

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTLEIGH HIGH SCHOOL

Leigh

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106524

Headteacher: Mr J Pout

Reporting inspector: Dr Andy Swallow
12524

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th March 2003

Inspection number: 253281

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Westleigh Lane Leigh Lancashire
Postcode:	WN7 5NL
Telephone number:	01942 202580
Fax number:	01942 202705
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Hargreaves Stead
Date of previous inspection:	29 th September – 3 rd October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12524	A Swallow	Registered inspector	Citizenship	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9176	G Barker	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?
30690	G Allison	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
4551	L Banks	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
32316	M Brown	Team Inspector	Science	
12600	L Hesketh	Team Inspector	Design and technology	
30187	S Johnson	Team Inspector	History	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15280	D Kennard	Team Inspector	Geography Educational inclusion	
27246	P Kitson	Team Inspector	Physical education Religious education	
28429	C Maynard	Team Inspector	Music	
22685	N Moss	Team Inspector	English Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
31129	J Pickering	Team Inspector	Art and design	
15970	N Waller	Team Inspector	Mathematics	
4829	I Waters	Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

'Grasshoppers'
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Westleigh High School is a smaller than average mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school with 744 pupils. The school serves principally the areas of Hindley Green and Leigh, a former mining community in the borough of Wigan. Census data shows significant deprivation in these areas. One in four pupils is entitled to free school meals which is above average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language, is very low. Few pupils leave the school once they have started. The attainment of current Year 7 pupils on entry to the school is below average, but is much improved in comparison to pupils in other years whose attainment, on entry, was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is high. The school's priority is to maximise learning and improve standards. It is part of the Leigh Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Westleigh High is a fast improving school where teaching and learning is good and where pupils achieve well. Overall standards in lessons are at the national average and end of Year 9 attainment is approaching national averages. Although GCSE examination results are well below average, they are above those of schools with similar backgrounds and rising year on year. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. The very good leadership shown by the headteacher, senior management team and governors is driving these improvements and ensuring that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and is very good in science, religious education and drama. This is resulting in good achievement and good progress by most pupils in Years 7-11.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher, senior management team and governors promotes a very strong ethos that values equally all children, promotes very good relationships and sets a clear educational direction for the work of the school.
- The commitment of all staff in the school and, therefore, the capacity of the school, to improve further, is very strong.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance are resulting in fewer exclusions and improved rates of attendance.
- Provision for pupils' overall personal, social, health and citizenship education, and arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are effective.
- The range of activities provided out of school hours is very good.
- Parents' views of the school and the school's links with other schools, colleges and the local community are very good.

What could be improved

- Results in Year 11 public examinations are well below average in most subjects.
- Provision for design and technology, where standards of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in most subjects is not sufficiently well developed to enable all pupils to use it effectively in their learning.
- Pupils' attendance is still not at the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1997 is good overall. There has been good progress in improving overall standards of teaching and learning, and attainment in national tests and GCSE examinations. Very good progress has been made in improving the

monitoring and evaluating responsibilities of the governing body and the extended senior leadership team, and in strengthening overall subject leadership. There has been good improvement in pupils' numeracy competencies and in widening the curriculum in Years 10-11 to raise attendance levels and examination performance. The school now complies well with statutory special educational needs, performance management, modern foreign languages and religious education requirements, although still not fully with those for ICT in Years 10-11.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Over the last three years the results of national tests for pupils aged 14 have improved at rates faster than those seen nationally. Test results in 2002 were at the national average for science, but below average in English and well below in mathematics. Compared with schools with similar backgrounds, results were well above average in science, average in English but below in mathematics. The standards of work of the present Year 9 pupils are above average in English and average in science and mathematics. Given their low standards when they enter the school, most pupils achieve well. Achievement is very good in science. Standards of literacy and numeracy are improving, but remain below average overall.

GCSE 5+ A*-C results have improved over the last three years at three times the rate seen nationally. In 2002, although results were well below the national average, they were average compared with schools with similar backgrounds. The highest results were in drama and physical education. The governors' targets were achieved. GCSE results at 5+ A*-G are just below the national average, but are well above average at 1+ A*-G. Generally, girls do better than boys in English. Boys outperform girls in mathematics and girls outperform boys in science. Standards in Years 10-11 are average overall. They are above average in science, drama and physical education, but below average in art and design, ICT, geography, history and music, and well below in design and technology. Overall achievement in Years 10-11 is good. It is very good in mathematics, science and music; satisfactory in modern foreign languages, but poor in design and technology. Standards overall in Years 7-11 are improving as a result of significantly improved teaching and learning. This is leading to improved examination and test results. Pupils with special educational needs, and the exceptionally few with English as an additional language, make good progress. High attaining pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and are polite and courteous to teachers and visitors. There has been a steady fall in the number of exclusions over the past three years.
Personal development and relationships	Overall good. Most pupils respect each other's values and beliefs and willingly undertake responsibilities. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance has risen significantly since the last inspection, particularly in Years 7-9, but is not yet at the national average and unauthorised absence remains well above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, teaching and learning are good in Years 7-11. They are particularly good in Year 11 where more than one in three lessons is very good or excellent. Teaching and learning are very good in drama. They are good in English across the school and in mathematics, science and most other subjects in Years 7-9 and very good in science, mathematics and religious education in Years 10-11. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good. Most teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and plan their lessons carefully to meet the differing learning needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well taught and make good progress. High attaining pupils are not always challenged appropriately, but make satisfactory progress overall. The unsatisfactory lessons seen were mostly in design and technology and in subjects where there are temporary or inexperienced teachers. In these lessons teachers' expectations are not high enough to challenge all pupils to achieve their potential. No poor lessons were seen. In general, teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations. This results in good levels of concentration and enthusiastic learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. In Years 7-9 all pupils study the full range of National Curriculum subjects, drama and religious education. In Years 10-11 there is a good range of vocational and non-vocational subjects and opportunities for work-related learning. However, not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to the full ICT National Curriculum, and in art and design the shortage of computer software prevents full delivery of the statutory curriculum in Years 7-9. There is a very good range of activities outside of lessons and very good links with partner schools, colleges and the local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision is well planned and managed, both within and outside of lessons, and this enables pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is only one pupil at an early stage of English language acquisition. This pupil is supported well to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' social development is very good; it is good for pupils' moral and cultural development and satisfactory for pupils' spiritual development. Careers, citizenship, sex and drugs education are all taught well through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Child protection arrangements are very good. There are good monitoring procedures aimed at encouraging regular attendance and promoting good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. Parents' views of the school are very good. They receive good information about the work of the school and their children's education. Parents are consulted regularly and respond well. Many come to school to support their children, regularly attending progress reviews.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership and a very clear educational direction that is moving the school forwards. The leadership and management of most heads of department and heads of year are good. The overall levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their strategic role very well and hold the school rigorously to account for the standards that it achieves. However, they do not ensure that all children take part in a daily act of collective worship, that ICT is delivered fully across the curriculum in Years 10-11 and in Years 7-9 in art and design.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher, senior management team and governors have good systems for reviewing and evaluating all aspects of the school's work. Most heads of department and heads of year regularly monitor teaching and learning and the progress that all pupils make.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. External funds are well targeted. There is very good financial control and management. The school is very careful to obtain best value from all major decisions it takes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed which leads to teachers having high expectations. • Teaching is good, resulting in children making good progress and being happy in school. • The school is comfortable with the problems that parents raise and helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The range of activities outside of lessons is very good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The balance of homework that their children receive in different subjects. • The quality of the information that they receive about their children's progress.

The response to the parents' questionnaire and attendance at the parents' meeting was very low. Inspectors agree that the quality of teaching and levels of pupils' achievement are good, most pupils like school. The school's links with parents are good and the range of activities outside of lessons is very good. Inspectors find that most subjects provide a satisfactory amount of homework but that, whilst the quality of general information that the school provides for parents is good, there is room for improvement in aspects of annual reports on pupils' progress. Inspectors agree that the school is well led and managed and that this leads to high expectations of all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils now join the school with below average standards in English, mathematics and science. These standards have improved significantly from well below average, over the past three years.

2. Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 for science were in line with the national average. They were below average in English and well below in mathematics. Nevertheless, results have shown significant improvement in all three subjects since the last inspection and, particularly, across the last three years. Results are well above average for schools in similar circumstances in science, average in English, but below average in mathematics. The school uses nationally recognised systems for analysing the progress made by pupils between entry to the school and taking the tests. This shows that test results are above expectations, given the well below average attainment on entry of this group of pupils.

3. GCSE results are well below average at five or more grades A*-C, just below average at five or more grades A*-G, but well above average at one or more grades A*-G. Trends over the last three years show faster rates of improvement at grades A*-C than those seen nationally. Although trends show a decline in achievement at five or more grades A*-G in the past three years, this is partly due to the changes made in the school's curriculum that allow more pupils to study National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Almost all pupils, however, have gained at least one or more GCSE grades A*-G for the last three years. A*-C results are comparable with, and A*-G results are well above, schools in similar circumstances. Generally, girls do better than boys in English in Years 9 and 11, although the difference in their achievements is much closer than nationally at the higher grades. In mathematics and science, the differences between Year 9 boys and girls' performance are similar to those seen nationally, although by the end of Year 11 boys outperform girls significantly in mathematics and girls outperform boys in science, contrary to national pictures. GCSE results in English were well below average in 2002 and below average in mathematics and science. Given pupils' performances in the 2000 national tests at the age of 14 and their original attainment on entry to the school in 1997, however, overall these results represent better than expected achievement. The school met the governors' targets for 2002 and is likely to exceed the challenging targets set for 2003, given the most recent information on individual Year 11 pupils' progress.

4. In public examinations at the age of 16, results in many other subjects are well below average for boys and girls. In German and in history pupils attain above the national average, although the numbers taking these subjects are small. Whilst results in drama, geography, physical education and religious education are below average, they are much better than in other subjects in the school. Similarly, results in art and design, although well below average, are amongst the highest in the school.

5. Standards of work seen in Years 7-9 are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. They are better in English and mathematics than results would suggest, because pupils entered the school with higher levels of attainment in these subjects than in previous years. It is also because pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are improving, together with the overall quality of teaching, largely as a result of the National Strategies. The school's most recent information on pupils' progress shows that National Curriculum test outcomes at the age of 14 will rise again significantly in summer 2003. In other subjects up to Year 9, standards are above average in drama, religious education and physical education; they are at the expected levels in citizenship and ICT. Standards are improving in these subjects due to increasingly good levels of teaching and improvements made recently

in specialist resources. Standards are improving, but still below average, in geography, history, modern foreign languages, music and design and technology. They are well below average in art and design. These are largely due to pupils' below average knowledge, skills and understanding in these subjects when they enter the school.

6. Standards of work seen in individual subjects in Years 10-11 generally reflect the standards described above in Years 7-9. Again, they are mostly better than results in GCSE examinations. This is because most pupils have improved attitudes to learning as a result of the improvements made recently in the quality of teaching and resources. Standards are higher in science and in modern foreign languages than in Years 7-9 because pupils have developed key subject skills and have better attitudes due to the good teaching. Standards are not as high as in early years in English due to the significant weaknesses in pupils' basic literacy skills which were present on entry to the school and which have not improved sufficiently over time. Standards are not as high in ICT due to only recent changes made in the nature of the course that pupils follow and the quality of resources available. In design and technology, unsatisfactory teaching overall does not enable pupils to refine sufficiently important design and making skills.

7. Standards of literacy are below average when pupils start in Year 7. Standards were well below average when pupils currently in Years 8-11 started. The National Literacy Strategy is being used very well to develop the teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum. Most teachers provide good models for oral work, taking the opportunity to promote sustained and structured speech and good listening techniques. Pupils' reading is generally fluent and their written work is usually of good length and covers a good range of activities. Teaching and learning in literacy for pupils with special educational needs, or the exceptionally few who speak English as an additional language, are good. The school is developing a whole school approach to the use of literacy well and this is resulting in most pupils making good progress from a low starting point.

8. Standards of numeracy are below average when pupils start in Year 7. Standards were well below average when pupils currently in Years 8-11 started. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used very well to develop the teaching of numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils' mental agility, their application of the four rules of number, their skills in measurement and graphicacy have all improved, since the last inspection, to such an extent that low numeracy skills no longer impede pupils' access to subjects across the curriculum.

9. Although standards in ICT are average at the end of Year 9 and below average at the end of Year 11, pupils' overall achievement in relation to their standards in Year 7 is good. This is due to the good teaching and positive pupils' attitudes in specialist lessons and in subjects such as music and science. However, the overall provision for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning in most subjects is unsatisfactory. Most subjects still do not incorporate ICT fully into their teaching. As a result opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills to become independent users of ICT are limited. The failure to incorporate ICT into the teaching of art and design is a breach of statutory requirements

10. Throughout the school pupils' achievement is good, as is overall teaching and learning. This is because the school has put into practice a significant number of strategies in recent years that have dramatically improved the climate for learning. Achievement is very good in science. It is unsatisfactory overall in design & technology because in too many lessons work is not planned at an appropriate level and too many pupils are faced with tasks that do not sufficiently challenge their thinking and improve their key drawing and presentation techniques. Attendance has improved, particularly in Years 7-9, exclusions have reduced, and pupils' attitudes towards learning across the school are very good or better in over one in three lessons.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7-11, both in lessons and during withdrawal sessions, because teachers understand their needs and provide good support. They make good progress with targets in their individual education plans and individual behaviour plans. The special withdrawal sessions for certain pupils are effective in improving their literacy and numeracy skills, and in developing their overall confidence. Scheduled in-class support also enables all pupils to access the curriculum and to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are confident to answer questions and to participate fully in most lessons and they learn well in small groups and in one-to-one situations. At the moment, there is only one pupil at an early stage of English language acquisition. This pupil is supported well by the local authority team of specialist teachers, as well as by packs of work supplied by them in English and mathematics. Teachers work hard to integrate any pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school Learning Mentor ensures that they are paired with a 'buddy'. Overall, they make good progress and are fully included in all school activities. The school sets good targets for vulnerable pupils, including those at risk of exclusion and those supported by the Learning Support Unit and Year 7 'Nurture' group arrangement. The Learning Support Unit is a specialist unit within the school designed to help pupils to develop more positive attitudes to learning; the Year 7 arrangement enables vulnerable pupils to settle quickly into good learning habits and to improve self-esteem at the point of transition from primary partner schools. There are also very good targets set for pupils with statements of special educational needs at their annual reviews.

12. The achievement of higher attaining pupils is satisfactory overall. The school is in the process of identifying gifted and talented pupils. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well in mathematics. They achieve well overall in science, art and design, religious education, ICT, drama and physical education where additional work is identified and used regularly to make sure that pupils are suitably challenged and extended. Higher attaining pupils do not yet achieve sufficiently high enough standards in English, geography, history, design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. In lessons they are positive about their work, engaging quickly in activities and showing respect for their teacher and classmates. They listen carefully to their teachers and are prepared to concentrate and persevere with the task that they are set. Pupils feel positive about the school and are proud about its achievements. They react very well to the improved environment, do not abuse property and treat equipment with care. The majority are enthusiastic about coming to school and want to make it better.

14. Behaviour around the site and in classrooms is generally good. Most pupils move around the school in an orderly, though not always brisk fashion. They react well to instructions and obey the established conventions. Parents consider behaviour to have improved considerably over the last three years and the school has not permanently excluded any pupil for over one year. Fixed-term exclusions have fallen dramatically as of late. Even when direct supervision is minimal, behaviour is sensible. Teachers deal with instances of poor behaviour very well when they arise. The school has recently reviewed its behaviour policy and this is working well. Pupils perceive it to be fair and consistently applied. The work of heads of year, form tutors, the school counsellor, staff in the learning support unit and the Year 7 'nurture group' is contributing well to the overall atmosphere of calm in the school. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour and pupils say that they feel safe. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. They enjoy the fact that the school is friendly and everyone knows everyone else. The regular pupil questionnaires are appreciated because they show that senior staff trust them to have opinions and are willing to treat these with respect. They feel ownership of the place.

15. Attendance remains unsatisfactory, although the overall proportion of pupils attending school regularly has risen significantly since the last inspection. Attendance has improved year on year over the last three years. Unauthorised absence has also halved since the last inspection, although it is still too high. A significant minority of pupils who stay away from school regularly and a number of families who persist in taking holidays during term time, now prevent the school from reaching the national expectations for attendance. Nevertheless, the school has an impressive range of strategies in place to continue to encourage children to attend well, including the broadening of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 which is having a positive effect on attendance, as more pupils see the relevance of courses on offer. Most pupils are punctual to lessons and staff work hard to ensure that they do not waste valuable learning time at the changeover of lessons

16. Arrangements for pupils' personal development are good. The whole ethos of the school has a liberating effect on pupils and enables them to develop their own identity. The emphasis is very much one of regard for the needs of each individual pupil. The very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are welcomed openly into the life of the school and are treated with courtesy. Their values and beliefs are respected. The school's very good anti-racist and sexist policies work very effectively. Pupils respond particularly well in assemblies. They respect the purpose of prayer and the way in which messages are related to their lives. They reveal an understanding of the needs of others and a desire to help by being prepared to raise money for charities. Some of the poetry on display around the school and published in the school's magazine shows a real insight into the lives and plight of the less fortunate people in Britain and in other countries. When moments of wonder and awe occur in lessons, pupils respond with enthusiasm.

17. Pupils have a good understanding of the moral code operating in the school and are capable of debating the impact of morality in different aspects of life. They learn from the needs of the school community and recognise the need to follow a code. Those who respond to the regular questionnaires that the school circulates show a mature attitude. Those who take on responsibilities, such as being a school council representative, are enthusiastic and level-headed. They are prepared to make a case for change and to follow it through. For example, in assisting with the formulation of the anti-bullying policy and in agreeing and presenting it, both to pupils and to governors. Pupils are proud of the school and want it to continue to develop. Prefects are effective and respond well to the training that they receive. Pupils who undertake paired reading duties or act as a "buddy" are equally committed.

18. Relationships are very good both between pupils and staff and with their peers. Routines are well established in lessons and at break and lunch times and pupils feel at ease. They work sensibly in pairs, groups and independently in class. Their response to the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme shows that they enjoy the opportunity to debate and to exchange ideas. The majority understand well the impact of their actions on others. They are prepared to take on personal responsibility, such as helping in the library and acting as a receptionist in the entrance to the school, and carry out these functions well. They understand the need for training, if they are to perform a role in the school, and are prepared to see this through.

19. The school works to good effect to enable pupils to develop their cultural awareness. Pupils produce art exhibitions and take part in a number of musical activities, in particular singing. Year 8 pupils engage keenly and imaginatively in a series of media projects, using photography to create good images and producing amusing interview scripts. There is an enthusiastic response from pupils to extra-curricular activity. They participate readily in the many enrichment activities that are on offer, such as the individual subject clubs and revision sessions, the school camp, theatrical productions, musical performances and the many sporting opportunities. The school magazine, 'Aiming High', features a wide range of activities, all enthusiastically recorded, with a touch of wit and humour. The report of a visit to

the Labour Party Conference, for example, speaks of interviewing the then Secretary of State for Education and her “apprentices”.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good in Years 7-11, confirming the views of parents. In Years 7-9 teaching and learning are good or better in two thirds of lessons, with almost a quarter of lessons being very good or excellent. In Years 10-11 teaching and learning are good in three quarters of lessons, with almost one third of lessons very good or excellent. The proportion of good or better lessons has increased since the time of the previous inspection. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons has also increased slightly since the time of the previous inspection, although this is confined to a very small number of teachers and subjects. No poor teaching was observed. Features of weaker teaching include low expectations and planning for learning that does not take sufficiently into account pupils’ needs. This results in unsatisfactory pupils’ attitudes to learning.

21. Teaching and learning are very good in science and drama across all year groups and in maths, religious education and music in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are good overall in maths, music, English, geography, art and design, history, ICT, physical education and citizenship. In all of these subjects teachers’ knowledge and understanding are either good or very good and most teachers have high expectations of the achievements of their pupils. As a result, pupils show high levels of interest, concentrate well and make good progress. Lesson planning comprises clear learning outcomes that are shared with pupils and activities that are well matched to their different needs. These enable them to learn well.

22. In modern foreign languages teaching and learning are overall satisfactory. Although there are examples of good teaching and learning, examples of unsatisfactory teaching and learning were also observed in Years 10 and 11. In design and technology, teaching and learning are overall unsatisfactory. In Years 7-9 factors contributing to unsatisfactory teaching and learning include unsatisfactory planning and low level teachers’ expectations. These lead to many low level activities that fail to engage or stretch pupils. In Years 10 and 11 an additional contributory factor is the inability of some teachers to manage appropriately pupils’ behaviour.

23. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils very well. Pupils respond well to these expectations and have a clear understanding that they come to school to learn. Their concentration levels and the overall outcomes of their learning, are good. In most subjects the use of assessment information to help pupils to further improve their work, is good. It is very good in music and drama. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a good knowledge of their own learning and the improvements required to attain future targets in most subjects. This is less consistent throughout Years 7-9, resulting in pupils’ knowledge of their own learning being satisfactory overall. Teachers’ marking is generally consistent, regular and according to the school’s procedures. The marking of major pieces of work, however, does not always contain comments that are helpful to pupils’ in improving their understanding of the progress that they are making. The use of homework to develop and extend learning is satisfactory overall.

24. The teaching of basic skills is generally good. The school expects all teachers to plan to develop pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills. A number of departments, such as science and religious education, support well pupils’ correct use of specific vocabulary and provide good structures to enable them to write extensively and with confidence. Since the last inspection, there has been good progress in the teaching of the skills of numeracy to enable pupils to access all subjects of the curriculum. There are good examples of pupils applying number skills effectively in geography, design and technology and science.

25. The provision that teachers make for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning in all subjects is unsatisfactory. Very good provision does exist in some subjects. For example, in some science lessons the use of data logging equipment and sensors is excellent; in music ICT is used very well for composition and keyboard work. Some subjects encourage pupils to use ICT for coursework in Years 10 and 11 and for research using the Internet. However, most subjects do not incorporate ICT fully into their teaching. As a result, opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills to become independent users of ICT are limited.

26. The quality of teaching and learning in personal, social, health and citizenship education is good, particularly when these lessons are led by teachers who have a specific interest and/or expertise. These teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and work at a brisk pace, using effective questioning to promote good learning and understanding. Relationships with pupils are generally good and effective use is made of paper resources, videos and outside speakers. Teaching and learning are sometimes unsatisfactory in lessons led by temporary staff and teachers who only teach the subject occasionally. In these lessons, the purpose of the activities is often unclear, little attempt is made to ascertain pupils' initial understanding of the topic, and the overall challenge in the work is too low.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers' planning consistently refers to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and appropriately challenging work is planned for them. Pupils' individual educational and behaviour plans are well written, with a manageable number of helpful targets to promote good learning. Learning support assistants work well alongside teachers and individual pupils, both in lessons and during targeted withdrawal sessions. They plan these sessions well, with good support from the special educational needs co-ordinator, to promote pupils' learning in basic skills. The teaching and learning of higher attaining and gifted pupils, are satisfactory overall. There is particularly good practice in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. However, not all subjects have yet identified regular and specific activities in schemes of work to stretch the highest attainers. Pupils with specific talents are catered for well in drama, and in physical education where professional coaches work with them in games such as rugby, basketball and netball.

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

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in Years 7 to 9. As well as National Curriculum subjects and religious education, all pupils are taught drama as a separate subject and follow a programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Provision is also good in Years 10 and 11 where the school has introduced a range of vocational opportunities. In addition to GCSE courses, including those in vocational subjects, pupils can study work-related qualifications, such as National Vocational Qualifications. However, higher attaining pupils do not currently have access to vocational courses and those studying NVQ qualifications are unable to complete a full award.

29. Although the overall curriculum is broad and balanced, it fails to meet statutory requirements in a number of aspects. In Years 10 and 11 there is insufficient cross-curricular provision for ICT. This was a weakness identified at the time of the previous inspection and one that remains to be addressed. In addition, programmes of study for art and design and for design and technology, are not fully met. There is insufficient opportunity within art and design for the use of ICT to support learning and too little systems and control work in design and technology in Years 10-11. Time allocations are low in Years 7-9 for history and geography and in Year 9 for pupils studying a second language. This inhibits the breadth and depth to which these subjects can be taught. However, there is now sufficient time in Years 10 and 11 to cover the agreed syllabus in religious education and good access to personal, health, and social education for pupils studying a second language in Years 7-9. These were areas for improvement identified by the last inspection.

30. The programme for personal and social education in the school is good. There is a comprehensive scheme of work that includes health education, safety education, drugs education, sex and relationship education and careers education and guidance. It also covers parts of the citizenship programme of study. Good use is made of a wide range of external speakers to support the delivery. The programme for careers education and guidance is very good and includes appropriate work experience placements for pupils in Year 10. The school is also well supported by a dedicated Connexions adviser. The time allocation of one lesson a fortnight for personal and social education for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is inadequate to cover the scheme of work in sufficient depth, particularly when a considerable amount of the citizenship programme of study is delivered through personal and social education.

31. A very good range of extra-curricular activities helps to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Through the Wigan out of School Hours Project (WOOSH) a range of professional coaches support the development of pupils' skills in activities such as rugby, netball, badminton, football, tennis and cricket. Pupils also benefit from a range of out-of-school visits, such as trips to Disneyland in Paris organised by the language department and visits to the Faraday lectures during science week. After school activities in art and design, music and drama, and lunchtime clubs and revision classes provided across a range of subjects, also support well pupils' learning. These arrangements represent a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection and supports parents' positive views.

32. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. The appointment of a community development manager has resulted in a significant increase in the number of adults involved in learning in the school. Pupils studying health and social care, for example, visit old peoples' homes and benefit from guest speakers from the National Health Service. Pupils studying NVQ hospitality and catering receive part of their tuition at Wigan and Leigh College, and lecturers from the same college teach built environment courses in the school's Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) centre. Adults also benefit from this facility. Links with partner institutions through the Education Action Zone are also very strong. There are good links with primary schools through the junior sports leadership scheme and through summer schools for gifted and talented pupils. A number of subject areas have also developed good curriculum links, for example science and ICT. A large number of visitors come regularly to the school, including the Armed Services, the Emergency Services and local members of parliament.

33. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school regularly reviews the curriculum to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all pupils. All pupils with special educational needs follow courses with appropriate accreditation. A successful 'Nurture Class' for vulnerable pupils in Year 7 has been set up recently to assist their transition from primary school into a busy secondary school environment. Arrangements for in-class support, withdrawal work and the availability of access to a learning support assistant and a learning mentor allow pupils with special educational needs to cope well and to make positive contributions to the life of the school. Pupils in the learning support unit are also supported well by external specialists, including a counsellor and behaviour support staff. The school is currently reviewing the work of the learning support unit for pupils with behavioural problems. Clear referral criteria are now in place which highlight well pupils who might benefit from withdrawal sessions in the unit. However, the curriculum in the unit is not sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of individual pupils and to ensure their successful re-integration into normal classes.

34. Provision overall for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Although not all subjects include a spiritual dimension in their work, there are good examples in science, where pupils are asked to reflect on issues relating to acid rain, and in music where pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the effects of music in films and advertising. In religious education and in English there are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on different beliefs and the significance of symbols. The weekly whole school assembly and fortnightly year

group assemblies are used well to celebrate success and to explore a range of spiritual and moral themes. During the inspection week, the assemblies provided good opportunities for pupils to reflect on recent world events and appropriate music, readings and prayers were used to provide good opportunities for reflection. However, the school does not fulfil the statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Although form tutors are expected to set aside some time in morning registrations for a "Thought for the day", this rarely happens to good effect.

35. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school promotes respect for others and has a clear framework of values that enables pupils to distinguish between right and wrong behaviour. Teachers are good role models, have very good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of behaviour. There is a comprehensive code of conduct for pupils, with an effective merit and reward system linked to attendance. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme deals well with contemporary moral issues.

36. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school has clear values in social awareness that are promoted through the annual school camp, the peer-counselling programme in Year 10, paired reading schemes and activities to raise funds for various charities. In most subjects pupils work very well together, in pairs and groups, to discuss and debate issues. They listen to each other's views patiently and show good awareness of the impact of their actions on others.

37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There is good enrichment of pupils' knowledge and experience of their own and other cultural traditions in many subjects. For example, ceramics and paintings from different cultures are studied in art and design, pupils visit the Tate Modern and good use is made of the artists in residence scheme; in modern foreign languages excellent displays reflect the cultures of different countries; in music lessons feature a range of instruments from different cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and protection are very good. The senior management team is very well tuned to the needs of all pupils and is very aware of their backgrounds. The school provides a highly supportive environment in which all pupils are well known by tutors and support staff. Key adults in the school, including one of the deputy headteachers (who is the 'named teacher'), all heads of year, the school's counsellor, nurse and link governor, have all received appropriate and up-to-date training and are aware of their responsibilities. There are good guidelines for all staff on how to manage child protection issues and appropriate training has been provided. Specific groups of potentially vulnerable children, such as those who join the school in mid-term, children in public care, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and the exceptionally few with English as an additional language, are particularly well catered for. Discussions with pupils from all year groups indicate that they feel safe and secure at school.

39. Pupils are well known to the staff and daily pastoral arrangements work very well. Induction arrangements of new pupils to the school are thorough. Many pupils from partner primary schools have already had earlier contact with the school through the Year 6 booster classes and planned opportunities to use specialist sport and ICT facilities, before they start in Year 7. Good quality information is provided regularly to form and subject tutors to maintain effective links with the home throughout a child's time in the school.

40. The organisation and delivery of the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme is good. Outside agencies are integrated thoughtfully into this aspect of the school's work. For example, the Church's Family Welfare Team provides facilities for counselling, effective use is made of the Connexions team, the local drugs awareness team, community service workers, school nursing service and the armed and emergency services. A learning mentor enables the school to offer extra support to those with behavioural

problems and to develop community and family links. The school has an appropriate policy on drug-related incidents and a confidentiality policy. It has just received National Healthy Schools accreditation. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and there are now two health and safety officers and a link governor whose role it is to conduct regular monitoring visits. Inspectors found no major health and safety issues during the inspection week.

41. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Teachers and pupils understand the recently reviewed behaviour policy and consider that it is applied consistently, fairly and to good effect in lessons. Out-of-class supervision throughout the day is very good. The use of closed circuit television and senior staff 'walkie talkies' enable on-duty rapid response to assist with any problems as they emerge. This is reinforced to good effect by the very good work of administrative and support staff, and prefects. The learning support unit provides good support to pupils at risk of short-term exclusions and helps to re-integrate disaffected pupils into the main body of the school. The Year 7 'nurture group' works very well. These pupils are particularly well supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and by dedicated learning support assistants. They make a positive start to their time at the school. There are very good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Inspectors witnessed no racist or sexist behaviour during the inspection week. The anti-bullying agreement and the anti-bullying policy are very effective. They are supported well by the work of the school council and the prefect system. In their responses to the regular school's questionnaires, most parents and pupils indicate that they regard the school as a safe place in which to learn.

42. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and are resulting in rising attendance trends and in reducing levels of unauthorised absence. The school has invested significant time and funding in an electronic registration system which provides very efficient and comprehensive information on attendance and behaviour. Contacts with parents through support staff and the full-time, school-based educational welfare officer, are very effective in many instances. There is a very good system of rewards and credits linked to attendance information, so that a range of certificates and prizes can be awarded to pupils who attend well. These procedures have helped to improve significantly overall attendance since the last inspection. However, a small but significant group of pupils, particularly in Years 10-11, has deep-seated absence patterns. The school is now rightly focusing energies on specific families in a drive to improve attendance further to reach national expectations

43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. The school has a substantial amount of information on pupils' attainment prior to them joining the school. Overall, teachers use this information well to place pupils in appropriate classes and to set realistic targets for their future work. Most heads of department monitor effectively the progress that pupils make in individual subjects. They agree key pieces of work for marking and assessment purposes, and share outcomes with pupils so that they know how well they are working and what they need to do to improve further. Most teachers also use this information to change the ways in which they approach individual lessons and sometimes entire programmes of work, so that they are more relevant to pupils' needs. This can be seen in how the school has modified substantially, in recent years, the courses on offer in Years 10-11. The introduction of more vocational and work-related options has been a major contributory factor to the improved behaviour patterns and attendance rates since the last inspection. The senior management team hold regular and planned discussions with heads of subject and heads of year about the outcomes of assessments of pupils' progress. These discussions often result in the provision of additional support for individual pupils through extra homework, out-of-school lessons, links with learning mentors and personal support from specialist teachers. There is a comprehensive mentoring system in place for all pupils in Years 10-11. Three learning support assistants work specifically with pupils whose low basic skills put them at risk of not accessing the full curriculum.

44. The progress of pupils with statements of special educational needs and those on the school's special educational needs register, is regularly monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Good quality information is gathered from teachers, learning support assistant and heads of year. The special educational needs co-ordinator analyses information from partner primary schools well to establish the needs of pupils when they enter the school. Additional tests are administered early in Year 7 to supplement this information and all pupils undertake reading and spelling tests in Years 7-9. The school holds appropriate academic information on pupils with special educational needs and helpful targets are set for them within their individual educational / behavioural plans and through additional support plans. These targets and plans are well written, are manageable and reviewed every six months. The school is working towards a more regular review of plans using ICT. Teachers' lesson plans consistently refer to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and appropriately challenging work is planned for them. Subject, pastoral staff and parents are consulted and involved appropriately in the annual review of pupils' statements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parent's views of the school are justifiably very good. They feel that the school is improving and that it now provides a good quality education for their children. They attribute improvement to the very strong leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff. The majority who attended the parents' evening and who completed inspection questionnaires expressed confidence in teachers to deal with their questions and problems. Almost all believed teaching to be good and lessons helpful in encouraging their children to become more mature and responsible. They considered teachers to have high expectations that enable their children to make good progress. They particularly valued the range of activities available outside of lessons. Inspectors agree with these sentiments. Some parents think that the amount of homework that their children receive is inappropriate and a small number do not feel well informed about the progress that they make. They are uncertain about the quality of information exchanged at the recently introduced tutor led review days. Whilst inspectors do not find the amount of homework that pupils receive to be inappropriate, they agree with parents that the school could improve the quality of annual reports on pupils' progress to parents.

46. Links with parents are good. The general ethos of the school is reflected in the way it sets out to form effective relationships with parents and members of the local community. Parents are involved fully in induction arrangements and the school is building up a good reputation with local primary schools which is reflected in the growing number of parents who put down the school as their first choice. Home-school and attendance agreements are well-conceived and dedicated administrative staff, a full-time school-based education welfare officer and a learning mentor help to forge strong partnerships with all parents, particularly those with children at risk of exclusion and those with poor attendance records. Parents are invited readily to meet heads of year if there are concerns over their children's behaviour or progress and they appreciate this openness and flexibility. They say that it is helpful to be able to enlist the school's help, for instance, in putting their child on report. Equally, parents feel involved in the school's reward system. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their child's progress and welfare. They are appropriately involved in the annual review of their child's statement and any review of targets. Their partnership role and support for learning are made explicit within the individual education and / or behaviour plan.

47. The quality of information provided for parents is good. Good contact is maintained through regular bulletins and newsletters and a twice yearly magazine of high quality. Good care is taken to see that parents understand the content of the curriculum, and the way in which they may be able to support their child's learning. In the "Family Guide to the Curriculum", for example, parents are encouraged to do simple things like discuss routes for family outings, under geography, or encourage children to talk about their opinions and

ideas, under English. There are very good opportunities for parents to discuss the progress that their children make at parents' evenings, review days and option evenings. However, annual reports to parents of their children's progress, while informative about attitudes and qualities, do not contain sufficient information about the knowledge, skills and understanding that children are developing in all subjects. The targets that teachers set in the reports to help children to improve their work are too general.

48. The contribution of parents to children's learning is good. The numbers attending parents' evenings and review days are increasing and the majority encourage their children to complete homework on time and coursework within the established timescales. They support the school very well in ensuring that their children come to school appropriately equipped for learning. A significant minority still does not insist that their children attend school regularly, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This has an adverse effect on their overall progress and attainment.

49. Parents are very pleased with the way in which the school's standing in the community has improved in recent years and in the facilities that it now provides both within and out-of-school hours. They feel very much involved in the life of the school and appreciate the planned ways in which they are consulted about many aspects of school's work. They feel that the school is responsive to their ideas and opinions. The Friends of Westleigh High School are particularly active in support of the school. A small dedicated committee gives willingly of its time to raise funds for additional equipment, study visits and curriculum enrichment activities. Overall, this is a strong area of the school's work and one that has improved significantly since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher and senior management team, in partnership with the governing body, provide the school with very good leadership. They promote an ethos that places value on the learning and achievement of each child and they work very hard to ensure that all children fulfil their potential. This approach has led to good improvements overall since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' levels of achievement.

51. The headteacher has created a climate of openness and respect that enables the school's aims and values to flourish. His unwavering commitment to raising expectations of what young people can achieve and to serving the needs of the local community, is an inspiration to all who work in the school. His willingness to listen and engage with local residents has changed the public's views of the school and improved significantly its reputation over the last three years. This agenda for change is shared fully by the senior management team. They set high standards and a clear direction for the work of the school. This is articulated in an improvement plan that has appropriate priorities and targets. The roles of the senior team have been appropriately extended in recent years and are now well matched to individual's strengths. The result has been to minimise bureaucracy and to focus on key strategies to raise attainment. This, in turn, has resulted in a shared commitment to improvement.

52. The governing body is effective and plays a significant part in helping to shape the direction of the school. The structure of the committees has evolved a great deal since the last inspection and is now much more focused on school improvement. The chair of governors has high expectations and ensures that all the chairs of the committees meet regularly as part of the Self-Evaluation group. This committee now has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors are well informed of the work of the school, share a clear understanding of their roles and hold the headteacher and key staff rigorously to account. They set challenging performance targets and reflect critically on the standards that the school achieves. The governing body fulfils its wide-ranging statutory functions well, with the exception of making provision for a daily act of

collective worship for all pupils and ensuring that arrangements in Years 10-11 for delivering ICT meet National Curriculum requirements.

53. There has been very good progress in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning since the last inspection. There is a well-organised approach to monitoring the work of subject departments, although less so to monitoring the teaching and learning of personal, social, health and citizenship education. The self-review arrangements between heads of subject, heads of year and senior line managers, are regular and effective. These key post-holders provide good leadership and use well the wide range of information that the school holds on pupils' progress to set targets, in all years, then to support pupils' academic and personal development. In particular, the co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership to the special educational needs department and for the development of special educational needs across the school. She communicates well with the senior leadership team, governors, staff and parents; and manages funding and budgets appropriately. She knows how well pupils with special educational needs are progressing throughout the school, but does not have the opportunity to monitor directly their teaching and learning in lessons. All statutory requirements for special educational needs are now met. This represents very good progress since the last inspection. Learning support assistants operate well as a team under the direction of the special educational needs co-ordinator. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of special educational needs support in the school. This is not yet sufficiently well articulated in a formal development plan. All areas of the school have annual development plans that reflect the school's aims and priorities and contribute to the whole school plan. However, these plans are not yet sufficiently detailed to enable effective evaluation of the impact of the planned actions to raise standards of achievement further.

54. Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are very good. There is a well-structured programme of focused lesson observations, analysis of planning documents and review meetings. Opportunities for the professional development of all staff, including the induction of teachers new to the school, are very good. All subjects have a nominated member of staff to mentor students on initial teacher training placements. The evaluation of the impact of training, through into classroom teaching and learning, is well established. All staff, including administrative, clerical, financial and site management staff, have access to appropriate training programmes. These staff make a significant contribution to the very effective day-to-day organisation of the work of the school.

55. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning systems and specific grants, such as Education Action Zone, New Opportunities Fund, Standards Fund, Learning and Skills Council and additional funding for pupils with statements, are used effectively for their designated purposes. The large budget underspend and carry forward at the end of the most recent financial year is targeted appropriately on outdoor sport development and further site refurbishment. The school makes good use of its funding for vulnerable children. The Support Services Manager ensures that detailed financial information is made available on a regular basis to governors and all budget holders. Good attention is paid to obtaining value for money. Governors ensure that procedures for obtaining competitive tenders are in place and that contracts are effectively carried out. They apply the principles of best value very well. Parents and pupils are consulted through questionnaires and forums. The school council allows pupils to have a voice and contributes to a good level of challenge within the school about what should be provided and how best to do it.

56. The match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Most teachers are well qualified to teach their specialist subject. The school has the Investors in People award and the well-structured opportunities for continuous professional development make a good contribution towards the overall high levels of teaching and learning. The quality of accommodation is good. This is the result of a carefully planned rolling programme of refurbishment and re-build. Accommodation is especially good in

science, modern foreign languages, drama, technology and the humanities. Teachers take pride in the organisation of their classrooms, creating stimulating learning environments with effective displays of pupils' work and commercial products. Pupils respond positively to these conditions, settling down quickly to work and persevering well. The quality of learning resources is good. The school's spending on resources is higher than that seen nationally and the number of computers is approaching the 2004 national target. However, all pupils in all subjects do not yet have sufficient access to computers to help them in their learning.

57. The school now provides good quality teaching and learning for its pupils, many of whom have below average attainment on entry and come from a well below average social context. The quality of leadership and management is good overall and has enabled the school to make good improvement since the last inspection. Although results are still well below average, the school ensures that individual pupils make good progress throughout Years 7 –11, given their low starting points. It therefore gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER ?

58. In order to raise the standards achieved by pupils, governors, the headteacher and staff should seek to:

- (1) Raise further standards of attainment in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils in all lessons;
 - providing more consistently challenging work for higher attaining pupils;
 - widening the opportunities for pupils to learn and think independently.(Paragraphs: 2-6,12, 27, 60, 66, 71, 77, 83, 89, 94, 99-101, 105, 111, 116, 123, 125, 127, 130, 135, 141, 146)

- (2) Improve the provision for design and technology by:
 - improving the leadership and management of the department;
 - establishing rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures for all aspects of this department's work;
 - improving teachers' lesson planning to ensure that all pupils are challenged to reach their full potential in each lesson;
 - introducing a more systematic approach to the teaching of design, drawing and presentation skills, using ICT wherever possible.
 - improving the quality of assessment practice so that all teachers are sharing regularly accurate information with pupils about the progress that they are making within the National Curriculum or according to specific GCSE / GNVQ criteria;
 - introducing specific procedures for setting targets for individual pupils then monitoring regularly the progress that they make;
 - improving the quality of annual development planning so that actions are specifically focused at raising further pupils' levels of attainment, and that desirable outcomes are very clearly outlined so that progress can be measured;(Paragraphs: 22, 99-103)

- (3) Improve the use of ICT in all subjects so that it can make a better contribution to pupils' learning.
(Paragraphs: 25, 56, 103, 107, 113, 114, 118, 120, 121, 138, 143)

Minor issues

- Ensure that the following statutory requirements are met in full:
 - provision for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils;
 - the full delivery of the National Curriculum requirements for ICT in Years 10-11;
 - the ICT requirements for art and design in Years 7-9.(Paragraphs: 9, 29, 34, 52, 87, 92, 120)
- Improve further pupils' attendance so that it reaches national expectations.
(Paragraphs: 15, 42)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	146
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	32	66	31	11	0	0
Percentage	4	22	45	21	8	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	744
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	190

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	27
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	263

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.4
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	65	69	134

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	29	34	42
	Girls	49	35	44
	Total	78	69	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (46)	51 (54)	64 (47)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (20)	25 (26)	24 (14)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	26	35	47
	Girls	40	38	46
	Total	66	73	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	49 (47)	53 (47)	69 (63)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (16)	16 (34)	24 (21)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	65	65	130

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	16	55	65
	Girls	19	57	65
	Total	35	112	130
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	27 (24)	86 (90)	100 (100)
	National	50 (48)	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	27.2 (25.5)
	National	39.8 (39.3)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	69	86%
	National		N/A

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	737	161	2
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	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	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	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	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

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	47.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	368

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	
---	--

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.5
Key Stage 4	20.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	2 603 933
Total expenditure	2 526 046
Expenditure per pupil	3 528
Balance brought forward from previous year	149 099
Balance carried forward to next year	226 986

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	750
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	36	6	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	50	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	58	3	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	47	14	8	0
The teaching is good.	47	44	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	33	19	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	39	11	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	61	31	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	44	3	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	36	0	0	0

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 **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' good achievements by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are brought about by their good attitudes towards the subject and their good behaviour in lessons.
- Good teaching, with some very strong features, ensures good learning by all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- Pupils' work is well assessed and monitored and very good use is made of assessment to guide teachers' future planning.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of the higher grades attained at GCSE is not high enough.
- The attainment of boys is well below that of girls.
- There is not enough access to the use of ICT in the subject.

59. Standards in English are below the national average when pupils enter the school, but they make good progress from Year 7 to Year 11. By the end of Year 9, standards are above the national average and by the end of Year 11 they are in line with it, though showing rapid signs of improvement. This shows a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be below the national average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Pupils achieve well by the end of both Year 9 and Year 11.

60. In the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9, pupils attained below average standards when compared with all schools but slightly above average standards when compared with schools of a similar nature. Over the last three years, pupils have attained at below the national average, but there has been a steady rise in attainment from 2000 to 2002. This has brought the school in line with the national trend, showing good added value between Years 7 and 9. Inspection evidence indicates that girls' performance now significantly exceeds that of boys. At GCSE in 2002, pupils attained results which were well below those of the national average in both English and in English literature. Just over a quarter of the pupils gained A*-C grades in English, although the vast majority of pupils gained passes at A*-G grades. In English literature, about the same percentage gained A*-C passes and grades A*-G. The percentage gaining the highest grades was low in English and only slightly higher in English literature. This also, however, was an improvement on the last inspection, when both subjects were well below the national average. The trend of late has been an upward one. The standards attained by girls were significantly higher than those of boys.

61. Pupils generally have good speaking and listening skills. Teachers offer good role models in these areas and provide pupils with good opportunities for practising their oral skills. By the end of Year 11, most pupils can speak articulately, either when giving presentations in class or in group or class discussions and they listen well to their teachers and to other pupils. The higher attaining pupils acquire a sense of appropriate audience and are able to vary their speech according to its purpose at the time. Pupils join in class discussions of the media work or the literary texts they are studying and many are able to use a tone and vocabulary suited to varying purposes. This was clearly to be seen in a Year 11 lesson in which pupils were representing various factions at a council meeting, presenting arguments for and against the building of a new factory. They are generally fluent readers, well equipped to tackle unfamiliar words with ease. Many show good understanding of what they read and are able to make constructive comment based on characters and

ideas in their literary texts. A Year 9 lesson focusing on a key scene from 'Macbeth' for the forthcoming national tests, demonstrated pupils' ability to understand and empathise with Macbeth's dilemma over Duncan's murder and on Lady Macbeth's responses. Writing skills, too, are well emphasised. Written work is frequently accurate in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils write at good length, in the main, and cover a good range of written styles and modes, though it is very apparent that girls write with more assurance and sophistication than boys.

62. Pupils in all years achieve well, as a result of the enthusiasm and interest they bring to their work, both language and literature. The majority work willingly for their teachers, maintain a good level of effort and concentrate well in class. Their strong relationships with their teachers ensure that they learn well and work productively. Behaviour in class is usually good. Pupils show respect for teachers and each other.

63. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The majority of lessons observed were good or better, an improvement on the situation at the last inspection, when teaching was judged as never less than satisfactory. A high proportion of lessons seen during this inspection was very good or excellent. The strongest features of teaching are the impressive level of subject knowledge and understanding of teachers and the effectiveness with which they teach the basic skills of literacy, speaking, reading and writing. They plan very well, stimulating their pupils as well as holding their interest by the wide variety of methods they employ. As a result, pupils learn well and become enthusiastic about the subject. Management of pupils' behaviour is generally good, time is used wisely and to good advantage, and resources are well deployed. Teachers know their pupils well and assess their work thoroughly and constructively, marking in such a way that it is clear to pupils how they could improve their work. Homework is regularly set, reinforcing learning done in class. Teachers make objectives clear to pupils at the start of lessons and review and reinforce work done in the lessons at the ends. This ensures that pupils know what they are learning and why.

64. The department provides a good range of learning opportunities for the pupils. Units of work are well balanced to cover all the skills of literacy. The implementation of the new National Key Stage 3 Strategy in English has been exemplary and it is clear that it is already showing to be of benefit to pupils' standards in English. Pupils' personal development is carefully nurtured through the social, moral and cultural content of the curriculum. Much emphasis is put upon helping pupils to understand the social, historical and cultural context of literature and media work in English. This was evident in a Year 10 lesson in which pupils were understanding and empathising with both Pip and Magwitch from 'Great Expectations', with focus on the period and the morality of 'being a gentleman'. As a result, they are able to think sensitively and sensibly about social and cultural issues.

65. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department leads with enthusiasm, experience and very clear direction. She ensures that good teaching is the norm and provides a very good role model for other members of her department. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Staffing is now stable, learning resources are satisfactory and accommodation is good. Members of the department share a very strong commitment to the achievement of the pupils and a common aim to help them to achieve as well as possible. Policies and schemes of work reflect this high level of commitment and form the basis of a firm and realistic way forward for both department and pupils. Teaching and pupils' work are both monitored regularly. The department has initiated many intervention measures to help raise the standards of groups of pupils who are not reaching their full potential, so that the needs of most pupils are addressed very well. Assessment procedures are good and are used very well to enable pupils to know how they can improve their work and to assign pupils to intervention and booster classes, ensuring that pupils are given the most suitable help and encouragement. This detailed use of assessment also ensures that pupils with special educational needs and

the very few who speak English as an additional language are enabled to meet their full potential.

66. The department's major priority is now the raising of the percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades at GCSE. Teachers' expectations of what these pupils can attain are sometimes too low and, as a result, pupils are not extended to their limits. Another area of focus is the raising of boys' level of attainment to match that of girls. The department is very conscious of this need and is taking measures to address it. There is also insufficient regular access to computers to aid pupils with their work in English.

The use of the skills of literacy to support learning across the curriculum

67. The development of literacy has been enhanced by the effort that the school has put into the adoption of the National Literacy Strategy for Years 7, 8 and 9. The school has a full and productive policy to encompass literacy within the whole school. This policy covers the needs of all students, the monitoring of their work, active reading strategies and the support of writing skills. The school makes regular audits of pupils' work and has the support of subjects throughout the school. Teachers have received training and regular meetings are held to explore future initiatives.

68. Most teachers provide good models for oral work, taking the opportunity to promote sustained and structured speech and good listening techniques. Reading is generally fluent and comprehension techniques well emphasised throughout all subjects. Written work is usually of good length and covers a good range of activities.

69. Teaching and learning in literacy for pupils with special educational needs or the very few who speak English as an additional language, are good. Good support measures ensure that every pupil's specific needs are the focus of the literacy plans. These pupils are supported well in lessons by their teachers. There is room for development in the more advanced skills of literacy for the higher attaining pupils.

70. Throughout the rest of the subjects, literacy is well served, often because of the way pupils learn in English. Many individual teachers are aware of the need to take every opportunity to promote literacy skills. Vocabulary for specific subjects is often well stressed and varied styles of writing are now integrated into subjects other than English, such as the recording of scientific experiments and the use of banks of key words. The school is developing a whole school approach to the use of literacy well.

Drama

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment and pupils' progress are good.
- The quality of teaching is very good, resulting in very good learning.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject are good; they enjoy it and gain self-esteem from its practice.
- Assessment is used to very good effect.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Areas for improvement

- There are none which are not being addressed.

71. Standards of attainment in GCSE drama in 2002 were below average compared with those nationally. However, standards seen during the inspection were above average by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11. The subject is becoming increasingly popular as a GCSE option. The very good leadership and teaching, together with the change of syllabus

effected this year have ensured that both Years 10 and 11 are making rapid progress and are likely to attain at least above average standards.

72. Achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9 is very good, with all pupils benefiting from regular weekly drama lessons, during which they not only learn the basic skills of drama, but greatly improve their presentation of themselves and their self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language also find much benefit from the lessons and make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are well provided for and have every opportunity to reach their goals.

73. Pupils' drama coursework folders for GCSE are productive and well organised, reflecting their high level of effort and development. It is clear that they have learnt to evaluate their own and others' work, to analyse the staging and techniques of stagecraft and to work with depth and perception. Their performance skills, as observed in lessons and on videos of their examination work on Hertston Prison and "Dr. Faustus", are informed and well rehearsed, as well as showing an impressive grasp of improvisation work. Work seen in a Year 11 lesson based on improvised work for their examination presentation demonstrated a solid grasp of stage techniques, such as thought tracking and freeze frames, as well as the ability to portray characters with understanding and empathetic response. In Years 7, 8 and 9, the very good rate of progress is clearly evident. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment in oral skills, but, by the end of Year 9, are able to improvise, analyse and understand much of the sub-text of scripts. In one excellent Year 7 lesson, pupils were exploring an extract from Harold Pinter's 'The Dumb Waiter', exploring the importance of varied interpretations. They worked imaginatively and co-operatively, with good emphasis on movement, mime and gesture, as well as speech. Another Year 8 lesson, with a group of lower attaining pupils, produced some very good insight into the techniques of staging the story of Chaucer's 'The Pardoner's Tale'.

74. Teaching is always at least good, sometimes excellent. The drama co-ordinator plans careful schemes of work to ensure that pupils acquire the necessary skills of stagecraft, improvisation, direction and evaluation for GCSE. Units of work planned for Years 7, 8 and 9 are tailor-made to stretch pupils to full potential, as well as making good links with literacy. As a result, pupils are absorbed in their work and learn well. Teaching shows great expertise in the subject and teachers communicate it well to the pupils. Pupils find the subject co-ordinator, who is the only full-time teacher, inspirational. He is adept at coaxing and cajoling the best possible work from pupils, as well as providing them with an excellent role model. Teachers' management of classes is very good, so that the pace of work is good, productive and progressive. Methods are innovative and varied, encouraging pupils to become interested and learn well. In Years 10 and 11, the programmes of study follow those set for the GCSE examination. The subject co-ordinator uses them with relevance and imagination, structuring them to the needs of the pupils. Those for Years 7, 8 and 9 are written by the co-ordinator with the specific needs of the pupils in mind, so that their object is not solely dramatic, but they add significantly to pupils' social and cultural development, their oral literacy skills and their self-knowledge of the way in which they present themselves to others. The subject is accessible to pupils of all abilities and many find that they are able to achieve in this area better than in more academic areas, thus raising their self-esteem. Most pupils show good attitudes towards drama and they clearly enjoy what they are doing. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.

75. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has ensured very good improvement since the last inspection. He has devised all the very good schemes of work, passed on his own good practice to other teachers and inspires pupils to find resources within themselves hitherto unexplored. Assessment procedures are very good, by teachers and by the self-evaluation pupils are taught to make of their own work. The results of assessment are used to great advantage in grouping pupils and in ensuring that work is at the most suitable and challenging level for all abilities.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The subject is well led, with a clear focus on improving standards.
- Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not yet high enough in Years 7-11.
- The use of assessment to help pupils to make even better progress is not yet sufficiently consistent in all lessons.
- Pupils do not express themselves sufficiently well when writing about how they investigate, analyse and solve problems and plan, collect, interpret and refine information, when tackling coursework.

76. There has been good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. Good leadership and staff teamwork and pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, result in better than might be expected achievement, considering pupils' standards when they enter the school. Standards of work seen in the inspection are now average overall and are well above average for the higher attaining pupils. The standards are achieved are due to good teaching.

77. National test results in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 9 are well below those for all schools and below those for schools with similar social backgrounds. There is no significant difference in boys' and girls' performance. However, since the previous inspection, results have improved at a similar rate to the national average. At GCSE, whilst results for 2002 are below the national average for all schools, the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in mathematics is above the school average for all subjects and higher than the other core subjects. Boys outperform girls by a significant margin, but few pupils achieve the highest grades. Progress in mathematics between the age of 14 and 16 is now well above the national average. Due to the recent changes in staff and their higher expectations, both in teaching and in planning for mathematics, the standards of work seen in the inspection are much closer to the average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11.

78. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. By the end of Year 9, most pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Good teaching has ensured pupils have better numerical and algebraic skills, so that by Year 9, the most average attaining pupils can simplify expressions and solve linear equations and percentage problems. They know the properties of angles in geometrical shapes and can calculate the mean of a frequency distribution. Low attainers in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in using their own strategies to solve problems mentally. They can also substitute values in expressions, work out averages and construct and build three-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils confidently tackle problems, applying their knowledge of co-ordinates and curve sketching to find the region bounded by a set of inequalities. By the end of Year 11, most pupils are well equipped to cope with the demands of number in life after school. Average and higher attaining Year 11 pupils know when to apply Pythagoras and trigonometrical ratios appropriately when faced with problems involving missing sides and angles, with the highest attaining pupils using the sine and cosine rule effectively. The majority of average and higher attaining Year 10 pupils know and apply a range of statistical methods, including cumulative frequency and lines of best fit in their coursework, with the highest attainers using the Spearman's Rank coefficient to measure correlation. Low ability Year 10 and 11 pupils can calculate probability and circumferences, draw graphs, plot lines and convert between different measures. These

pupils still lack confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. Across all age groups, pupils' ability to explain in writing how they plan, collect, interpret and refine information, analyse and solve problems and tackle problems and investigations is a relative weakness.

79. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 7 to 9, they are good in just over half the lessons and in Years 10 and 11 they are very good in over half the lessons. Good subject knowledge and well established classroom routines, together with high expectations and pace in lessons ensure that pupils learn well overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the better lessons, teachers use a wide range of resources and methods, work the pupils hard and ask penetrating questions to encourage pupils to apply their knowledge to new situations. Where lessons are only satisfactory, pupil-teacher interaction is limited and teaching lacks precision in telling pupils what they need to do to learn and achieve. Very good attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to pupils' learning. In the lessons seen, only when pupils were unclear of the purpose of the planned activities was there inappropriate behaviour. This resulted in one unsatisfactory lesson. The overall quality of lesson planning is good. There is an emphasis on improving basic skills, on developing mathematical vocabulary and good opportunities for pupils to develop key links to Citizenship skills. However, there is little to support pupils' spiritual and cultural development through mathematics. Teachers give freely of their time to all pupils. They organise special homework sessions for pupils with special educational needs, revision classes for Year 9 and 11, and after school early-entry GCSE statistics classes carefully matched to the needs of middle and higher attainers in Year 10. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and those who are gifted make very good progress. Pupil-teacher relationships are very good and this gives pupils greater confidence in their mathematical ability. Pupils respond very positively, tidying up the bright, well-organised classrooms at the end of lessons and using the displays to look for answers, spellings or examples to support their learning. Teachers mark regularly and identify pupils' attainment well, but rarely use the outcomes of assessment to ensure that pupils make even better progress. Similarly, computer software is used to test pupils' knowledge and understanding in aspects of mathematics, but is insufficiently used by pupils or teachers to improve learning. The use of homework is satisfactory.

80. Leadership and management in mathematics are good. The new scheme of work builds in increased levels of expectation and challenge for all pupils. Recent changes in staff and in the classes that they teach, together with improved resources and a higher subject profile in the school, contribute to improving standards. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting the work of the department. These include the use of assessment data to identify targets for improvement, to place pupils in appropriate groups and to monitor their progress. The new subject team also checks the setting of homework, the quality of pupils' work in their books and classroom teaching and learning. The professional development of staff is closely linked to subject improvement priorities, but action planning does not sufficiently indicate how any improvements will be achieved.

The use of the skills of numeracy to support learning across the curriculum

81. Since the last inspection, there has been good progress in teaching the skills of numeracy. The new scheme of work for mathematics, the school numeracy policy, the "Family Curriculum" document and better teaching all contribute to the improvement seen during the inspection. There are some good examples of pupils' application of number skills in geography, science and technology. Pupils estimate distances and areas on maps, measure accurately, interpret scales, manipulate equations, convert between units and present data in a wide range of graphical formats. Pupils' mental agility, application of the four rules of number, skills in measurement and graphicacy have improved to such an extent that numeracy no longer impedes pupils' access to other subjects in the curriculum. In spite of this, the teaching of numeracy skills by other subjects is inconsistent.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Vigorous and energetic leadership provides a clear vision for the future of the subject.
- Pupils achieve very well.
- Staff and pupils share high expectations of what they can achieve.
- A very strong team of committed staff ensures that teaching is of a very high quality.
- Accommodation and resources are well ordered and of high quality.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are still too low at the end of Year 11.
- Some actions and targets in the departmental improvement plan are not yet sufficiently specific.

82. Science has improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards of work seen in the inspection are above average overall. These are achieved because the teaching is very good. Pupils' very good attitudes and the provision of high quality accommodation and resources also contribute to very good learning. As a result, pupils' overall achievement in relation to their standards when they begin in Year 7 is very good.

83. Results in national tests at the age of fourteen are average for pupils achieving level 5 and above but have risen over the last three years at a faster rate than the national trend. The proportion of pupils achieving level 6 or above is below average. Boys do as well as girls. In comparison with schools with similar social backgrounds and similar prior attainment, results are well above average. GCSE results were well below average in 2002 but there has been a trend of improvement over the last three years. Girls' results are better than boys' and the number of pupils attaining the highest grades is much lower than is seen nationally. Standards of work seen in Years 7-9 were in line with national test results. By the age of fourteen most pupils can plan an investigation, identifying the key factors that need to be considered in a fair test and selecting the appropriate apparatus. Most pupils can also record their measurements and observations systematically and present their data as line graphs. However, average and lower attaining pupils are not able to describe acceleration from a graph of data or calculate average speed independently. Standards of work seen in Years 10 -11 were above average. By the age of sixteen most pupils can represent data in graphs using lines of best fit and they can calculate percentage composition of chemical compounds. Higher attaining pupils can calculate the half-life of radioactive sources from graphical representations of beta decay. They can calculate the time taken for an object to reach terminal velocity from velocity/time graphs and relate this well to their knowledge of unbalanced forces. These pupils can re-arrange formulae, changing the subject of an equation, and use this to calculate the resistance in a circuit. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in Years 7 to 9 are good and very good in Years 10 and 11; this helps them to learn very well.

84. By the end of Year 9 most pupils achieve very well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils of all levels of attainment develop the ability to plan and carry out science investigations and represent their findings in a variety of ways. They develop the ability to evaluate their results and begin to suggest improvements to their work. The development of pupils' scientific enquiry skills relies on regular exposure to full science investigations rather than the ongoing, planned development of the specific skills. By the end of Year 11 most pupils achieve very well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. They build very effectively on what is achieved in Years 7 to 9 and the knowledge and skills that they have developed stand them in good stead for the GCSE course. Good levels of support and encouragement are provided for pupils who have special educational needs and as a result they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils, and those who are identified as

being gifted or talented, also make good progress overall, as a result of the high levels of challenge offered to them.

85. Teaching and learning are very good. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are very good or better in half of lessons. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are very good or better in over half of lessons. Overall, the teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills is satisfactory. The use of homework is good. Pupils learn very well in most lessons because teachers have high expectations of what can be achieved. They provide clear explanations of the science involved because their knowledge of the subject is very good. Teachers draw on a wide range of very good teaching styles to present their subject in a variety of stimulating ways. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils learnt how to use the particle theory to explain pressure in solids and liquids. In this lesson, pupils observed a water rocket taking off and then used a computer simulation to investigate the effects of adding more water to the rocket. Pupils made excellent progress in this lesson as a result of highly effective and stimulating teaching. The structure of this lesson also provided pupils with an opportunity to make connections between different aspects of their learning, supporting their spiritual development well. In a Year 10 lesson, more able pupils made very good progress when learning about the fractional distillation of crude oil. In this lesson, the teacher used different sized magnets to represent different sized molecules and demonstrate the effect of particle size on the separation of different fractions from crude oil. The result was that all pupils were able to visualise how different fractions of oil are separated at a molecular level and could then apply this successfully to examination questions related to fractional distillation. In comparison, Year 8 pupils made only satisfactory progress in a lesson on soil types. Although by the end of the lesson, pupils could describe how to test the acidity of a soil sample as a result of them carrying out a simple experiment, they were insufficiently challenged due to the routine nature of the activity.

86. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of science provides high quality leadership to a very strong team of highly committed and enthusiastic staff. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The quality of teaching has improved and is now very good overall and pupils achieve very well as a result. This has had an impact on standards that are now at the national average by the end of Year 9. Management of the department is also very good and this ensures that it runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis. The team shares very high expectations of what can be achieved by all pupils and, as a result, the numbers of pupils attaining two GCSEs in science are higher than national figures. However, the number of pupils attaining the highest GCSE grades is still too low. Similarly, by the end of Year 9, whilst the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 and above is now at the national average, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels remains too low. The accommodation and the range of resources for science, including modern technology, are very good. They make a very positive contribution to the increasingly high standards. However, the departmental improvement plan does not yet contain targets that are costed and sufficiently specific to the continued raising of these standards.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The leadership and management of the department result in positive relationships and a good atmosphere for learning.
- The teaching staff offers a wide range of expertise.
- The accommodation is new, well maintained and contributes well to the pupils' learning.
- The GCSE results, over time, are amongst the best in the school.

Areas for improvement

- The lack of opportunities for pupils to work with ICT is a breach of the statutory requirements relating to the National Curriculum.
- Overall standards are too low because pupils' understanding and use of drawing is not sufficiently well developed, and they do not use sketchbooks well for investigation and experimentation.

87. The art and design department has made satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection, although overall standards of work are not as high. This is largely because the pupils' basic skills of drawing and their use of sketchbooks are not sufficiently well developed, albeit from a lower starting point, and they do not use computers to create or manipulate artwork. However, the GCSE results are consistently amongst the best in the school. Pupils enjoy their art and design lessons. Teaching and learning are good overall and pupils respect their teachers, the subject and the processes and materials made available to them.

88. The 2002 GCSE results were well below average and similar to those in recent years. However, every pupil who completed the GCSE course was awarded a pass between A* and G. Teachers' assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 were well below average.

89. Standards are well below average in Years 7, 8 and 9 and below average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils do not draw often enough for different reasons and shading often contradicts form rather than accentuating it. Pupils prefer to draw from their imagination, rather than observation. This contributes to their strong dependence on teachers for guidance and limits their understanding of how well they are doing or how they might improve. Sketchbooks are not well used for investigation; experimentation or preparation work and pupils do not refer to them as they work. Pupils draw with pastel, crayon or oil pastel to add linear elements and surface texture to paintings or prints. They do not yet generate imagery with computers, scanners or digital cameras or use specialist software. They are happy to accept new methods of working or using mixed media in both two and three dimensions. The design element in pupils' work is strong and they are comfortable working with colour and mixed media in innovative ways, merging print, paint and drawing in original, personal ways. Pupils have good general knowledge of art and design and are able to look at and make connections with their own work and Russian icons, Islamic art and Aboriginal paintings. Much of their writing on Islamic patterns, famous artists and textile artists is taken from books or the Internet and pupils seldom offer an opinion of the work. Drawing is used effectively as an element in pupils' compositions, rather better than it is used to select and record specific information. Annotation is less well developed than is usual and, while pupils are pleased to explain their work, they are not always comfortable using appropriate subject vocabulary. Pupils confidently exploit materials to create engaging decorative effects. This work is inspired by visits to the Wigan Arts Centre, where they work with artists-in-residence. The pupils' response to the wide range of GCSE courses, including creative textiles, also leads to exciting, colourful compositions. Their textiles work, with its very good experimentation into fabric dyed, machine embroidered, sometimes embellished with macramé and knotting, is increasingly investigative and experimental. Paintings are

beginning to take on this experimental quality, following the pupils' working with and visiting practising artists' exhibitions.

90. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. They are able to follow starting points and develop materials and ideas, influenced by famous artists into paintings, prints or sculpture. Their ability to work independently is limited by their weaker than usual basic skills and they depend on their teachers for step-by-step guidance. Although pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to rely on their teachers for guidance, their confidence in using a wider range of methods and materials allied to their more mature attitudes result in their achievements being good. Those who are least capable in art and design make good progress thanks to their teachers' clear demonstrations of the work at the beginnings of lessons and the way they circulate in lessons, assessing, offering guidance and encouragement so that all pupils might learn. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Those who are most capable make good progress in art and design, with the expected numbers of pupils gaining the highest A* and A grades in the GCSE examination.

91. Teaching and learning in art and design are good overall. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and create a climate in which good relationships flourish. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and respect their teachers and the work of the department. Lessons are well planned and invariably begin with a clear exposition of what pupils are expected to learn. The ends of lessons are less well planned with few opportunities to review learning or to look at and appreciate classmates' work. The teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills is satisfactory and the overall quality of teaching enables pupils to achieve well overall. For example, Year 8 pupils make good progress when designing and constructing 'mini beasts' following the recent visit of an artist-in-residence. Their ability to construct sculptures from card, tape and Plaster of Paris is impressive. Another group, working on the same project, make equally good progress using wax crayons and dye on distressed paper to produce richly coloured material to cover and enhance their sculptures. Year 10 pupils make very good gains in knowledge and understanding in a textiles lesson centred on a self-portrait. The pupils paste layers of different coloured tissue paper to a line drawing of themselves and the colours overlap and intensify progressively, allowing a better understanding of the methods of textile designers, while developing their own designing skills. Although homework is planned systematically, it is not always sufficiently demanding to allow the full range of pupils to develop their work away from school. Teachers' expectations are high and their management of pupils is generally good.

92. The leadership and management of the subject are good overall. The teaching staff is well qualified and this permits the department to offer a broad curriculum and a wide range of GCSE courses. Pupils are introduced to a range of European and multi-cultural art and artists and explore the spiritual and religious content in work from Europe and the wider world. Assessment in art and design is thorough and the extensive information gathered from assessment is well used for target setting and to make sure that pupils perform according to their potential. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Development planning is aimed at raising attainment and closely follows the school development plan, but there are insufficient details of desirable outcomes necessary to implement the plans. The shortage of computers and software, and the difficulty in gaining access to computer suites, prevent full delivery of the National Curriculum. There is a strong sense of teamwork within the department and teachers have the determination and the capacity to continue to improve. While standards of observational drawing have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement overall. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design and the work of famous artists is now good. The department is situated in a new, purpose built block and accommodation is now very good.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been planned well.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The school council is effective in involving all pupils in Years 7-11 and this promotes positive attitudes towards the school community.

Areas for improvement

- Procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across the school and the use of the information obtained, are poor.
- Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in citizenship are not yet included in the school's monitoring schedules.

93. The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been well planned. Overall, pupils reach expected standards at the end of Years 9 and 11. For the most part, they are interested in the subject and keen to learn. They show good attitudes in Years 7, 8 and 9 and very good attitudes in Years 10 and 11. Achievement across all groups of pupils is generally good, but for higher attaining pupils it is only satisfactory.

94. Standards of work seen in the inspection were satisfactory overall. Higher attaining pupils complete the work set but it does not always require them to demonstrate higher order skills and understanding and is not assessed to the National Curriculum attainment targets. Girls and boys are equally interested in the subject and respond well when working independently, in pairs, small groups or asked to join in whole class discussions. A small minority of lower attaining pupils underachieve in lessons as a result of teachers not setting them sufficiently challenging work, or not requiring them to work at a demanding pace. Pupils with special educational needs, however, make good progress because they receive good support from learning support assistants and the tasks and materials are suitably matched to their needs.

95. Most pupils achieve well in Years 7-11. Year 7 pupils with special educational needs can explore the nature and seriousness of some crimes and imagine how their families might feel if they were the victims or the perpetrators of such crimes. Year 8 pupils can explain where crime might occur in their community and suggest how they can avoid becoming victims of it. Year 9 pupils can justify orally a personal opinion about a specific issue; making reasoned judgements about their feelings. They are able to consider other people's experiences and contribute to group and class discussions. Year 10 pupils can judge how issues and opinions are presented in articles and texts presenting a particular point of view. Year 11 pupils can relate their developing understanding of the significant symbols and beliefs of Islam to a wider understanding of the diverse religious identities in the United Kingdom. They can also plan an argument that might be presented at a meeting of the local council for and against permission for the siting of a new factory. The curriculum provides many opportunities, across all years, for pupils to speak, listen, research and write within a range of situations that help them to become informed citizens. Many are developing skills of enquiry and can challenge stereotypes. They are learning to justify and express opinion orally and in writing.

96. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lesson planning is effective with teachers highlighting citizenship learning objectives to pupils that are linked directly to the three statutory elements in the National Curriculum. Most teachers employ a range of methods including paired tasks, small group work, independent research and whole class discussions and debates. These lessons motivate and engage the majority of pupils who show that they

can consider the experiences of others, negotiate, decide and take part in challenging discussions.

97. The citizenship curriculum in Years 7-11 is very well planned, with elements being covered in the personal, social and health education programme, as well as planned opportunities in all other National Curriculum subjects and religious education. A very good audit, undertaken by the citizenship co-ordinator, which included interviews with all heads of faculty, has resulted in a scheme of work that is well matched to National Curriculum requirements. In addition to the planned curriculum, there are many other opportunities where pupils can develop further their skills of enquiry and communication, can take responsible actions and improve their understanding of how informed citizens might behave. These include working as school receptionists, the work of the year and school councils, whole school assemblies, charity work and volunteering at school and in the local community.

98. The co-ordinator for citizenship shows good leadership and has developed a well-planned citizenship programme delivered through personal and social education and all subjects. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in citizenship are not yet included in the school's monitoring schedules. The school has set up a good system to encourage pupils to record their experiences of volunteering and participating in school and community-based activities. However, pupils are not consistently encouraged, or supported by form tutors, to do this, and the purpose of the citizenship file is unclear to pupils and tutors alike. Pupils are encouraged by teachers to record the elements of citizenship that they are studying in different lessons in their planners, but the use and purpose of this activity is also unclear. Procedures for assessing pupils' development in knowledge, skills and understanding in citizenship, in order to judge their attainment at the end of Year 9 and 11, are poor.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching in hospitality and catering and in textiles is good.
- Pupils enjoy and respond well to practical work.

Areas for improvement

- The leadership and management of design and technology are unsatisfactory and do not promote high enough standards of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' attainment, their standards of work and their achievements across Years 7-11 are not high enough.
- Teachers' marking and their use of assessment information to monitor and challenge the progress that pupils' make are unsatisfactory.
- There is not enough use of ICT to improve pupils' design, drawing and presentation skills across all aspects of the subject in all years.
- There is insufficient opportunity for higher attaining pupils to study a vocational or a modern technological subject to GCSE level.

99. Although the introduction of technologically based vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 has enabled lower attaining pupils to experience more success overall in this aspect of the school's work, provision for design and technology itself has not improved since the last inspection. Standards of work seen are well below average overall. This is due to unsatisfactory leadership and management of the subject and unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Pupils' overall achievement in relation to their attainment on entry to the school is unsatisfactory. Their overall attitudes to the subject are, similarly, unsatisfactory.

100. 2002 GCSE results at grades A*-C were far below average in 2002 for both food technology and graphic products. In both subjects no boys achieved at the higher levels, although all gained at least a grade 'G'. In the previous year, results for both subjects were similar. Results in resistant materials were also well below average in 2001. In 2002, the overall results achieved in design and technology were significantly below those of all other subjects in the school. Teachers' assessments show that attainment at the end of Year 9 is well below the national average. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7-9 are below average. By the age of fourteen, higher and average attaining pupils are better at making than designing. Their drawing skills and presentation skills are under-developed. The evaluation of work by lower attainers is poor, but is improving through carefully structured writing aids. Standards of work in Years 10-11 are well below average. By the age of sixteen, there is insufficient breadth in pupils' research, very little analysis and consideration of industrial practices in GCSE resistant materials, food technology and graphics. In resistant materials, pupils spend more time making their product than designing, and folders show very little product development. Pupils following NVQ courses have acquired the practical skills necessary to make a kebab and pizza in catering and cut tiles, lay bricks and complete various carpentry tasks in building crafts.

101. By the end of Year 9, most pupils make unsatisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Their achievement is being held back due to the lack of teachers' planning for learning at an appropriate level. Higher and average attainers therefore complete work that does not sufficiently challenge their thinking. Activities are mundane and, in a number of lessons, many pupils revert to personal discussions, rather than persevere with their learning. Drawing and presentation techniques are particularly poor. In the few instances where teaching is well planned, pupils are clear about what is expected and activities are sequenced appropriately. For example, in two Year 7 lessons pupils draw with care to produce step-by-step planning that is of a higher standard than previous work contained in their folders. By the end of Year 11, most pupils achieve well below expectations, given their attainment at the end of Year 9. There is very little detail of final design and ideas for manufacturing in pupils' folders in resistant materials and graphics, especially in relation to industrial practices. The design and drawing of projects in resistant materials in Year 10 falls well short of expectations. Overall, much of the work planned for lower attaining pupils is appropriate and they make satisfactory progress. Very little work is provided to stretch the highest attaining pupils who make unsatisfactory progress in all years.

102. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall in Years 7-11, although they are good in hospitality and catering and in textiles. Although most teachers have generally sound subject knowledge, they do not understand the levels at which pupils should be working. In general, teachers' expectations are too low, planned activities are unchallenging and unstimulating, and pupils' loose interest quickly. In some lessons these features lead to unsatisfactory pupils' attitudes to learning, occasionally resulting in poor behaviour that is, at times, not sufficiently well controlled. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils entered simple data into a computer to produce a graph for their folder. However, the majority had completed this activity many times before in other subjects. Many pupils working in a Year 8 electronics lesson were slow to complete the activities and became restless and noisy. Their construction of the circuit was too easy and did not reflect methods used in modern circuit design. Nevertheless, where teachers understand fully the needs of pupils, good learning takes place. For example, in a Year 7 textiles lesson, good questioning skills by the teacher provided constant support for pupils in an evaluation of their 'Eye of God' talisman. Pupils in all years respond well to practical work, particularly when it is well introduced and structured. The use of assessment information to help pupils to understand the levels at which they are working and what they need to do better to improve further, is unsatisfactory. Teachers themselves do not use this information well enough to adjust their planning to meet the changing needs of individual pupils. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is generally satisfactory, with most teachers sharing key vocabulary in each lesson. However, there is too much inconsistency in the ways in which pupils are expected to use technical

language, write in paragraphs with appropriate punctuation, and use simple number calculations to determine the accuracy of their measurements and cutting techniques. In Years 10 and 11 teaching does not result in pupils' learning that produces step-by-step planning that is of a high quality. Pupils are provided with too much information, rather than encouraged to research it for themselves, then to choose the most appropriate method of presenting it. They have very little understanding of the best materials to use and little thought about how their product might be produced in an industrial setting. Teachers delivering the vocational aspect of design and technology, however, are very comfortable with this way of learning. Assessment is regularly discussed and pupils respond favourably to the less informal approach adopted in both the CITB classroom and College of Further Education.

103. Improvement since the last inspection in design and technology is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory, as are current arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and achievement. Procedures for target setting, then checking the progress that all pupils make towards these targets, are also unsatisfactory. The programme of work for Years 7-11 does not yet provide the full balance of design and technology activities, with insufficient attention given to electronics, systems and control and the use of modern materials. Planning for the use of ICT is in place, but too few teachers use computers regularly enough to support pupils' learning. Some elements of design and technology, such as food and textiles, provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to work together to develop their social and moral skills. Aspects of Citizenship are also dealt with satisfactorily in these subjects. Overall accommodation is satisfactory, although there are no specialist facilities for the teaching of textiles or electronics. The general quality and range of materials available for pupils to use in their project work are unsatisfactory. These shortfalls hinder progress and final outcomes. Although good progress has been made since the last inspection in the introduction of technologically based vocational courses for lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11, more challenging vocational qualifications are not yet available to average and higher attaining pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching in Years 7-11 is good.
- Levels of attainment are improving and pupils make good progress throughout the school, particularly in their development of geographical skills.
- Teachers have high expectations and challenge most pupils well.
- Teachers create a secure environment in which pupils enjoy learning.
- Teachers make good use of the resources available to them.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not know or use the national standards well enough to improve their planning, especially to ensure that higher attaining pupils make appropriate progress. Some of the marking in pupils' books does not give them helpful hints about how to improve.
- The targets in the subject development plan are not precise enough, neither in terms of where the subject is, nor exactly how it will improve.
- There is not enough use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.

104. Standards in geography have improved significantly since the last inspection. The quality of leadership and management is good and this enables the improvement to be achieved despite a reduction in the time available to teach the subject. The teaching is good throughout the school and in many lessons is very good. Most pupils make good progress

from their mixed, but mainly below average starting point in Year 7. They show good attitudes to learning.

105. 2002 GCSE results were below average. Nevertheless, this shows a continued upward trend over the previous three years, as results have improved from well below average. Although only a small number of pupils sat the examination, no higher grades were attained and only boys achieved above a grade C. Current standards of work in Years 10-11 are below average but show more even performance across boys and girls, and the potential for a wider range of grades. By the age of 14, attainment is below the expected level, but teacher assessments for 2002 shows a big improvement on the previous three years. Although standards of work in Years 7-9 are still below average, the improving programme of work planned for pupils, especially the focus on developing specific skills of geography, is having a positive effect on pupils' confidence and on their learning. This, and the way teachers encourage pupils to express themselves openly in class, is enabling more of them to reach better standards. In lessons, 16-year-old pupils talk about renewable sources of energy using the correct technical terms and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of the various schemes. 14-year-olds work effectively to arrive at conclusions about how different land use demands cause conflict and how these conflicts need to be properly planned for. Both 16 and 14 year olds display appropriate skills of questioning and explanation and are able to communicate their ideas effectively. Lower attaining pupils often display good levels of geographical understanding when they speak, but do considerably less well when they have to write things down. High attaining pupils, who show better skills, often stop short of writing quality evaluations of their own project work, or only look at information on a superficial level. Overall standards seen in lessons are above those indicated by the tests, but remain below average.

106. In lessons most pupils achieve well, given their below average starting point. This is a direct result of the overall good levels of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The well-planned lessons provide a strong structure for skills' development and this enables most pupils to improve at a better than average rate. By age 14 most pupils are able to apply map, aerial photograph and data analysis skills to a good range of places. They analyse shopping trends in West Leigh and the positive and negative impacts of tourism on Benidorm. They have good knowledge of how less economically developed countries compare to ones like Britain. From this base, by 16 they build a good understanding of how places like Castleton manage tourist impact or how tropical places deal with hazards. Throughout their time at school they build logically on their abilities to describe and explain the ways in which people interact with the places they live. They can describe patterns in the way things are found in similar places.

107. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well thought out, and interesting resources and contexts are used to engage pupils from the start of most lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use this well to prompt and coax pupils into thinking for themselves or to set up sessions where they can learn effectively in pairs or groups. The pupils respond well to this provision. In most lessons they are well behaved and concentrate for good periods of time. A handful of younger pupils, mainly boys, are less well behaved and this sometimes disrupts the flow of a small part of some lessons. The teachers' planning for some of the highest attaining pupils is not well enough informed by national standards to offer the opportunities for reaching the highest levels. The challenge in these lessons is too often to do more of the same, rather than a clear instruction about what is actually required for higher attainment. As a result, the progress made by the highest attaining pupils is unsatisfactory. The use of ongoing assessment is generally satisfactory but not all of the marking in pupils' books gives them helpful hints about how to improve. There are good opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy and literacy skills, but pupils' use of ICT in their learning is too infrequent. The use of homework is satisfactory.

108. The subject is well lead and managed by an experienced member of staff who is systematically providing a good and improving experience for the great majority of pupils. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have added generously to the resources available and have established a real geographical presence in the school. Fieldwork is offered, and the necessary increase in this aspect of work is planned for next year. The subject development plan has other such good intentions, but is not precise enough to point the way to, or to enable efficient monitoring of, an even better level of provision.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils, are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Areas for improvement.

- Standards by the age of 14 are not high enough. In particular, the tasks and resources for higher attaining pupils do not yet challenge them sufficiently.
- ICT and out of school visits are not used sufficiently to assist pupils' learning.

109. Overall, good progress has been made since the time of the last inspection. Although, standards of work seen are below average, this now represents good achievement in relation to pupils' very low starting points in the skills of history. This is due to the good quality of teaching, pupils' good attitudes to learning and the good relationships between pupils and teachers.

110. The 2002 GCSE examination results were slightly above the national average for pupils achieving A*-C and slightly below average for pupils achieving A*-G. Girls outperformed boys at the higher levels. This represents a significant improvement since 2001. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show levels of attainment to be well below average. This has remained constant over the past three years.

111. By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievements in relation to their very low standards on entry to the school are good. Pupils of all abilities can communicate using appropriate historical terms because these are taught well from Year 7. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate the capacity to express their ideas and the results of their investigations by writing to a good length. They select evidence well to support conclusions, and are beginning to understand the interrelationship of causes as demonstrated through work on World War One. On occasions, however, they are restricted from demonstrating attainment at the highest levels due to the over-structured nature of some tasks. The ability of pupils to understand different interpretations of history is generally weaker because they have fewer opportunities to develop this skill. The progress made by average and lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, is good.

112. Overall standards in Years 10-11 are below average, although pupils' achievement over time is good. Higher attaining pupils become more adept at using their own knowledge, placing events in a wider historical context and organising information to answer specific questions as demonstrated in work on changes in Russia during the 1930's. Lower attaining pupils make gains in organising and presenting work but tend to copy information from sources with little analysis. Good pupils' attitudes and the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils make a positive contribution to learning.

113. Teaching and learning are good overall, although examples of very good and outstanding teaching were also observed. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on Cromwell. High teachers' expectations, good planning and the use of clear objectives typify all lessons. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding and there is a good match of work to the needs of lower and average attaining pupils. However, the department does not yet have specific targets for gifted and talented pupils, or strategies for challenging the more able. The progress made by the highest attaining pupils is therefore unsatisfactory. Very good relationships exist between pupils and teachers. Most pupils respond positively and maturely in lessons, sustaining concentration for long periods. Pupils' work is marked regularly, using agreed school codes, and there is emerging good practice in providing pupils with advice to enable them to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to achieve better. Good use is made of attainment information in Years 10 and 11 to establish individual targets for pupils and regular assessments enable progress against targets to be measured. The use of homework is good. Annual reports to parents contain insufficient information on the gains that pupils make in their knowledge, skills and understanding of history, and targets for improvement are weak. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect upon moral issues and to develop an understanding of the traditions of people from other cultures. Opportunities to develop literacy skills are also good. The use of ICT, however, to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory, and opportunities to enhance pupils' learning through visits to historical sites is under-developed.

114. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There are good systems for monitoring teaching, learning and pupils' progress. Schemes of work provide a satisfactory framework for the teaching of history and Citizenship, but do not yet incorporate sufficiently the key messages emerging from the national strategies for teaching and learning. There are not enough opportunities planned to develop pupils' ICT skills or to stretch the highest attainers. Good quality display work is used to stimulate pupils' learning and to celebrate their achievements. The department improvement plan is not yet satisfactory. Desirable outcomes are not specific and it is unclear how actions will be monitored and evaluated. Time allocation in Years 7 to 9 is low and this inhibits the breadth and depth of the curriculum on offer.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to pupils achieving well at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Pupils make good progress because they are interested in the subject.

Areas for improvement

- All pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not taught how to use ICT to control events.
- The use of ICT in most subjects is unsatisfactory so that pupils are not developing further their skills as independent users. This is particularly the case in art and design where statutory requirements are not met.

115. There has been satisfactory improvement in ICT since the last inspection and the school has the capacity to improve still further. Although standards of work are average at the end of Year 9 and below average at the end of Year 11, pupils' overall achievement in relation to their standards in Year 7, is good. This is due to the good teaching and positive pupils' attitudes.

116. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average. Few pupils have been entered for GCSE in recent years. Standards of work of pupils at the end of Year 11, as seen during the inspection, are below average, but are improving. Higher attaining pupils are working at above average standards. The courses now followed give pupils more opportunity to be

successful. The improved resources have also helped considerably. Attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2002, as shown by teachers' own assessments, was above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is rising. Standards seen in lessons are average. Pupils' good attitudes help their learning. They are interested, concentrate and enjoy ICT. Pupils show curiosity by their questioning of the teacher to further extend their knowledge. There is no difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

117. Pupils' achievement is good at the end of Year 9. They develop good skills and understanding of how to use different types of software. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 use spreadsheets to graph information very well. They revise and improve their graphs to make them suitable for the intended audience. They describe the limitations of different ways of handling information well. They evaluate their work well and have good understanding of how it can be improved. Middle attaining pupils also use spreadsheets to graph information but their presentations do not give a clear message to the reader. Lower attaining pupils' skills in presenting information develop well as they move from Years 7 to 9. Their understanding of layout and their use of the spell check facility improve their presentations considerably. Most pupils in Year 8 show good presentational skills in formatting a letter as part of their project on global travel. Most pupils in Year 7 understand basic points about how ICT can be used to control events. They describe concisely how to program a series of commands. They can then describe their results in a manner that shows good learning as they progress through the module of work.

118. Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 11 is also good. Higher attaining pupils are particularly adept at analysing and explaining why a particular piece of software is suitable for a specific task. Their powers of reasoning are especially strong. They interpret and interrogate information using a database very well by posing appropriate queries. Lower attaining pupils are confident users of ICT and use some aspects of word processing software well. They can format and change text, insert graphics and pictures. However, they need a lot of help from their teachers to ensure that their work is suitable for the intended audience. The small numbers in some classes enable teachers to give good individual assistance to pupils with special educational needs. As a result they make good progress. Most pupils take care with their coursework files. These are well presented and very detailed because of the good guidance given by their teachers. Most pupils' skills in using number are sufficient to enable them to meet the requirements of their coursework.

119. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning is never less than good, with one lesson out of five being very good. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory with almost all lessons being good. Pupils learn well in lessons because teachers are well prepared. The tasks they set are clearly explained. Good demonstrations, using projectors and interactive white boards, also make the tasks clear to the pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They respond to questions well and are able to give more detailed answers and tasks to higher attainers. All pupils, but especially those with special educational needs, learn well because of the active support from their teachers. Pupils' understanding of ICT words is good because of the emphasis that their teachers put on these words in their questioning. In the best lessons tasks are given which stretch the higher attaining pupils. Most teachers use appropriate techniques that make the pupils think. The answers are not provided for them. As a result, pupils are actively engaged in their learning. Behaviour is good in most lessons so that learning proceeds without interruption. A particular strength is the provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to work together and to help each other. They do this willingly and well. The use of homework is satisfactory.

120. The ICT department is well led and managed. There is a clear focus on improving standards. The provision of an extra qualification for pupils in Year 9 illustrates this well. Courses are well planned and enable pupils' skills to develop as they move through the school. Assessment procedures for checking how well pupils are progressing, are good. Marking is also good. A particular strength is the advice given to pupils on how to improve

their work that is specific to the subject. Teaching and learning is well monitored and supported. Pupils make good progress as they enter Year 7 because of the good links with their primary schools. Pupils' access to the computers is well maintained by the good provision, and expertise, of the technical support staff. Computer resources are good. Pupils use these well outside lesson time because their teachers and support staff give of their time readily. However not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are taught how to control events as required by the national curriculum. The detailed contribution that other subjects make to the development of pupils' ICT skills is still not planned systematically.

The use of the skills of ICT to support learning across the curriculum

121. The overall provision for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Very good provision does exist in some areas, notably in music and science. The use of data logging equipment and sensors in science is excellent in some lessons. In music ICT is used very well for composition, for keyboard sequencing and for exploring its impact on the development of music. Some subjects encourage pupils to use ICT for their coursework in Years 10 and 11 and for research using the Internet. However, most subjects still do not incorporate ICT fully into their teaching. As a result opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills to become independent users of ICT are limited.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The good leadership of the department has resulted in many improvements.
- Teachers contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development.
- Higher attainers in German achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- The marking of pupils' written work in Years 7-9 lacks rigour.
- Standards of accuracy and presentation in the work of some pupils in Year 7-9 are not high enough.
- The curricular time for French for higher attainers in Year 9 is insufficient and this restricts their overall progress.

122. There has been good improvement in the provision for modern foreign languages since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are now good. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are usually good. Standards of work seen in French are below average in Years 7-10 and average in Year 11. Standards for a small class in German in Year 11 are above average. Pupils' overall achievement in relation to their standards when they begin in Year 7 is satisfactory.

123. Many pupils are disapplied from modern languages in order to follow a more appropriate curriculum. Results in GCSE in French for approximately half the year group in 2002 were well below the national average and below average at grades A*-G. This represents a downward trend from 2001. The department attributes this to pupils' absence for one of the modules which pupils were not able to re-sit. These pupils did not meet their predicted grades. Pupils no longer follow the modular course. Girls' results were better than those of boys, and the difference between the two was greater than that seen nationally. No boy attained a high grade (A* or A) in French or German. Results for a small group of higher attainers in German in 2002 were significantly above average. All pupils attained grades A*-C, and this represents good achievement. Results for the previous two years were consistently high. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are average. By the age of sixteen, pupils write with commendable accuracy for their coursework about different topics – work experience, school and school uniform, and holidays. Teachers and pupils have worked hard

on this component of the examination. Nevertheless, pupils still lack confidence in speaking and reading aloud.

124. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2002 suggest that their overall standard was well below the national average. Standards have improved, particularly in writing, and work seen in the inspection is below average. By the age of fourteen, most pupils understand the key words and constructions of different topics and the French used in class by the teachers. Pupils are less confident with speaking. Many pupils write at an appropriate level, but accuracy varies.

125. By the end of Year 9, most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. They acquire the key words and constructions that help them to complete tasks in four different skills. For example, higher attainers in Year 7 and 8 successfully extracted information from cassette and noted it about animals and homes respectively. Middle attainers in Year 8 scored well in a listening exercise. Lower attainers in Year 9 recognised different items of food. Useful, home-produced booklets help pupils to consolidate the key words and phrases and to provide them with material to take part in role-play situations with a partner. However, pupils become very dependent on these prompts, and few pupils participate from memory. In many lessons, pupils have the opportunity to ask questions as well as to answer them. The quality of pronunciation varies, and pupils often lack the correct intonation when using questions. Higher attainers in Year 7 write accurately about their daily routine, with reflexive verbs, and in Year 8 about leisure activities. They also use the past tense accurately to link with different countries and means of transport. In contrast, higher attainers in Year 9 are not fully secure with and confident in the use of the perfect and immediate future tenses. This prevents them from attaining higher levels. However, these pupils have only one lesson of French each week, because they also study German. Middle attainers in Year 9 write about the same topics; accuracy varies, because pupils use accents inconsistently. Very few pupils complete corrections or re-draft their work to improve accuracy.

126. By the end of Year 11, most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. Pupils in Year 11 have acquired the relevant vocabulary, constructions and tenses to help them in their coursework. Higher and middle attainers write with interest about work experience and holidays, use past tenses accurately and a range of relevant vocabulary. The work, some of which is word processed, is well paragraphed and well presented.

127. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In a small number of lessons they are unsatisfactory, notably in a Year 10 all boys class where most pupils were very reluctant to learn and failed to co-operate with the teacher. This was totally at variance with the overall attitudes of pupils which are mostly good. Generally, teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and use the foreign language satisfactorily in most lessons to challenge pupils. They plan their lessons well, with appropriately different activities and skills. There are good opportunities in many lessons for pupils to hear and to speak the language, either to the teacher or in pairs. These contribute well to pupils' social development. Objectives are set out clearly at the beginning of lessons, so that pupils know what they have to learn. The activities usually help to maintain pupils' concentration and interest. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils learnt the names of animals and consolidated them in a listening exercise. Patient revision of animals in a lesson with lower attainers in Year 7 helped pupils to recall previous work. Illustrations on the wall supported them well when they linked numbers to animals. Higher attainers in a Year 11 lesson in German developed their listening skills in an exercise with a past examination paper. As they corrected their answers, the teacher explained the points to watch for. Most lessons end with an evaluation of what has been covered, although this is not always challenging enough. Teachers use their resources well, particularly the overhead projector and flash cards, to present a visual image to pupils, when they introduce new vocabulary or consolidate previous work. Specially produced booklets help lower attainers and pupils with special needs to work through each topic, with exercises

adapted to their own requirements. For many of these pupils, the retention of previous work presents problems, so teachers begin each lesson with careful revision. Sets are small, and teachers support pupils well. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Higher attainers, some of whom have been identified as gifted and talented, are challenged well in Years 10-11, and they make good progress. The highest attainers in Years 7 and 8 make satisfactory progress, but not in Year 9 because of insufficient curricular time. The use of homework is satisfactory. Although the marking of pupils' written work in Years 7-9 is frequent, it lacks rigour. There are very few comments that will help pupils to improve from one level to the next. When levels are given on a piece of work, they are at times optimistic. Teachers' expectations regarding the presentation and accuracy of written work in Years 7-9 are not high enough.

128. The appointment of a new subject leader after the previous inspection has resulted in good improvements and leadership and management are good overall. Courses have been changed, up-to-date textbooks introduced, and the profile of modern languages within the school has been raised. The learning environment in all the classrooms and corridors is stimulating. There are good displays of pupils' work and good use of commercial materials and posters which have a positive impact on pupils' cultural awareness. The annual visit to France has increased in popularity. Teachers work well as a team and the monitoring and evaluation of their work is satisfactory. The lack of a foreign language assistant, however, means that pupils have no contact with a native speaker.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good, particularly the use of multi-media ICT, and this enthuses and inspires most pupils.
- Learning is good overall with pupils making good progress from low attainment levels on entry to the school.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are very good and information is used well to inform future work.
- Subject documentation, including schemes of work, is very good and makes a significant contribution to the good standards of teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory because it does not contain sufficient information on how well pupils are achieving and what they need to do to improve further their work.
- The identification of, and provision for, the highest attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient access to computers which limits the standards of work produced by pupils in Years 10 and 11.

129. There has been very good improvement in music since the last inspection. Pupils now make good progress in acquiring listening, composing and performing skills as they move through the school and those with special educational needs make good progress generally, but very good progress in Years 10 and 11. Although standards of work are still below the national expectations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11, they have risen steadily in recent years due to the improvements in the quality of the teaching.

130. GCSE results in music were well below the national average in 2002 but they have improved steadily over the last three years and are set to rise again this summer. Standards have been particularly depressed in the past because few pupils were accessing instrumental tuition. The school has worked hard to redress this and now the majority of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 have instrumental lessons. Teachers' assessments of the pupils'

standards at the age of fourteen in 2002 show that most are below national expectations. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7-9 are below average, although there were some examples of pupils using correct musical terminology and producing satisfactory compositions. In Years 10-11, standards of work are again unsatisfactory. Most pupils have only very basic listening and composing skills, although their performing skills are generally good and in some cases very good. Overall, pupils come to their music lessons with good attitudes to the subject and are prepared to engage with learning. The new music teacher has rapidly established herself in the department and has a very good rapport with the pupils. This ensures a very positive climate for learning.

131. By the age of fourteen, most pupils achieve well, given their levels of musical knowledge, skills and understanding when they arrived in Year 7. Many pupils can describe the structure of, and analyse, a piece of music using correct musical terminology and vocabulary. High attaining pupils are able to describe the effect of music on mood and emotion, using sophisticated language. Pupils' composing and performing skills, although much improved, are still only basic by the end of Year 9 in the majority of the classes, with only the higher attainers able to play keyboards and other instruments with correct technique. By the age of sixteen, most pupils achieve very well in comparison to their attainment by the end of Year 9. This is largely due to their natural musical talents and the very good teaching that they receive.

132. Overall, the quality of the teaching and learning is good. It is very good in Years 10-11. Pupils learn well because the teacher is enthusiastic and skilful, using a wide range of teaching styles and strategies to enthuse and inspire pupils. These include the use of up-to-date, multi-media ICT. Most pupils are given work that interests, stretches and challenges them and the teacher uses very effective methods to record and measure their achievements. She uses these outcomes very well to inform her planning for future lessons. There is satisfactory use of homework to reinforce and extend key learning. Lessons contain appropriate learning objectives that are met through a variety of linked activities, moving forwards the learning at a good pace. There is no formal identification of pupils who might be musically gifted and talented and lesson plans do not always contain activities aimed specifically at the highest attaining pupils. More than often they are just expected to do more or better work. Recent examples of written work completed by pupils in Year 11 are marked well and include helpful information about the levels being achieved and targets for improvement. Other written work from pupils in Years 7-10 is not marked satisfactorily. They do not give sufficient indications of how well pupils are doing or how they might improve. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are well-planned opportunities identified in the subject's schemes of work to enhance pupils' overall personal development. These schemes are very well thought out to provide a very good range of objectives, activities and assessment opportunities to challenge well most pupils.

133. Music has made very good progress since the last inspection. Standards in the subject are rising, many more pupils have instrumental tuition, lessons regularly include singing activities and resources for learning have been improved. The subject is now well led by the recently appointed head of department. She has a clear vision for music and is working hard to raise standards further and enhance the profile of the subject in the school. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities and additional support classes. Pupils' learning in the classroom is enhanced by very good quality display, although it does not, as yet, include any examples of the pupils' own work, annotated to show the levels of work that are being achieved. Music makes a good contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy skills and a satisfactory contribution to the school's numeracy strategy. Overall resource levels are satisfactory, although the limited access to computers is hampering Years 10 and 11 pupils from attaining the higher ICT to create, notate and record their work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good which result in a good rapport with pupils.
- There is a strong commitment to provide extra-curricular activities.
- The schemes of work provide clear guidance for teaching.
- The annual reports of pupils contain clear and concise information about their strengths and weaknesses in the skills of physical education.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is not used sufficiently to improve pupils' learning.
- Departmental improvement planning does not contain precise actions and targets for raising standards further.
- The large items of equipment in the perimeter of the sports hall are a serious safety hazard.

134. Physical education has improved well since the last inspection. Standards of work are good as is the quality of teaching. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. As a result, pupils' overall achievement, in relation to their below average standards when they begin the school in Year 7, is good.

135. The 2002 GCSE results at A*-C grades compare favourably over the last two years with other departments in the school. GCSE results show an upward trend, although they are still below national averages. In the last two years there has been no significant difference in results between boys and girls. One quarter of the pupils attained the higher A*-C grades in 2002. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate that most pupils attain at national expectations.

136. Current standards in Years 7-11 are above average. By the age of fourteen, most pupils can select and apply skills and tactics, evaluate and improve performance well. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of fitness and health. By the age of sixteen, pupils show that they can apply themselves to increasingly more demanding situations, judge accurately their performance and that of other pupils, and make appropriate decisions about how to improve. They are able to make informed choices about what role they should play in individual activities. They show a willingness to co-operate with each other and their good attitudes and behaviour make a positive contribution towards their overall learning.

137. By the end of Year 9 pupils' achievement is good, given their below average attainment on entry to the school. Most pupils can apply rules and conventions well for different activities. They know how to prepare and recover from specific activities. In Years 7-9 they develop good levels of competency in gymnastics, basketball, badminton, netball, soccer, and rugby. For the most part, they are keen to participate and enjoy succeeding in what ever they are doing. Higher and average attainers persist well in developing specific techniques and perform these with consistent control. They are able to apply their knowledge and understanding of basic hand to eye co-ordination, control and positioning to different games situations. Provision for the highest attaining and gifted pupils is good, although there is still insufficient attention paid to their observation and assessment skills. By the end of Year 11 pupils' achievement is good. Higher and average attaining pupils can prioritise and carry out decisions to improve their own and others' performance. The Year 11 GCSE class has highly motivated pupils who can give reasoned judgements about their knowledge and understanding. They are able to set themselves challenging targets in order to improve their performances. In Years 7-11, appropriate tasks are set for pupils with special educational needs and there is particularly effective use of learning

support assistants. This provision enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress overall.

138. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in Years 7-9 and are good in Years 10-11. Across the school there is a calm and measured approach to teaching that ensures very good relationships. In the only lesson that was unsatisfactory, the teachers' expectations were too low, the lesson started late, and the learning objectives were unclear and caused confusion. This resulted in some poor behaviour. This scenario is far from typical of the overall quality of teaching and learning in physical education. In one excellent badminton lesson, pupils showed an eagerness to link their learning to a previous lesson, the purpose of the activities was clear to all and all pupils made excellent progress. Pupils learn well in almost all lessons because the teaching provides well for their needs and aspirations. Teachers use praise and encouragement effectively as a strategy to motivate pupils to give of their best. Overall, teachers' knowledge and understanding is good. Good planning and, in most cases, the sharing of desirable lesson outcomes, enhance learning. Good use is made of assessment information to help pupils to progress further and to ensure that activities are matched appropriately to their developing needs. Opportunities for pupils to share their views about how they and others are progressing are well managed, and a good range of questioning techniques is used to challenge their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 9 football match where the teacher asked pupils why it was important to move up the field of play when the ball was in the opponents' half. The teaching of basic skills is generally good. Effective references are made in lessons to key words and good emphasis is put on answering questions in full sentences, both orally and in GCSE written work. There is limited evidence to show that the department is making a planned contribution to the school's numeracy policy. Overall, teachers of physical education contribute well to pupils' personal development, particularly their moral understanding and social skills. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents contain specific information about the development of pupils' key skills in physical education, and indicate precise targets for improvement in these skills. Homework is used well, particularly in GCSE classes, to reinforce learning, but there is little access to ICT to measure the effectiveness of performance via digital timing devices.

139. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Leadership and management are good overall. Procedures for monitoring the work of teachers and for making sure that all pupils achieve the levels accordingly, are satisfactory. The programme of out-of-school activities is impressive. This includes good work with partner primary schools. Participation rates by pupils are good with some progressing well in local and regional teams and competitions. A professional rugby league player is paid to be the school coach. He is also employed as a Literacy Learning Support Assistant, acting as a good role model for the pupils. Plans are in hand to improve further the quality of accommodation with the laying of an astro-turf pitch and the school is central to the team that is planning the Leigh Sports Village, designed to bring about first class local sporting facilities. This clear vision to enhance current standards is not sufficiently well expressed in the subject's development plan. General actions to maintain the good quality teaching and to improve further attainment are not precise, nor are the desirable outcomes by which future success will be evaluated. Also, the large items of equipment that are left regularly in the perimeter of the sports hall are a serious safety hazard.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The leadership and management of the department is very good and this promotes overall very good levels of teaching and learning.
- The quality of the teachers' planning and the organisation of how the subject is taught support pupils' learning well.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very effective in providing clear information about how they are attaining and what they need to do next to improve their work further.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn independently and, in particular, to use ICT to improve the quality of their work.
- There is a need for greater detail in departmental improvement planning to enable teachers to evaluate accurately the success of their actions to improve further provision for religious education.

140. There has been very good improvement in religious education since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are now very good overall and are ensuring that pupils' overall standards of work are above average. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and, as a result, they achieve well. Despite the very good teaching, they do not achieve better because of their low levels of literacy and their under-developed research and analytical skills.

141. The 2002 GCSE results at grades A*-C compare favourably with other departments in the school, but are below national expectations. However, they show an upward trend on previous years. There is no significant difference in results between boys and girls. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9, according to teachers' assessments, is in line with national expectations. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average in Years 7-9. By the age of fourteen most pupils can use the correct terminology and explain clearly the meaning of texts, language and symbols, central to the beliefs of a religion. Standards of work in Years 10-11 are in line with national expectations. By the age of sixteen pupils can give an accurate and coherent account of the effects of a religion on a person or a group of people. They can make reasoned judgements about their knowledge and understanding of religions, in the light of different points of view, and are very willing to share their knowledge and understanding.

142. By the end of Year 9 pupils' achievement is good in relation to their below average attainment on entry to the school. Most pupils can make reflective and informed responses to their knowledge and understanding of religions. They can identify the links between religions, and can give good verbal accounts of stories from the Bible. Higher and average attainers are able to demonstrate good understanding of historical and important events in the major religions of the world. By the end of Year 11 pupils' achievement is again good in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. Most pupils can give an accurate and coherent verbal account of a religious story and can examine and explain different points of view in relation to their own knowledge and understanding. They can demonstrate an understanding of religions and talk about the significance of stories and beliefs. Pupils in the GCSE groups in Years 10 and 11 can provide reasoned judgements about their understanding of religions, taking into account different points of view. Despite the very good teaching, pupils do not achieve better because of their low levels of literacy and their under-developed research and analytical skills.

143. Teaching and learning in religious education are very good overall. They are predominantly good in Years 7-9 and very good in Years 10-11. Pupils learn well in most lessons because teaching provides effectively for their needs and aspirations. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding, plan work very well and share effectively the purpose of lessons with pupils so that they are well aware of the work that they have to do. There is very good provision made for the teaching of basic skills and for the school's citizenship programme. Most lessons build well on what pupils have learnt previously. Teachers assess pupils' work well and make good use of the information that they obtain to share with pupils what they need to do next to improve further their work. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. High attaining and gifted pupils make good progress, although not all teachers are confident yet in planning for the learning needs of these pupils. All teachers are enthusiastic and enjoy very good relationships with pupils. This helps to create a very positive learning environment in which pupils feel confident and secure. Speaking and listening opportunities are well managed and a good range of questioning techniques are used by teachers to challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding. In two lessons appropriate use was made of videos to stimulate discussions about how people deal with suffering and death. In a lesson about the Five Pillars of Islam the teacher successfully used a model of the Five Pillars to motivate pupils' learning. The department makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, social, and moral development of the pupils and plans effective opportunities to enhance pupils' cultural awareness. There is insufficient work, at present, to develop fully pupils' multi-cultural awareness. Most pupils concentrate very well in lessons and show high levels of interest and perseverance. Although the use of homework is good, there are too few opportunities for them in class to learn independently and to use ICT effectively for research and analysis. Annual reports to parents do not contain sufficient information about the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils are developing in religious education. Targets to improve their skills in the subject are unsatisfactory.

144. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Leadership and management of the department is now very good and the subject meets the necessary statutory requirements. The head of department's commitment to continuous improvement promotes overall very good levels of teaching and learning. There are good procedures in place for monitoring the quality of teachers' work and for checking that all pupils are making appropriate rates of progress. The quality of resources and artefacts is particularly good and classroom displays make a positive contribution to the learning environment. Although the overall actions taken to meet the school's targets for the subject are good, development planning in religious education is unsatisfactory. Priorities, although appropriate, are often too vaguely expressed and desirable outcomes are too imprecise to enable teachers to evaluate accurately what has been achieved.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in vocational education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
- The use of assessment of pupils' progress is good in national vocational qualifications and in health and social care courses.
- The school has established strong relationships with partner institutions, business, industry and health care centres.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient resources for the teaching and learning of business studies.
- Pupils do not presently complete sufficient NVQ units to achieve full NVQ awards and the programme of vocational studies does not yet include other areas of the curriculum outside of technology, nor is it yet appropriate for higher attaining pupils.
- Lines of accountability for vocational subjects are not yet separate from those for design and technology. This is not helpful in ensuring comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of all courses, both on and off the school's site.

145. Vocational subjects have not been inspected previously. The school offers currently General National Vocational Qualifications, National Vocational Qualifications and Vocational GCSEs that are studied within the technology department.

146. 2002 GCSE results for business studies were far below average, with only three girls achieving at the higher levels. In GNVQ health and social care, all fifteen girls passed at foundation level. NVQ results in hospitality and catering showed improvement on the previous year, with all pupils achieving a pass in at least two units. Foundation craft awards in building also showed improvement, with almost all pupils successful in obtaining at least one unit. Half of these pupils were successful in at least three units. Although considerably more boys than girls completed the course in business studies, none were successful in achieving the higher grades. Girls are generally more successful than boys in these subjects. Standards of work seen are in line with national expectations in NVQ courses and in health and social care. In business studies standards are below expectations.

147. By the age of 16, pupils are gaining valuable understanding in the development of a food product and are confident in preparing, cooking and then serving a range of simple dishes, with close adherence to strict health and hygiene requirements. Most pupils pass the basic food hygiene certificate and this proves beneficial in securing part-time jobs for many of them whilst they are still attending school. Pupils following the building course gain appropriate skills in brick laying, painting and decorating and other surface treatments. Pupils following the business studies course, however, have only a superficial understanding of how business and industry work. At present, their knowledge is insufficient for them to complete a simple analysis of accounts. Overall, pupils' achievement in vocational subjects, given their starting points at the end of Year 9, is satisfactory.

148. Teaching and learning in vocational subjects are satisfactory overall. In all lessons teachers have good knowledge and expertise and manage pupils' behaviour well. They remain calm and purposeful, even when working with some pupils who display challenging behaviour. This was particularly the case in a Year 10 health and social care group studying drugs. Here, a small number of pupils tried to dominate the discussion without success. Teachers and lecturers delivering NVQ courses plan and prepare well. They use a range of questioning techniques to very good effect, as pupils engage in their practical work or as demonstrations unfold. The good relationships, particularly in the health and social care and NVQ courses, result in well-motivated pupils who want to do well. Teaching is less effective where very few learning resources are available to support the wide range of learners' skills

and aptitudes. This is particularly the case in business studies. Consolidation of new learning is restricted sometimes due to inadequate planning for pupils to practise and apply their knowledge. Overall, pupils show satisfactory attitudes in vocational lessons and generally enjoy their work.

149. The leadership and management of vocational subjects are overall satisfactory. The expansion of provision to include NVQ alongside GNVQ qualifications has led to a significant improvement in both pupils' attendance and their examination results at grades A*-G. Good relationships have been developed with colleges, local businesses, industrial partners and the many organisations that offer placements for pupils following the business and health and social care courses. However, lines of accountability for vocational subjects are not yet separate from those for design and technology. This is not helpful in ensuring comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the courses on offer, both on and off the school's site. Regular and informal discussions take place between teachers and college lecturers, but there are no systems in place to assess thoroughly the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements out of school. Similarly, little evaluation has taken place of the value for money of the NVQ qualifications. Overall provision is very teacher intensive, with two teachers and a technician working in the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) centre and a teacher and lecturer providing the input when pupils attend Wigan and Leigh College of Further Education. Nevertheless, despite this provision, pupils cannot yet study sufficient units for them to gain the a full award in either hospitality and catering or the building course. The overall range of vocational subjects is still very much limited to those with a technological background and, at present, only relevant and available to lower attaining pupils. Assessment of pupils' progress is completed regularly and outcomes shared with them so that they know how well they are achieving and what they have to do to further improve the quality of their work. Planning for citizenship within the various programmes of work is satisfactory and teachers see this as crucial in developing the skills that pupils will need in service delivery.