overlook the school. Using traditional methods of scaling and determining angles they all produced an effective, well-finished drawing by the end of the lesson. The very good demonstration of mono-printing at the beginning of a Year 11 lesson enabled pupils to pick up techniques quickly and produce good results in a single lesson. The mixed-media printing and textile work they undertake is interesting, complex and colourful, reflecting a strength of the curriculum. The appropriately high standards of work and behaviour that are required of pupils, and their positive and well-behaved response, ensure that they work to the best of their ability and without distraction in lessons. The very good work on display and in sketchbooks, although restricted in scale and over focused on two-dimensional work, nonetheless bears witness to an effective learning experience in which the creative, observational and technical skills of pupils have been well developed over their time at school. It also shows that pupils are able to gain in independence as they grow through the school, exploring their creative potential as they free their imagination. Boys in Years 10 and 11 work in a committed way and all three who took the GCSE examination in 2002 gained passes at A*-C. This included a boy who had been on the register of special educational needs.
92. Pupils throughout the school generally respond well to the well-managed lessons. They enjoy them and are very well behaved, making the working environment relaxed, but productive. They listen respectfully to the teacher's introduction to lessons and most contribute to discussions that arise during them. They are polite to visitors and are keen to talk with them about their work and their life at the school. They are treated as potentially independent learners and respond well by exploring their own ideas and preferences within the framework of the project they are engaged in.
93. The quality of teaching is consistently very good. The teacher has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and teaches it confidently, using her own skills to demonstrate the techniques and media being employed in the lesson. Pupils build and consolidate their skills as they encounter different media and techniques through the school. Although able to use the computer for art, the teacher is restricted by the lack of good PCs and appropriate software to enable ICT to play a full part on the curriculum. On occasion, the pupils are not invited to contribute to the lesson at a sufficiently early stage. However, when they do, their views are valued and encouraged and they make very good progress in the lesson. Lessons are well planned and prepared. The teacher uses the Key Stage 3 strategy very effectively and, even in the shorter lessons, is able to provide an introductory demonstration and a closing critical session with the whole class. In Years 7-9, the specialist vocabulary of art is introduced and used fluently, so that pupils use specialist terms in the research and development of their work for the GCSE examination. Work is presented and displayed very well, making a very colourful and effective contribution to the overall presentation of the school, especially in the art area and the school foyer. The teacher is aware of those pupils on the special educational needs register and plans for different levels of ability and interest. Extension work for higher attainers and gifted pupils, who are not formally identified by the school, is too often confined to homework, rather than the demands of work in lessons.
94. This is a single-teacher department that is run efficiently and effectively by an experienced teacher, who has spent many years teaching at the school, but who has retained her enthusiasm for the subject and her enjoyment in teaching it. Very good records of the progress that pupils make are kept and GCSE results are analysed and reported on each year. Standards in the department reflect the aims and values of the school very well, with annual exhibitions of examination work attracting the interest of parents and other local people. At present there is no ceramics work undertaken, although the tools and equipment are available. Three-dimensional work is confined to card constructions, such as dioramas, and to textile and papier-mâché work. There is little opportunity for pupils to undertake work on a large scale. There is insufficient use made of computers in art, although good use is made of the Internet for research at school and home. Good use is made of the very interesting local environment for drawing and painting,

although the number of visits that are made to local or national galleries and museums, or to see the multi-cultural influences on local architecture and dress, are very small and ineffectual. There has been no recent contact with any artists in residence. The accommodation, though spacious, is in need of re-organising and upgrading to enable larger groups and more varied activities to be taught.

95. The department has made a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in lessons and in public examinations have risen and procedures for assessing and recording the progress of pupils have improved. Greater use is made of the specialist vocabulary of art. Insufficient use is made of sketchbooks and they lack the individuality that is evident in much of the finished work. Teaching time has improved by way of a carousel timetable in Years 7 to 9, allowing more time for research and development of the subject. Talented pupils are able to explore work in their own way, but the lack of formal identification of gifted and talented pupils weakens the focus on this important group.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Maintenance of satisfactory standards in the department at a time of extreme staffing problems.
- College links and extension of the work-related curriculum.
- Year 10 foundation course.

Areas for improvement

- Appointment of a department manager.
- Accommodation.
- ICT provision.

96. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 as below average. Work seen during the inspection substantiates this judgement. The school has had a difficult staffing situation for 15 months; a constant flow of supply staff, often non-specialists, has had an impact on standards of work in Years 7-9. There is no formal design and technology link with the partner primary schools, to aid a smooth transition to secondary school designing and making.
97. In 2001, GCSE results were below average at grades A*-C and just above average at A*-G. Results in 2002 showed an improvement. Girls' performance was higher than their performance in other subjects while boys' performance was weaker than in other subjects. Girls were more successful than boys because of their greater attention to detail in their research and portfolio production.
98. The school's entry for GCSE design and technology is 20 per cent above the national average, indicating positive support for lower-attaining pupils. There are very few ethnic minority pupils, but the small number is given consideration in planning. The department makes good use of a foundation course at the start of Year 10 to identify any gaps in knowledge from Years 7-9 caused by the staffing situation. In Years 10 and 11, a good programme of alternative accreditation supports lower-attaining pupils and raises their success rate. This included a GNVQ in engineering (2000-2001) that produced good results. Pupils are now studying GCSE engineering through a planned link with Stockport College.
99. In Years 7-9 achievement is unsatisfactory in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Their progress has not been good enough because the department's staffing difficulties have affected the continuity of their learning. Pupils have worked on well-prepared work sheets that have given them the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the design process and technical vocabulary. Many skills, including orthographic and isometric drawing, annotation, rendering and researching all suffer because of the lack of specialist teaching and standards have fallen despite the school's best efforts. Worksheets have been underpinned by simple practical problem solving in resistant materials. There are improving practical opportunities from a specialist food technology teacher. At

present the school has a specialist resistant materials teacher on a one-term appointment who is having a positive impact on teaching and learning in resistant materials.

100. Standards improve in resistant materials in Years 10 and 11 because of the specialist teaching from a member of the senior management team and the food technology teacher - achievement is good. A diagnostic session at the start of Year 10 identifies the gaps in learning from Years 7-9. A foundation course has been put in place to improve practical skills and consolidate designing and research. Pupils learn good tool handling and improve their manipulation, cutting, shaping and joining of materials and ingredients. There is strong emphasis on health and safety. A very productive link with Stockport College has provided an engineering option to broaden the curriculum. The course is very popular and promotes good standards of work but unfortunately only attracts boys. The use of ICT is improving. Pupils make good use of graphical wizards to analyse data, Word Art and word processing to improve presentation and computer-aided design and manufacture to raise pupils' understanding of industrial processes. Access to computers is leading to improved standards but limited equipment, for example for CAD/CAM, restricts opportunity.
101. Attitudes and behaviour are good overall; pupils in Years 7-9 are frustrated at the lack of specialist teachers, especially in resistant materials, but have a positive attitude to the opportunities they are given. The department has a consistent approach to behaviour, which support the work of the less experienced supply teachers. Personal development is satisfactory. It is better in Years 10 and 11 where pupils have the opportunity for freer designing and making tasks, allowing them to show their problem-solving skills and to take responsibility.
102. The quality of teaching and of learning are satisfactory overall in Years 7-9, with strengths showing when specialist teachers are involved. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good because all pupils experience specialist teaching. In the case of engineering, team teaching between a member of the school team and a visiting senior lecturer from the college provides pupils with inspiring and relevant knowledge about engineering and the world of industry. There are good opportunities for literacy work in worksheets. There is good use of key words in prominent places in food technology. Pupils use the key words to help with spelling and comprehension of technical terms. Numeracy strategies have had less impact in Years 7-9 but are emphasised in the foundation course in Year 10. Teachers' expectations are clear, which helps pupils learn because they know what they need to do. Classroom management and organisation of teaching and learning has suffered because of the lack of specialist staff. For example, freedom and independence have been constrained by teachers who lack experience of the independent learning needed for successful designing and making.
103. Management of the department is satisfactory. The school plans to appoint a new department manager this term. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance has been good. The acting manager has provided detailed reviews and evaluation of all policies and examination results and has set short-term targets. Technical support is limited. The caretakers and science technician give time to the department, but have other roles in school. The major factors that impede standards, apart from the lack of permanent staff, are the accommodation and resources. Accommodation is dated and limits pupils' independence. The cramped conditions restrict circulation, the use of audiovisual equipment and limit the use of basic safety markings in the workshop; poor benching makes accurate designing impossible and inappropriate furniture adds to problems. In addition the department's rooms are geographically separated on opposite sides of the school.
104. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory because progress has been made on issues such as ICT use, support for pupils with special educational needs, the work-related curriculum and assessment and monitoring.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The dedication of hard-working staff.

- The quality of teaching.
- The quality of the inclusive learning strategies and text-based resources made available.

Areas for improvement

- The development of departmentally-based ICT facilities.
- The restructuring of fieldwork to build independent learning skills from Year 9 to Year 11.

105. Results in the 2001 GCSE examination were below the national average at grades A* to C. Girls reached higher standards than boys, but both were below their respective national averages. However, the 2001 results were achieved by a year group whose attainment on entry to the school was below average and the results obtained in geography represent satisfactory achievement.
106. The unconfirmed 2002 results show an improvement on those of 2001 with one in four pupils obtaining one of the higher A*-C grades. Girls again reached higher standards than boys but the difference was marginal, although both were below their respective national averages. However, the results overall were adversely affected, as had been the figures from 2001, by a proportion of pupils producing weak coursework. This meant that, overall, pupils tended to do slightly less well in the subject than in the others they took. On balance, a high proportion who sat examinations in geography in the last two years gained results that showed good achievement in relation to their earlier standards.
107. In work seen during the inspection, the standards that pupils reach at the end of Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement, as pupils enter the school with below average standards. Pupils gain a good knowledge of the local area, regions such as Kenya, Japan and Bangladesh, and the distribution of volcanoes. Most pupils possess an appropriate range of map and graphical skills, and apply the numerical skills they are consistently taught correctly. Pupils' work shows a good range of data handling and graphical techniques illuminated with basic explanations. The higher attainers analyse patterns displayed in the data in clear sentences that display a good use of subject vocabulary. Pupils' written work is generally satisfactory and uses a range of technical words in appropriate context. Higher-attaining students write extended answers in assessment tasks derived from national guidance. In Year 9, for example, lower-attaining pupils made clear comparisons about migration issues in their written work and orally gave sound basic explanations. Higher-attaining pupils studying the same issues responded positively to questions that change the possible variables in world health data, correctly identifying the impact of Aids on population pyramids of African nations.
108. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards at the end of Year 11 are average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement based on their standards at the end of Year 9. They consolidate map skills and all but a small number produce a good standard of GCSE coursework. For example, pupils in Year 11 conducted an in-depth study of the central business district of Glossop, displaying good research skills and varied techniques of illustrating information. Higher-attaining pupils understand concepts about change in use being related to distance from the town centre. Average-attaining pupils comment on land use patterns along major roads but the standards of lower attainers are reduced by a limited range of display skills and weakness in explaining the results of findings. Average and lower-attaining pupils do not gain the image comparison and analysis marks that access to modern ICT facilities would enable. In Year 10 work on demographic patterns, girls consistently use technical terms accurately in short examination style essay questions but boys tend not to write using the same technical terms that they use orally in lessons. Many pupils write well and pay attention to grammatical accuracy. Lower-attaining pupils' written work is satisfactory because they use good specialist writing guidelines devised by the department.
109. The quality of teaching and of the learning that such teaching promotes is good overall. Pupils learn well because teachers plan work to consolidate gains made in previous lessons and provide challenging and supportive resources and tasks that match the needs of individuals. Those with special educational needs make good progress because they are provided with support materials that are well matched to their needs. They respond well to help and this results in improved concentration on learning tasks. Most pupils make good progress in learning about geographical terms because teachers emphasise them in lessons and require pupils to use them consistently.

110. The marking of work generally informs pupils about the quality of their efforts. Good use of assessment tasks derived from national guidance is helping to raise standards but the quantity of tasks used and the range of subject content work attempted is limiting the time available to for all pupils to reach the highest standards possible. Teachers use a good range of resources well to support learning. For example, in a Year 8 lesson pupils sat in captivated silence during a reading of an eyewitness account of a volcanic eruption before making good use of resources to write about an eruption of Mount Etna. The quality of books and reprographic materials is good and teachers stimulate interest through video and data analysis work. Pupils respond well in lessons and display confidence in teachers and the high quality support staff available.
111. The curriculum is limited by the lack of appropriate ICT provision and this is affecting standards. The hardworking staff of this small department has successfully planned topics and resources to be as inclusive of all levels of attainment as possible and this has a good influence on pupils' attitudes and the standards that many pupils reach. Local fieldwork is available in both Years 9 and 11. The assessment of National Curriculum levels in Years 7-9 still needs further development. There are weaknesses in Year 7 tasks and there is some imbalance in Years 8 and 9. Here the department's interest in the new Key Stage 3 strategy for foundation subjects is a significant step forward.
112. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils questioned the different population patterns in Europe and Asia, relating these to cultural differences. However, opportunities for development are not identified in schemes of work.
113. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The work of the department is well co-ordinated. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Teaching has improved and standards have risen. Whilst GCSE results have been below average, they represent good achievement for most pupils.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding enable them to enrich the learning of their pupils.
- The high quality of GCSE coursework contributes to rising GCSE grades.
- High expectations of behaviour result in a good working environment.
- History makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring of progress is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure early identification of underachievement in specific areas.
- Display is not used to extend learning outside the subject base.
- Lack of a textbook for personal study limits pupils' opportunities for preparation and review.

114. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations in history were above average. Results in 2002 were lower than 2001 but the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades remained high. Boys' results have improved over the last two years, boys and girls achieving well. Fewer boys than girls are choosing to follow the course. In 2001 pupils' results were significantly better than in most other subjects they studied.
115. Standards by the end of Year 9 are average; this represents good achievement given the pupils' standards on entry to the school. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a secure view of the periods studied and the in-depth studies have enabled them to develop their skills of research. They use sources to obtain information and they select relevant information in response to questions. Higher-attaining pupils recognise the need to question the reliability of the information and the varying points of view involved. Lower-attaining pupils take information at its face value unless directly questioned. Pupils make good use of the opportunities to write at length and the use of

writing guides enable lower-attaining pupils to produce well-planned essays. Higher-attaining pupils write more fluently and consider the implications behind titles set. They write in the appropriate style and support their opinions with evidence. Most pupils recognise the link between cause and effect and this was most evident in the Year 8 work linking the rapid growth of cotton industry with conditions in mill towns.

116. Standards by the end of Year 11 are average; this represents a good level of achievement as a significant number of pupils are demonstrating higher achievement in their written work, in particular their coursework, where careful preparation and research enables them to achieve a high standard. The strength in their understanding is in the study of the cotton industry when they become immersed in their local culture. Pupils use sources with confidence and higher-attaining pupils recognise the significance of what they read and can make links with earlier work. Pupils have a general understanding of the 'Troubles' in Ireland but their grasp on the political strategies involved is less secure. Higher-attaining pupils produce good independent writing using different styles. They are able to make reasoned judgements clearly and support them with evidence. The writing of other pupils is generally accurate but lacks reasoning and evidence. Missing or uncompleted work limits the understanding of some pupils in all year groups.
117. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the use of appropriate tasks and the support of teachers and their fellow pupils. This was illustrated in a Year 9 class where a pupil was fully engaged in a class quiz with the encouragement of his friends and teachers.
118. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In most lessons, lively delivery by teachers promotes a good pace and their enthusiasm is transferred to the pupils. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and use it to enrich their lessons and capture the attention of the pupils. The department has a very good understanding of the examination requirements and uses this to match the pupils' work to the mark schemes. Support for the development of pupils' coursework is especially good. Lessons are usually well planned and various methods are used to enable pupils to become actively involved in their learning. Good use is made of introductory questioning to enable pupils to recall earlier work and so build on prior learning. The good relationship between teachers and pupils encourages pupils to participate and they have confidence that their contributions will be well received. Exercise books are regularly seen by teachers. However, although encouraging, marking does not provide enough information to enable pupils to identify weaknesses and strengths, or provide advice about how to improve.
119. Teachers manage pupils well and, as a result, activities are varied and pupils have good opportunities to work in pairs and groups, learning to share information and to learn from each other. Opportunities to use ICT for research and presentation are growing, although there is limited availability within the department's area. Pupils enjoy research and opportunities to work independently when they arise. Some pupils continue their investigations after lessons but the lack of a textbook for personal use restricts opportunities for pupils studying the GCSE to review previous work or to prepare for following lessons. One Year 11 class has a double period in the afternoon for its lesson. This is well managed by the teacher, but it does result in missed opportunities for reinforcement, as the gap between lessons is large. The teacher has to work hard to sustain pupils' concentration. Year 8 has only one lesson of history and this will be a handicap to the development of their historical skills. Clear thought has been given to the emphasis on topics studied, and as a result the department is making very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils.
120. The department is led and managed well. There is clear subject information and the co-ordinator actively investigates new initiatives and enables her pupils to benefit from them. Support and monitoring of other teachers who teach a few lessons is restricted by lack of opportunity and in one case by distance from the subject base. The subject has an attractive base, although the lack of historical display outside the room means that the subject disappears for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 unless they are following the course. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards that students attain have improved and they are more actively involved in their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **satisfactory** when it is taught as a separate subject but it is **unsatisfactory** when used to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Strengths

- Improved hardware and access.
- The introduction of a work-related curriculum and the link to Tameside College.

Areas for improvement

- Raising achievement by the regular use of National Curriculum levels.
- Management of cross-curricular ICT.
- Improved access by enhancing the network.

121. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average. Teachers' assessments in 2001 indicated that pupils' standards were below average. Work seen during the inspection verifies that judgement. Pupils have sparse records of their work. There is no ICT link to primary schools nor any chance to capitalise on the computer work pupils do at home.
122. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' standards continue to be below average. Achievement is satisfactory in relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. The proportions of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C and A*-G is below average and standards are below expectation for those who do not complete a formal qualification. Pupils' performance in computer studies was lower than their performance in other subjects.
123. In work seen during the inspection, there has been a recent improvement in standards. Work in specialist ICT is improving and achievement is satisfactory because the acting head of ICT is ensuring pupils' studies are broad and balanced. There is more use of the Internet for research and pupils are gaining skills of editing both text and images. Generally pupils will not make decisions about the next step in their work without approval of their teacher. Pupils can use technical vocabulary with confidence and can draft and modify text on screen. The use of PowerPoint by Year 7 in the production of a series of slides about themselves proved to be both exciting and challenging, the enthusiasm only dampened by some pupils having to share equipment.
124. In Years 10 and 11, the introduction of a college link and a work-related GNVQ course has set a new direction for the school. The GNVQ requirement to produce and evaluate individual action plans presents a challenge to many of the pupils, especially the boys. They find it difficult to make independent decisions without reference to the teacher. Girls' standards of work are higher because they are purposefully engrossed in the problem-solving, such as working with a spreadsheet or creating a database. Portfolios of the units taken are beginning to flourish and the pupils respond well to the approach of the teaching team. A minority of pupils with special educational needs are given the option of external support through the local training agency. Other pupils with special educational needs work at their own rate and are supported well by teachers, which helps them to build up confidence and skills. There is no specific policy for gifted and talented pupils but lesson planning provides for individual needs.
125. There has been an improvement in cross-curricular ICT since the previous inspection but departments' use of ICT to support learning is inconsistent. English, history and modern foreign languages have embedded ICT into their curriculum planning. Departments such as physical education do not use appropriate ICT and subjects such as mathematics do not build ICT into their schemes of work. Other subjects, such as design and technology, are at an early stage of developing specific skills such as computer-aided design and manufacture. Access to computers is an issue because the cross-curricular room is booked to capacity and progress is hampered.
126. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils enjoy ICT. Clubs before school, at lunchtime and after school use the IT rooms to capacity for homework and research. They respect the equipment and there is a good atmosphere in the room between a mix of age and gender. Parents and pupils are involved in the decision about acceptable use of the Internet; this is also monitored by the ICT technician.

127. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding with high expectations of work output and behaviour, which is improving standards. In Years 7-9 teaching methods are challenging and effective in promoting learning and creativity. For example, pupils in a Year 9 lesson worked in groups to plan activities such as the design and testing of a theme park ride. Pupils selected their ride and planned its sequence, including the use of sensors to control speed and safety. Lots of debate ensued which strengthened the learning. The groups then presented their ideas to the class for discussion. Most girls were clear and articulate in their presentation, with the boys providing the practical problem solving. The mixed gender teams gave the better presentations. Numeracy skills are sharpened by application of the basic skills within spreadsheets. The use of homework to extend learning is a missed opportunity in most classes in Years 7-9, but is a requirement for Years 10 and 11 in the production of their portfolio. Teachers plan well and match work to pupils' specific needs.
128. Resources have improved and the opportunity to use the digital camera, scanners and the projector linked to a computer enhances learning. In food technology, pupils use a digital camera to record all their practical work which they store on a personal disk to use in the development of their product design for their portfolio.
129. Management of the department is satisfactory under the direction of an acting head of department. There is no overall management of cross-curricular ICT, which has had an impact on the development of the use of ICT to support learning in departments. The technician manages the network and ICT clubs effectively, promoting enjoyment in learning. His dedication has encouraged the use of ICT because teachers and pupils know equipment is well maintained. Resources have improved and the ratio of computers matches the national average, but deployment across the curriculum limits progress. Improvement in keyboard skills is hampered because of the inappropriate chairs and workstations in use.
130. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. It has included improved equipment and networking, access to the Internet and email supported by broadband and increasing use in subjects across the curriculum that is helping to raise standards and capability.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- German is well taught.
- A good contribution is made to pupils' personal development.
- Learning tasks are well matched to the needs of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in French are not high enough.
- Some pupils still have insufficient textbooks.

French and German

131. At the end of Year 9 standards in the first language, French, are below average but those in German are close to it. German is taken as a second foreign language by two-thirds of the pupils and their standards are in line with those usually seen in second foreign language work. Teachers' assessments for 2002 reflect this position. The school has quite properly given the pupils' results in German as their foreign language grade as grades in German were higher than those achieved in French, despite the fact that less time is devoted to German. Pupils' achievement in French is satisfactory because their attainment on entry to the school is below average but standards are not as high as in German because of the staffing difficulties of recent years; achievement in German is good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
132. All pupils in Year 11 take a GCSE course, about half of them taking each of the languages. Average standards were seen in German, where as many boys as girls are doing well. Standards in French are below average but all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are on

course for a grade at GCSE. In GCSE examinations in 2001, results in German were in line with the national average for the proportion of pupils awarded grades A*-C, and all pupils were awarded a grade. Boys' results were, unusually, better than those of girls and better than those of boys nationally. Similar high standards were reached in the two previous years. Pupils' standards matched those of their other subjects. Results in French were well below average in 2001, both for pupils obtaining at least a grade C and for those obtaining at least a grade G. Girls' results were, as nationally, better than those of boys but significantly worse than in their other subjects. There was no improvement in this position in 2002.

133. In work seen during the inspection in Years 7-9, pupils were better at understanding the foreign language when they heard it or read it than they were at producing it themselves, either in spoken or written form. They learn passively and are insufficiently involved in active use of the language, especially in speaking. Pupils with special educational needs learn well, as sometimes happens when a classroom assistant takes the role of learner alongside them. In ordinary class groups, their learning is satisfactory because materials they are given match their learning needs. Most do not take a second language, which is right for them. More difficult materials are provided for higher attainers, and gifted linguists have the opportunity to do well in two languages. This is possible through to GCSE, though no one at present is doing this. Where standards are below average, as for all pupils learning French and up to two thirds of those taking German, this is often because they lack experience of dealing with longer texts. Not having much reading experience, they have few models on which to base their own writing. All are, however, becoming aware of the way languages work - for example, learning concepts such as masculine and feminine, because teachers' planning has responded to national concerns about literacy by putting a fresh emphasis on grammar.
134. In Years 10 and 11 learning and achievement are still reflecting these pupils' previous experience when there was unsatisfactory teaching in French. Because of pupils' low level of attainment when they began Year 10, achievement is satisfactory. A few pupils have the potential for higher grades. German has held up well, and achievement is good. Longer texts have been written as course work, and pupils can understand video presentations by native speakers of German related to their course. They are able to deal with calculations using the Euro, which reflects a concern for numeracy.
135. Pupils' attitudes are now generally good, though the exception is in the case of those Year 10 pupils, more than half the total number, who have opted out when given the opportunity. This means that in Year 10 French is taken only by a group of ten girls. Strong motivation is displayed in German by a group of pupils, mainly boys, who under their teacher's leadership are about to take part in a local twinning visit to Glossop's twin town, Bad Vilbel near Frankfurt-am-Main. Behaviour in lessons is good. Teachers manage their pupils well and relationships are good, so that pupils feel secure.
136. The school has recently recognised the need to provide up-to-date teaching and learning materials. These were just appearing in lessons at the time of the inspection and some were still awaited. Particularly worthwhile are personalised workbooks now used in Years 7-9, which are expected to encourage pupils to attempt work on their own. This is a good improvement in teaching provision, though having only just been introduced it has not yet had time to affect results. All teaching is now at least satisfactory, and there is good teaching in German. Pupils' learning reflects the quality of teaching and they make good progress when teaching is good. However, they lack the techniques to consolidate and retain information, so learning overall is no better than satisfactory.
137. There have been satisfactory improvements in teaching, planning and resources since the previous inspection. These have yet to show their full effect.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- New accommodation for music is very good.

- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good.

Areas for improvement

- To continue developing assessment procedures to enhance pupils' knowledge of their learning.
- To make ICT equipment fully operational.

138. Standards in Years 7-9 are average, representing good progress from below average standards on entry to the school. Standards in Year 11 are above average, showing good progress from the end of Year 9. At the time of the inspection there was no Year 10 class. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show that 72 per cent of pupils gained grades five and above, which is above the national average. Girls performed significantly better than the national standard and boys were exactly in line. In 2002 overall percentages were considerably lower. Girls' and boys' scores were very close with boys slightly better than girls. No national figures are yet available for comparison for 2002. There were five GCSE candidates in 2001, all of whom passed, with one pupil obtaining grade A, three grade B and one grade E. Such numbers are too small for comparison with national figures, but they are good results. The 2002 provisional results with four pupils were two grade B, one C and one D. Numbers of pupils entered for GCSE music over the past 5 years have ranged from 2 to 10 with a good proportion obtaining higher grades, though no two years are the same, and with such small numbers there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
139. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are average. Pupils understand and can interpret most note symbols for time and tune, achieving reasonably accurate performances even in 5/4 time. They are familiar with terms like 'ostinato' (repeated melodies forming a basis for other melodies) and 'pentatonic' (a five note scale often used to compose ostinato melodies). Pupils understand simple harmony based on chords I, IV and V. They are able to use their knowledge to devise short compositions which they perform on keyboards and tuned percussion instruments. Singing is a strong feature of the curriculum even to the extent of singing the register in Year 7 lessons to develop confidence. Very good singing was apparent in all years, showing fresh, bright tone and good diction as, for example, in a Year 9 performance of 'Everything's alright'. Pupils' written work is well presented, showing familiarity with a satisfactory range of musical terms, composers and their works. Although gifted and talented pupils are not systematically identified, a small number of higher-attaining pupils were observed working on appropriately challenging tasks successfully. Lower-attaining pupils are identified and given support matched to their needs. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 are above average, with more than half of the small number of pupils working towards the higher grades in GCSE examinations. Pupils show a grasp of composing devices such as 'mirror image' (inverting upward melodic steps downwards and vice versa), movement in intervals of a third apart or a sixth, use of major and minor keys. They are able to identify these effects in music such as John Tavener's 'Song of Athene', and apply them in their compositions. Pupils have good performance skills and a good understanding of musical vocabulary and history. An above average proportion of pupils enhance their musical attainment with additional instrumental lessons.
140. Pupils' attitudes to music are very positive. They expect that lessons will be enjoyable and well presented and are not disappointed. No doubt the new accommodation and good resources play their part in promoting good attitudes and behaviour, but the key factor is the very good quality of teaching they experience. A good example was a very good Year 7 lesson about AABA musical structure, which included a number of enjoyable songs, opportunities to play instruments but also very clear rules about what was permissible in the use of instruments and listening to instructions and what was not.
141. The quality of teaching is very good and the quality of learning is good. Lessons are very well planned and delivered and good use is made of resources, although it is a source of frustration that computers are not fully operational. Singing is very well taught, resulting in lively tuneful performances. More use could be made of assessment and commentary in marking so that pupils have a greater understanding of how they are doing and how they can improve further. Pupils are very well managed and this is a major strength of the teaching. The quality of learning lags a little behind that of teaching, mainly because there has been a long period over the summer holidays during which memories of skills and knowledge acquired during the previous year have dimmed

somewhat and will take a little time to return. Pupils are well behaved and work with good concentration. Productivity is good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress.

142. The department, including the thriving instrumental provision, is well managed. Extra-curricular activities, including the band and the choir, are well supported and appreciated within the school and community. The previous inspection report highlighted weaknesses in the use of ICT, GCSE results, pupils' knowledge of notation, and accommodation. Teaching was reported as good. Since then, very good, new accommodation for music has been built. Resources for musical ICT are good but the computers are still not fully operational. GCSE results have greatly improved since 1997 and pupils' knowledge of notation is good. The quality of teaching is very good. The department has made very good progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are good.

Areas for improvement

- To provide leadership for the department and an office base from which to administer the subject.
- To produce documentation that is up-to-date and policies and procedures that identify the future development of physical education.
- To update knowledge of how ICT can support learning in the subject.

143. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 as below average. The proportions of pupils gaining grades A* to C and A* to G in GCSE examinations in 2001 were below average. Results in 2002 show an improvement in GCSE standards but no improvement at the end of Year 9. Observations of Year 10 classes during the inspection confirm the 2002 Year 9 assessments. Work scrutiny and observation in Year 11 shows that next year's results could be similar to last year's GCSE results. Pupils' achievement, in core physical education, in relation to their previous learning, is below average at the end of Year 11. Long-term absences of teachers and many replacement staff have contributed to a lack of continuity in learning and standards have fallen. The teaching observed during the inspection is beginning to create a more positive environment for progress. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' standards at GCSE level. In the majority of lessons, lower-attaining pupils achieve in line with their potential. Talented pupils are given opportunities to develop their expertise through representing the school and county in football and netball. There is inclusive access to all curricular and extra-curricular activities.
144. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 9, standards are average in netball and above average in football. In netball, basic passing skills to partners are good but passing to moving targets is not developed and this affects performance in a game. In football, Year 9 boys show good movement into space to receive the ball and their control is above average. They are capable of playing a small team game with pupils of all abilities contributing to the performance and strategies. Year 7 pupils are showing an interest in their netball lessons and passing skills are improving in group practices. The control of the ball in more dynamic situations is below the standard expected. A fitness session in a Year 7 class showed that stamina and an understanding of health-related fitness were beginning to be understood. Some pupils found difficulty in finding their pulse and some estimates of pulse rate were inaccurate.
145. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 11, overall standards are below average. Previous development of skills in netball has been neglected so that the girls' passing, moving into space, shooting and tactical sense are below the average standard. Lack of involvement by a few lower-attaining pupils impedes their progress. In badminton, basic skills have not been learned by the Year 11 girls on the GCSE course. They have a determination to progress and their low standard at the moment will improve if the teaching quality is maintained. The Year 11 GCSE group is working hard to complete the syllabus and is working at an average standard. The boys

perform the practical tasks better than the girls but the reverse happens in the theoretical aspects of the course. The girls present their work clearly and their literacy skills are well developed. The boys are below average in their presentation of written work. Extra GCSE sessions and targeting of individual pupils has recently been organised to improve standards. Practical standards in Year 10 are lower than in Year 11 because of the lack of previous learning in basic games skills.

146. Attitudes to the subject are good and there is an enthusiastic response to the extra-curricular programme. Most pupils co-operate and help each to improve in the practical activities. Relationships are good and contribute to progress. There are very few non-participants and those that are excused the practical work are involved in umpiring, refereeing or coaching. Many pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning in paired and small group work. Progress in lessons is promoted by the good behaviour of the pupils.
147. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers show an in-depth knowledge of the subject. They plan lessons well with good organisation and management. They build upon positive relationships with pupils. The very good lessons provide a very active, challenging and varied approach that promotes rapid progress. In their short time together the two staff have enthused the pupils to aspire to higher standards. Their short-term objectives for the subject are helping them to manage without documentation and a head of department. The unsatisfactory situation created before their arrival has been tackled with vigour. Pupils are challenged in lessons and progress is made. Lower-attaining pupils are not sufficiently involved in a few lessons. Demonstrations are very good but more use of pupils of different levels of attainment would further improve teaching quality. The teaching of skills in the first half of many lessons was successfully transferred to the full game in the second part of the lesson. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to attend the extra-curricular sessions at lunchtime and after school.
148. The curriculum meets statutory requirements although the absence of documentation is a concern for future development. Equal access is provided and a GCSE option is available for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. ICT links are not developed. Short-term assessment procedures are effective in curricular planning but need documenting to meet the exact national criteria. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there is no head of department to develop the subject. The short-term staffing arrangements have helped to lift the subject from the doldrums. There are two teachers and two ECOs who contribute to the good extra-curricular sporting activities and 50 per cent of pupils take part. The accommodation is adequate but the indoor areas are drab and uninviting. The lighting is poor and the floors in an unsatisfactory state. There is no office for the staff to administer the subject. The grass playing field is poorly maintained. The hard play areas are showing signs of wear and tear.
149. The department has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection. A GCSE course has been introduced and the short-term staffing arrangements have resulted in good teaching. Areas for improvement should be centred on the production of up-to-date documentation that states procedures, policies or schemes of work, the appointment of a head of department, increasing the use of ICT and improving the quality of the indoor accommodation.