

INSPECTION REPORT

IRWELL PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 106011

Headteacher: Mr N Haslam

Reporting inspector: Mrs E R Adams
12261

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th March 2002

Inspection number: 230085

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Britannia Street Salford
Postcode:	M6 6JB
Telephone number:	0161 7370024
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Brummitt
Date of previous inspection:	February, 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12261	Ms E R Adams	Registered inspector	Mathematics, history, art and design, physical education, equal opportunities, special educational needs, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils' taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9974	Mr D Singh	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?
1830	Dr S Charlton	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17171	Mrs M Last	Team inspector	English, modern foreign languages, geography, music, religious education	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Irwell Park is a mixed day school for pupils aged between 11 and 16 who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. In the last year the number on role has increased from 36 to 52, five of whom are girls. Most pupils live in the Salford area. Fifty pupils have a statement of special educational need. No pupils have English as an additional language; one pupil is of mixed heritage. Well over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. Pupils have a range of learning needs; some have challenging behaviour, others are more withdrawn. About a third have moderate learning difficulties. Pupils' attainments on entry to school are below, and well below expected standards. Most pupils have experienced a disrupted education with periods out of school, either due to their challenging behaviour resulting in school exclusions or poor attendance. One in six pupils are in the care of Social Services and have experienced significant disruption. In common with many schools, the school has had difficulty in recruiting specialist subject teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The lack of stability in leadership and staffing has adversely affected the improvements in the standards and the quality of education identified by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in 1999. The improvements were not maintained in 2000-2001. The newly appointed headteacher and senior management team are beginning to move the school forward again. They have made good progress towards re-establishing standards. Pupils who attend regularly make satisfactory progress and achieve sound standards. The teaching of the experienced staff is good but teaching is unsatisfactory overall because of weaknesses in supply teaching and that of some newly recruited teachers. The school uses exclusion to combat violence resulting in a high level of exclusion, but since September 2001, the number of exclusions has reduced. The level of absence from school is high and some pupils leave lessons without permission. This, together with some weaknesses in teaching and aspects of the curriculum, means that pupils with poor behaviour and attendance and some with learning difficulties make unsatisfactory progress. Strategies for raising standards are in place and spending is closely linked to the strategic plan for school improvement. The new headteacher inherited a significant overspend that has been reduced this year. The governing body does not have a delegated budget but financial planning and use of resources are good. The school has serious weaknesses in some areas although it provides an acceptable standard of education.

What the school does well

- Teaching was good or very good in half of the lessons observed.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in art and design, French, geography, history and music and they make satisfactory progress English, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school closely monitors undesirable and oppressive behaviour and provides good personal support and guidance to pupils through the tutorial system.
- The senior management team, in collaboration with the local education authority, has a clear plan and has demonstrated their capacity to improve the school.
- There is effective financial planning to support school improvement.

What could be improved

- The consistency in the quality of teaching.
- The consistency of some subject teachers' management of behaviour.
- The statutory provision in respect of religious education in Years 10 and 11, the curriculum for physical education and end of Year 9 reports to parents.
- The balance of the curriculum and the length of the teaching day.
- The standards of literacy across the school.
- Pupils attendance and the level of exclusions.
- The monitoring by senior managers, subject leaders and governors of attainment, teaching, learning and school developments.

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

Overall, this school is giving its pupils an acceptable standard of education, nevertheless it is a school with serious weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected by OFSTED in 1998 and placed in ‘Special Measures’. It was inspected by HMI in 1999 and found to have made substantial improvements. Since this time the school has worked under the leadership of three headteachers resulting in a lack of continuity. The improvements identified in the last inspection have not been sustained and the key issues have only been partially achieved. Since the appointment of the present headteacher in April 2001, the school, with assistance from the local education authority, has identified appropriate priorities and established a strong management team and effective systems to promote school improvement. The proportion of good and very good teaching has improved since the last inspection but there are too many lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory. Standards in French, music, history and geography have improved but in mathematics and science they have deteriorated. The curriculum has not been sufficiently developed and remains unsatisfactory. The behaviour and attendance of a small group of pupils is unsatisfactory. The number of exclusions initially increased following the last inspection but is reducing again this year. This represents deterioration since the last inspection. Although there are improvements in teaching and assessment, the weaknesses in the curriculum, some teaching, the attainment, attendance and behaviour of some pupils and inadequate monitoring by the governing body, means that unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The new management team has demonstrated the capacity to improve through successful implementation of strategies to establish a positive learning environment.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 16	Key	
Speaking and listening	C	Very good	A
Reading	B	Good	B
Writing	C	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	D	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	C	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	D		

** IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.*

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below that which would be expected. Through good and very good teaching in art and design, French, geography, history and music, pupils who attend regularly make good progress. The development of pupils’ literacy, numeracy and ICT skills over time has been adversely affected by staffing changes. Pupils’ achievements in English are satisfactory; most pupils achieve a General Certificate Secondary Education (GCSE), but standards in literacy remain unsatisfactory. In Years 7 and 8, pupils’ achievements in mathematics are unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory teaching, but the more able, older pupils who attend regularly achieve a GCSE. In science, pupils’ achievements are poor because the quality of teaching is poor. All those who attend regularly make at least satisfactory progress in ICT and achieve a nationally recognised certificate of competence. Pupils do well in practical subjects. The standards in design and technology, music and art and design are in line with national expectations. In physical education, pupils achieve satisfactory standards within the narrow range of activities currently provided. The proportion of pupils achieving one or more GCSE grades A to G has increased over the last three years. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school is beginning to use appropriately challenging targets for individual pupils to raise the standards they achieve.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall, except for the attitude of a small but significant group of pupils with challenging behaviour who do not value learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory. Most pupils behave well, particularly in formal situations such as in lessons and assembly, but behaviour deteriorates when classroom management is weak and when other pupils exhibits challenging behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils understand the impact of their actions on others and are able to show initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Levels of absence are too high for a significant group of pupils and this inhibits their progress and attainment.

Despite a number of parents reporting that their child does not like coming to school, when at school, most pupils show pleasure in learning and their attitudes are good and very good in lessons that offer challenging work. A small group of pupils are unable to manage their anger and are verbally aggressive towards staff and pupils and occasionally physically aggressive. Although beginning to reduce, exclusion levels remain high. Absence levels are too high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Unsatisfactory

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

The teaching of the experienced and substantive staff is good, but it is unsatisfactory overall because of weaknesses in supply teaching and some newly recruited teachers who are having difficulty maintaining discipline. Much of the good and very good teaching and learning was observed in art and design, French, geography, history and music where teaching motivates and interests pupils and the teachers build upon what pupils know and can do and explain what they are going to learn next. Planning takes account of the individual learning needs of pupils and pupils receive appropriate support in order to be independent learners. In art and design, pupils sustain their concentration well in order to develop work even when they find the task difficult. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory and pupils make good gains in knowledge of literature and in reading skills, but insufficient focus is given to developing pupils' writing and spelling. There is no overall strategy for raising standards in literacy. Too many pupils depend upon adults to help. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in design and technology, ICT, and in mathematics for Years 10 and 11. Unsatisfactory teaching is often related to inconsistencies in the management of pupils' behaviour. Teachers' planning does not focus on the skills pupils need to master the subject and overcome their individual difficulties. Pupils quickly lose heart and struggle to succeed. This contributes to pupils' low self-esteem and unsatisfactory behaviour. In mathematics, teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of teaching approaches to implement the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and pupils' learning skills are inadequately developed. Teaching of mathematics in Years 7 and 8 is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in science is poor. Insufficient attention is given to teaching the skills that underpin the subject and pupils are not helped to understand how to improve their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory, although there are some good features. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements, in respect of teaching religious education in Years 10 and 11 and physical education. The length of the taught day is well below average resulting in an imbalance between subjects. Time allocated to teaching basic literacy, numeracy and ICT is well below that expected. The school is not sufficiently aware of the impact of the changes to the 14 to 19-year-old curriculum to be

	introduced nationally in September 2002.
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is appropriately supported through the work that they do in personal, social and health education, art and design, French, history and music. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Assemblies do not contain a clear spiritual focus. Years 10 and 11 do not have religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The satisfactory standard of guidance and pastoral support has been maintained since the last inspection. Secure systems are in place to attend to pupils' health and safety. Arrangements for monitoring behaviour and attendance are in place. Arrangements to monitor provision for pupils' individual learning needs are developing.

The school has developed satisfactory links with parents with weekly contact and by readily consulting with parents and other professionals and discussing parental concerns.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership by the headteacher and key staff is satisfactory overall. The management strategies that have been introduced are beginning to have an impact on the quality of education.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. The governing body does not fulfil statutory requirements. Many governors are not well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The curriculum and Year 9 reports do not meet statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning is at an early stage of development. The school has relied on the local education authority to monitor and evaluate attainment, teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Financial controls, planning and management to support school priorities are good. The school had a significant overspend two years ago that has been reduced with prudent management of the budget.

The staffing levels for teachers and learning support assistants are good but there is no technical support in science, design and technology and ICT. The continuing difficulties in recruiting teachers have led to an unsatisfactory match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum. The bursar and governors monitor and control school spending effectively, but the local education authority still manages the school budget. Governors embrace the principles of best value but have yet to establish adequate monitoring and evaluation procedures to fully apply these.

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 works closely with parents • The information they receive about their children and the progress they make • The approachability of staff • The school's high expectations for their children • The leadership and management of the school • The quality of teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard of behaviour in the school particularly in relation to aggressive behaviour • The range and quality of homework • The amount of unsatisfactory teaching • Their children's progress • The range of activities provided outside of lessons

Parents at the parents' meeting had very positive views about the school, but of those who completed questionnaires, many were less positive. The inspection team agrees that behaviour needs to improve and that there is an unacceptable amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Homework is set regularly but not

all teachers take action when homework is not done. This is unsatisfactory. The quality of the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents has improved since the last inspection but not all the Year 9 reports contain information about the level that each pupil has achieved in each subject. This is contrary to statutory requirements and therefore unsatisfactory. The transport arrangements limit opportunities, but a reasonable range of activities outside of lessons are provided. It was the view of the inspectors that not all parents support their children's learning adequately by ensuring that they abide by the home/school agreement and see that their children attend school regularly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations. The report does give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at the ages of 14 and 16. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews, and work seen in lessons and in pupils' books. Reference to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population and not against national averages.
2. The progress of a small group of pupils is adversely effected by their erratic school attendance. Judgements about standards achieved are based on those pupils who attend reasonably regularly and on the evidence from an analysis of pupils' books and learning in lessons. Seven out of nine pupils achieve one or more GCSE grades A to G in English, mathematics, French, science and art and design. A boy and a girl achieved GCSEs, grades A to G in five subjects and a girl achieved a grade B in art and design. Most other pupils achieve Certificate of Educational Achievement in a number of subjects. Pupils usually make satisfactory progress in lessons but when aspects of the teaching is unsatisfactory, progress is unsatisfactory. Progress over time in literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactory, as the instability of staffing and irregular attendance by some pupils have adversely affected the progress pupils make and the progression of what pupils are taught. There is no discernible difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are unsatisfactory. Standards in mathematics in Years 7 and 8, in physical education and in science have deteriorated since the last inspection.
3. Standards in English are satisfactory overall. Although by the age of 16 pupils understand the use of various styles of writing they lack confidence in their ability to write and standards of spelling are unsatisfactory. Few pupils use a range of approaches to tackle unfamiliar words, resulting in them being overly reliant on staff to help them with spelling. By Year 9 pupils have improved their attitudes to learning and take a greater interest in their work. They are keen to discuss their work, for example issues surrounding the sinking of the Titanic and to compare what they have read from reports of the day with scenes depicted in the film. By the age of 16, although pupils have made good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in their ability to use a range of writing styles, they have not made sufficient progress in mastering the craft of spelling.
4. Pupils' attainments in mathematics are unsatisfactory in Years 7 and 8 because teachers have not fully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers with limited knowledge of the subject teach the lessons. Lower ability pupils throughout the school achieve little independently in mathematics as the teaching and planning does not pay sufficient attention to establishing the mathematical concepts that underpin the mathematical operations. Pupils are not encouraged to articulate their thinking. By the age of 14, all pupils understand place value up to 100 and choose the appropriate operation when solving problems involving metric measure. They are able to calculate ten per cent of a specific quantity. Most pupils confidently identify and calculate the area of equilateral and right angle triangles. Higher attaining pupils can identify the probability of specific situations by drawing up a probability scale. The higher attaining pupils make good progress and achieve age appropriate

levels of attainment in mathematics but the progress of the average and lower attaining pupils is not good enough.

5. Older pupils make steady progress and achieve sound basic mathematical skills but the lower ability pupils do not develop appropriate mental strategies. Lessons frequently focus on the task and some pupils are unable to follow the teacher's explanations of how to complete the activity because they do not understand the underpinning concept. These factors have a limiting affect on the progress over time of lower ability pupils who do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English at the age of 16. Pupils of average and above average ability successfully achieve GCSE in mathematics.
6. In science, attainment is poor throughout the school because the quality of teaching is poor and the planning does not sufficiently focus on the skills to be developed. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the subject are not identified when they enter the school resulting in insufficient consideration being given to how the individual learning needs of the pupils are to be met as the teachers do not use information in pupils individual plans sufficiently.
7. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in information and communication technology (ICT). They enter the school with limited skills and achieve a nationally recognised Certificate of Competence by the age of 16 and some now attain levels that would enable them to access GCSE. Attainments in history and geography are good. Year 11 pupils are completing a nationally recognised Certificate of Competence and the more able Year 10 pupils are attaining levels that will enable them to achieve a GCSE in these subjects. Pupils make good progress in French, history, geography, art and design and music and pupils attain good standards given their low starting point when they enter the school. Lessons have a clear structure with learning objectives that are shared with pupils and an effective plenary session at the end that enables them to evaluate what they have learnt. In history and geography, good support is provided to develop pupils' literacy skills with a focus on key vocabulary that promotes lively discussions enabling pupils to develop effective communication skills and independent writing. Standards in French are good because the experienced and competent specialist teacher makes the work interesting and pupils are motivated to do their best. Pupils enjoy practical work and attain higher standards. They attain standards in the 'making' aspects of design and technology that are in line with national expectations. Pupils on link courses respond with enthusiasm and attain particularly high standards on the car maintenance project at a local further education college. In this setting pupils show maturity and fully engage in the activity, attaining a range of vocational skills in preparation for life after school. Standards in music and art and design are good. In art and design pupils who complete the GCSE course achieve a pass grade. In physical education standards are broadly in line with national expectations within the narrow range of activities currently offered in the school.
8. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are improving in quality but this work is too new to make judgements about pupils' progress towards achieving their targets. Where teachers take account of pupils' targets when planning lessons, such as in history and geography, pupils make good progress and the standards in literacy are higher than they are in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Most pupils' attitudes to school and learning are satisfactory and good when the quality of teaching is good but they will lose interest in learning when the teaching is unsatisfactory. A small but significant number of pupils throughout the school display

aggressive, anti-social and negative behaviour, both inside and outside of the classroom, which affects their learning. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. When given responsibility they respond positively and show maturity. Relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils are usually satisfactory but occasionally pupils with volatile behaviour do not show enough respect for others.

10. Although a significant number of parents reported that their child did not like school, when in school most pupils show pleasure in learning and have a positive attitude to their work. However, pupils are quick to lose interest and concentration in less successful lessons and can become disruptive if the teacher does not use consistently the strategies set out in the school's behaviour management policy. Year 7 pupils' have greatest difficulty in responding to classroom routines and concentrating on their work. As pupils grow older their attitude to learning improves and in lessons where teaching is challenging and well organised, pupils are interested and participate fully. For example, in English, French, history, art and design and music lessons the Years 10 and 11 pupils display a very mature, responsible, constructive and purposeful attitude to learning. Throughout these lessons pupils listened attentively and engaged in constructive dialogue with teachers and with each other. This interaction motivated their learning and enhanced their confidence and self esteem.
11. The behaviour of a small but significant group of pupils is unsatisfactory and this has an adverse impact on their learning, achievement and their personal development and, at times, affects the learning of others. In interviews, some pupils complained about the negative attitudes and the behaviour of some pupils. During the inspection some incidents of silly and time wasting behaviour were observed in lessons and on the playground. These pupils can become particularly challenging, rude and disruptive, adversely affecting the learning of the group. However, in many other lessons and in lessons conducted at the local college and leisure centre, behaviour is satisfactory and sometimes good and very good. This was particularly evident during the two car maintenance lessons and travel to and from the project. It is evident that pupils behave well in lessons which engage them and teachers manage to achieve behaviour based on mutual respect and understanding.
12. Around the school, although most pupils get on well with each other, the same small group of pupils behave badly. Some boisterous behaviour was observed when pupils were in the playground, which occasionally led to aggressive, anti-social behaviour. Some pupils need constantly reminding not to run along corridors. Occasionally some pupils use vulgar language. Pupils with challenging behaviour sometimes deliberately show a lack of consideration for members of staff and visitors. In contrast, most pupils are polite, considerate and pleasant to be with. Pupils show concern when another pupil is in distress and they are generally understanding of the needs of others. Although parents at the parents' meeting felt that the staff do all they can to influence pupils behaviour, in the questionnaire over half felt that behaviour of the pupils was not as good as it should be.
13. The exclusion rate is too high although the number of days lost from school through exclusion is now reducing. Pupils are excluded for violence, bullying, damaging property and dangerous behaviour such as climbing on the school roof. In 2000-2001 twenty-nine pupils, that is nearly 60 per cent of the pupils, were excluded for, on average, four occasions totalling a loss of 283 days. In the term before the inspection, although lower, exclusion levels remained high with four pupils receiving more than one period of exclusion and 38 per cent of pupils being excluded from school for fixed periods. One pupil, who was undergoing statutory assessment for a residential school was excluded for a total of 50 days. The term of the inspection shows a decrease with nine pupils, that is 18 per cent of pupils, excluded for fixed periods,

indicating that the strategy is beginning to be effective. The school is currently reviewing its strategy for exclusions and is engaged in positive and constructive discussion with both the education welfare service and the local authority.

14. The quality of relationships is satisfactory. Pupils can work collaboratively sharing ideas and information. Pupils take part in school assemblies and behave well at meal times. Behaviour was good at the local college and in lessons they enjoy such as design and technology, ICT, French, music and art and design. Although friendships outside of lessons are generally between pupils of the same sex, there is some evidence of good relationships across gender. For example, pupils travelling in the minibus engaged in positive conversation and interaction and generally observed mutual respect. Occasionally, the vulgar language of some pupils damages relationships. There are few opportunities for pupils to serve the school and community, but when opportunities are made available pupils exercise these with a sense of maturity and responsibility. Most pupils have a very positive relationship with staff and are appreciative of what the staff do for them. However, a small number of pupils with complex and challenging behaviour frequently fail to observe the school's code of conduct and the values that are based on respect and tolerance and at times show a disregard for the wellbeing of others.
15. Persistent unsatisfactory attendance by a few pupils severely affects their learning, achievements and their personal and social development. Levels of attendance were below the average for similar schools in 2000 to 2001. Although the level of authorised absence has decreased, it is higher than average for similar schools. The level of unauthorised absence has increased but is still considerably below the average for similar schools. These absences are sometimes due to truancy; there are also parents who fail to provide plausible explanations for their children's absence apparently condoning it. Since October 2001, the school has worked closely with the newly appointed education welfare officer and over half the pupils with a history of poor attendance have improved their attendance this year. Punctuality is satisfactory; most pupils are transported to and from school. The lack of support from some parents makes it very difficult for the school to tackle the long-standing unsatisfactory attendance. Overall, attendance levels have improved from 77.7 per cent to 80.8 per cent since the last inspection but the level of absence is still too high. Absence and exclusion levels are unsatisfactory and remain a concern for the school and local education authority.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The teaching of the experienced and substantive staff was generally good or very good. However, it is unsatisfactory overall because of weaknesses in supply teaching and in some newly recruited teachers who have difficulty maintaining order and good discipline. Teaching is good or very good in nearly half of the lessons. The proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching has increased since the last inspection but the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has also increased resulting in unsatisfactory progress overall since the last inspection. In the unsatisfactory lessons the management of pupils' behaviour is inconsistent and does not ensure an appropriate climate for learning. In these lessons and in some lessons that are overall satisfactory, teachers do not focus on the skills that pupils need to master the subject and the skills required to overcome their individual learning difficulties. In these situations, pupils struggle to succeed as learners and if a learning support assistant is not available to provide support they quickly lose interest and become frustrated. If unresolved, pupils become disruptive and often eventually run out of the room disrupting the teaching and learning for themselves and others.

17. Much of the good and very good teaching and learning can be observed in French, history, geography, art and design, music and college links. The teaching in these lessons, motivates and interests pupils who are keen to take part and make a positive contribution to the lesson. Teachers build upon what pupils know and can do and explain what they are going to learn next. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt and are given advice on what they need to do to improve their work. There is a clear focus on the skills pupils need to develop and the learning activities provide good opportunities for pupils to apply and practice the skill. The individual learning needs are considered in the planning and learning support assistants know what they need to do to promote learning so that pupils receive appropriate support in order to be independent learners. Good use of key vocabulary, and writing frames in history and geography, enable pupils to undertake writing activities independently. In these lesson pupils engage sensibly in discussions that develop their thinking and understanding. In art and design pupils will sustain concentration in order to develop a piece of work even though they find the task difficult.
18. Even where teaching is otherwise good, teaching staff do not always use appropriate strategies to support lower attainers in literacy. This makes pupils overly dependent on adult help and the situation contributes to pupils' low self-esteem. The school does not have a coherent approach to develop literacy skills in all lessons and set clear manageable and measurable targets for each pupil to improve their skills.
19. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall and pupils' attainments are satisfactory. Good teaching was observed where the content of the lesson was relevant to pupils' experiences and appealed to pupils' interests of both girls and boys. In these lessons, pupils deepen their understanding of the literature they are studying and pupils study a range of literature from different cultures. There is not enough focus on teaching spelling in order to develop pupils' spelling skills and the teaching of literacy is not sufficiently embedded into the teaching programme. As a result, many pupils are under-confident as writers, remaining dependent upon adults to help them with their spelling and their spelling skills remain unsatisfactory.
20. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in science and in mathematics for Years 7 and 8. In these lessons, and in lessons for older pupils that are satisfactory overall, insufficient attention is given to teaching the skills that underpin the subject. Marking and assessment is not used to help pupils understand how to improve their work. In all the mathematics lessons, there is not sufficient focus on the learning that needs to take place and insufficient knowledge of the teaching approaches to encourage pupils to articulate their thinking to solve problems. Pupils' learning skills are inadequately developed for the lower attaining pupils even in the satisfactory lessons in Years 9, 10 and 11 because learning support assistants are used to show pupils what to do rather than explain the concepts that underpin the mathematical operation in order to promote independent learning. Teaching and learning is satisfactory in design and technology and ICT. Pupils are motivated by the subject and with staff help they respond purposefully to the learning activities. There was insufficient evidence in religious education and physical education to make a judgement. The satisfactory progress made at the time of the 1999 inspection has not been sustained.
21. Teachers have low expectations of pupils completing work at home and opportunities are missed to use homework to develop pupils' independent learning skills. Although homework is set regularly, teachers' response to uncompleted homework varies. Where there are some teachers, for example art and design, who make arrangements for pupils to make up work, there are no whole school strategies, such as homework clubs to support those pupils who do not have sufficient support at home.

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

22. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although broad, it is not balanced and fails to meet statutory requirements. There is an adequate curriculum statement that appropriately emphasises that the curriculum must meet the needs of individual pupils and acknowledges that the basis of the curriculum will be provided through the National Curriculum and religious education with equality of access for all. A recent training day was dedicated to familiarisation of the new Code of Practice and the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act in order to identify the changes required conforming to the new statutory requirements.
23. A relevant programme of personal, social and health education is provided containing appropriate units on awareness of drug abuse and sex education that meets statutory requirements. The HMI report judged the curriculum to be broad and balanced, but now the school does not teach religious education to pupils in Years 10 and 11 and so does not meet its statutory curriculum responsibilities. The balance of time allocated to religious education in Years 7, 8 and 9 is below that which is recommended and, although for these year groups statutory requirements are met, the provision is limited.
24. The length of the school day falls well short of that recommended by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The school allocates 21 hours and 40 minutes each week to teaching the curriculum, against a recommended time of 25 hours. This means there is insufficient time available for teaching all subjects adequately and there is not a good balance of time between the subjects, therefore statutory requirements are not met. The time allocated to teaching basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is well below that which would be expected, particularly in view of the weaknesses in pupils' skills in these areas.
25. The curriculum offered to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum but the time allocation to give pupils the time they need to fully develop their literacy and numeracy skills is inadequate. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, there is little opportunity to study vocational programmes. There are a small number of taster-type car maintenance courses at the local further education college that appeal more to boys than girls while a small group of mainly girls visit a senior citizens' home to work with the residents. The lack of opportunity for pupils to gain appropriate accreditation for vocational skills or to gain accreditation other than GCSE or Certificate of Educational Achievement for other skills does not prepare them adequately for the next phase of education. This is particularly so in respect of accrediting pupils' skills in communication, application of number and ICT, especially for the pupils with literacy and language difficulties. There is no whole school curriculum framework that sets out how the needs of the different groups of pupils are to be met. The school is at an early stage in recognising the importance of the introduction of vocational GCSE courses in September 2002 and using these to develop a curriculum and accreditation that is more closely matched to the needs, strengths and aspirations of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
26. The school has only partially implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the arrangements are not adequate to meet pupils' individual learning needs in order to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills. In most subjects, apart from religious education, the schemes of work in place provide adequate guidance for teachers when they are planning their lessons.

27. The role of overall co-ordination of the curriculum is undertaken by the headteacher, but the priorities of his management responsibilities have left little time for effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's curriculum provision. This has led to inconsistencies in the implementation of the school's curriculum statement, particularly as many subject co-ordinators are new to the school or new to teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
28. Overall, the school's extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. The range of activities that can be provided before or after school is restricted by the fact that most pupils travel to school by bus or taxi. An appropriate range of trips and visits are organised which support the work that pupils are doing in their lessons. Effective links are established with community organisations and local colleges to extend the learning opportunities for the pupils. Recently these have included visits to the local care homes, the Three Sisters Racing Circuit at Ashton-in-Makerfield, and to a local leisure and outdoor adventure centres. An appropriate range of visits linked to the careers programme for Years 10 and 11 are planned for later this term and in the summer term. Overall, the careers programme is satisfactory and the newly appointed co-ordinator has made an appropriate start to developing the range of activities for pupils to prepare them to make informed choices about the next phase of their education.
29. The community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Visitors such as the police and fire service help pupils to understand the work done by these services and supports their social and moral development by giving pupils an insight into issues associated with crime prevention. Links with other schools are established if pupils are ready to return to mainstream schools and arrangements are made on an individual basis to transfer pupils back into mainstream school.
30. The provision for moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory but provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is satisfactory and is supported effectively through the work that they do as part of their personal social and health education. This programme is delivered through a registration session at the start of the day and a tutorial session at the end of the day. The registration session includes a Breakfast Club at which pupils are provided with cereal, toast and a drink. They sit in class groups that provide appropriate opportunities for them to practise and develop social skills. The tutorial session is effective in some classes; for example with Year 11 but there is insufficient guidance through the policy and scheme of work to ensure that this is effective in all classes. For example, a session with a group of Year 10 pupils was not fully effective in following up the issues raised through a worksheet which explored the 'moral' response and the pupils' response to a series of situations. Small groups of pupils make regular visits to the local old people's home that give useful work experience and help them to recognise the needs of others. During 'taster' visits to the local further education college, pupils have the opportunity to develop their social skills in a wider context.
31. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' awareness of other cultures is developed through aspects of work completed in art and design, French and history lessons. Through their work in art they are introduced traditional Aboriginal and Indian designs and in history they study ancient cultures and trace their influence upon modern society. In these subjects pupils have adequate opportunities to study other cultures and faiths, but opportunities to appreciate the diversity of their own cultural heritage through visits out or through visitors to the school are limited.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Religious education is not taught in Years 10 and 11 and that which is taught in Years 7, 8 and 9 is limited. Morning assembly usually ends with a short prayer but the focus of assemblies is

generally moral, or sometimes social, rather than spiritual and there are very few opportunities in lessons to reflect upon spiritual aspects of life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The overall provision for pupils' care, support, guidance and welfare is satisfactory. This complements the satisfactory arrangements for child protection. Staff understand and respond appropriately to pupils' pastoral needs. They listen to, and deal, with pupils' concerns and celebrate their achievements. The school system to administer prescribed medicines is sound and ensures pupils' health and wellbeing. There are effective procedures in place to secure confidentiality in relation to information about pupils.
34. All safety and fire equipment is checked and maintained regularly and the procedures of evacuation are known and observed by the school community. There are regular fire drills and all fire exits were clear during the inspection. The local authority has recently undertaken risk assessments and the school is presently awaiting the report. During the inspection a Year 9 pupil was injured in a classroom accident and all the appropriate procedures and actions were taken to ensure his wellbeing. However, the same rigorous standards are not maintained when at college where pupils are not required to wear protective clothing in a car maintenance workshop. This compromises the high safety standards set by the school and local authority and places the pupils at potential risk. Effective arrangements are in place to supervise pupils on arrival to and departure from school and the transport arrangements meet appropriate safety standards.
35. There are effective procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development and behaviour and the information is used to support their personal development. Tutors and support staff monitor pupils' personal development and celebrate their achievements in tutorial periods. Teachers assess pupils' attainments regularly and assessment is good in Years 10 and 11 because the accreditation process guides it. A record of pupils' progress is kept and used when setting pupils' individual curriculum targets but too often assessment information, particularly in relation to pupils' literacy levels, does not guide teachers' planning and this adversely affects the progress pupils make. All pupils have individual education plans and these vary in quality and effectiveness from good to unsatisfactory. The recently appointed special needs co-ordinator has begun to implement a coherent process to ensure that the provision requirements set out in pupils' statements of special educational needs are in place and reviewed regularly.
36. The school provides careers education, work experience and provision for their personal, social and health education. Topics taught include health, drugs, careers and citizenship and offer pupils some opportunities for vocational training. This enables pupils to make some informed choices and aids their understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship. However, the opportunities are limited, therefore, the impact upon pupils' personal and social development is limited.
37. Arrangements for child protection are in place and working to provide for the safety and well being of the school community. However, not all new support staff have had relevant training to ensure adequate knowledge and understanding of the procedures. During the inspection some learning support assistants were not following the school's guidelines and their tone and manner towards some pupils, although supportive, was overly motherly and did not facilitate pupils' understanding of the need to take greater responsibility for their actions.

38. There is a well thought out policy on pupils' behaviour and discipline, and good procedures to support pupils' learning. Where the guidance was not followed consistently pupils' behaviour was not managed effectively. The code of conduct encourages respect, self-discipline and consideration for others engendering an ethos of mutual respect. The values are reinforced by the headteacher and most form tutors. However, the action taken by the school has a limited impact on the extreme behavioural problems. The number of changes in staff has resulted in some inconsistency of approach and there has been deterioration in the standard of behaviour since the last inspection.
39. There are good policies and strategies to discourage anti-social behaviour. Bullying is actively discouraged and the sanction for persistent bullying is temporary exclusion from school. Incidents of anti-social behaviour are investigated, recorded, monitored and dealt with appropriately. To reinforce the policy the headteacher has recently incorporated the recommendations made in the MacPherson Report and a system has been introduced for all incidents of racism to be reported to parents through the governors' report, and action is taken to ensure that the local education authority is also aware.
40. Procedures for monitoring attendance were improved in October 2001 and are now effective. Appropriate action is taken to improve existing levels of attendance through the close working relationship between the school and the new education welfare officer. All absences are recorded, investigated, monitored and information is shared with parents. Targets for improvement are set for individual pupils with the active involvement of the local education authority and parents. Although levels of attendance are improving, with over half of the pupils with poor attendance showing marked improvements, some pupils do not consistently achieve their attendance targets and some parents appear not to support the initiative. The school continues to work with pupils and all parents and have successfully sustained the quality of the pastoral support and guidance achieved in the last report.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Five parents attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting and seventeen returned pre-inspection questionnaires. These statistics represent a low response. The low response rate means that the views expressed by parents are not necessarily representative of the views of all the parents.
42. A significant number of parents have reported that the standard of behaviour is unsatisfactory and they are particularly worried about the incidents of aggressive behaviour. They are concerned about the range and quality of the homework their children receive and about the amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Some are concerned about the relatively few opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activity and others say that their child does not like school. Only about half of the parents that responded felt that their children were making satisfactory progress. However, most parents reported that they enjoy a close working relationship with staff and feel confident about approaching school with their concerns and questions. They are pleased about the information they receive and two-thirds thought that the quality of teaching was good and the school is well managed and led.
43. Inspectors agree with parents that the behaviour of pupils is not good enough. The inspection evidence supports the view that there is too much unsatisfactory teaching across the school. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. Homework is set but the teachers have low expectations of pupils completing work at home and only some teachers make arrangements in school for pupils to complete homework. Consequently, many pupils do not take

responsibility for their work and display an immature and irresponsible attitude towards learning. Transport problems and the short lunch hour limit the school in providing extra-curricular activities at the end of and during the school day. Some attempts have been made by the school to address this issue by arranging school trips. Inspectors agree with the parents' concerns. However, not all parents support the work of the school in a constructive and purposeful manner.

44. The quality of information provided is satisfactory and is appreciated by parents. The newsletters, consultation meetings, as well as the pupil planners are effective tools and offer clear lines of communication. This is complemented by regular telephone calls by tutors and the work of taxi drivers used by the school who assist communication between school and home by acting as messengers for parents and staff. The effective partnership between school and home facilitates a consistent approach to support pupils' learning.
45. The governors' annual report and the school prospectus are used well to enhance communication. They are written in a language accessible to parents. These documents are informative and interesting and comply with statutory requirements and maintain the improvements noted in the last inspection. The end of year pupils' report is also written in a style which most parents value and appreciate. Parents feel that the reports adequately inform them of their child's progress and personal development. However, whilst some teachers offer advice on improvements and set targets for the improvement of pupils' personal development, the reports for Year 9 pupils do not include levels of attainment in all subjects and therefore fail to meet statutory requirements. Annual review meetings and parents' evenings are generally well attended and enable most parents to make a significant contribution to the learning of their child. Parents receive a comprehensive report on their child's academic attainments and progress, personal development and behaviour. The reports are clear and helpful to parents and children in identifying what they have achieved, but they do not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and the standard they are capable of achieving by the time they leave school.
46. The partnership the school establishes means that most parents are used effectively to improve pupils' attendance, their behaviour and to sustain their interest in learning. Most parents make every effort to meet the commitments set out in the home/school agreement and support the school and staff in the process of educating their child. However, some parents make a less than satisfactory contribution to their child's learning at school and home and fail to meet their commitments in the home/school agreement. A small but significant number do not consistently ensure their child attends school regularly and that homework is done regularly.
47. Since the last report in 1999, the school has improved the day-to-day information provided for parents and the quality of the school prospectus. However, the quality of the end-of-year reports for Year 9 pupils are unsatisfactory because levels of attainment are not always reported and therefore do not meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory overall and provide a clear focus for raising standards and improving the learning environment. Despite several weaknesses that remain unresolved since the last inspection that contribute to unsatisfactory learning, teaching and behaviour, management time is being prioritised effectively to deal with the most pressing concerns first.

48. Since the last inspection the school has continued to experience difficulties over the recruitment and retention of many staff including a headteacher. This has resulted in a period of great instability for the school, an uncertainty about the future and its ability to raise standards.
49. Since June 2001, the local education authority has increased its support to the school and has been instrumental in supporting the recently appointed headteacher – one of six in the past five years. Together with the governors they are now establishing a clear pattern for development strategies for raising standards. One effective and supportive strategy has been the secondment of a part-time school improvement adviser to guide and support the headteacher, staff and governors.
50. The current headteacher has been in post for little less than a year and in that time has made some good progress in introducing strategies to help the school provide an efficient, effective and positive environment for learning. Governors have confidence in the headteacher's ability to improve the standards and quality of education.
51. Day-to-day leadership and management are satisfactory; the headteacher shows a clear commitment to improving the overall quality of provision through a systematic and steady approach. He places high quality teaching and learning as a priority in raising standards. The school now has a workable short-term plan for the future and is well placed to identify priorities for development. The newly established senior management team has just completed the first draft of a three year improvement plan. The school, with the help from the local education authority, identified planning, assessment, use of individual education plans, pupils' achievements and regular monitoring of teaching and learning as the significant areas for the focus of attention. However, this is a very recent development and attention to the priorities arising from previous inspections and monitoring have been slow, with several key issues remaining a cause for concern. The very high turnover of staff and the difficulty in appointing specialist staff have hindered development.
52. The governing body does not yet fulfil all statutory requirements; many governors are new to the role and are insufficiently informed about the school's weaknesses. For example, governors are unaware that the curriculum is unsatisfactory because it does not meet statutory requirements, as religious education is not taught to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Although governors suspected that the teaching time was below the recommended standards no steps had been taken to remedy the situation. The brevity of the school day means that the National Curriculum cannot be taught fully. The governing body is, therefore, not fulfilling its responsibility to monitor standards, teaching and learning.
53. The staff and governors now share a commitment to working together and raising standards. The leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but several weaknesses remain. These accord very clearly with inspection judgements. The school gathers data in relation to pupils' attainment and progress to analyse, but is only just beginning to use this information to set challenging whole school targets for raising attainment.
54. A small but significant number of pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The needs of these pupils are not met by the staff who do not pay close attention to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Pupils with literacy difficulties are withdrawn from lessons for additional support from a learning mentor. This intervention has contributed to improvements in reading skills but as yet has not impacted upon pupils' ability to read and write independently in lessons. Arrangements for organising annual reviews on the review day are very good, but some pupils' statements were not reviewed in 2000-2001 and therefore not all the 14

to 15-year-old pupils have transition plans. Procedures for organising and managing annual reviews have recently been revised with the appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator but it is too early to judge the impact of the process on provision for pupils. Arrangements to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum have recently been introduced by the headteacher. These are effective in ensuring that girls, boys, pupils in public care and those from mixed heritage backgrounds have the same opportunities to succeed. But the limited use by some teachers of information in pupils' individual education plans and behaviour management plans when planning learning means that pupils with very challenging behaviour and those with additional literacy and language difficulties do not consistently receive appropriate opportunities to achieve. This adversely affects their progress and attainments.

55. Teachers and support assistants are well deployed for the majority of the time. However, on some occasions there are too few experienced staff to manage the behaviour of some pupils, but too many in other groups. The continuing difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers have led to an unsatisfactory match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Since the last inspection, the high staff turnover and a large number of new appointments has resulted in a high proportion of temporary or inexperienced teachers. Job descriptions have been introduced since the last inspection but they are inadequate because they do not truly reflect the responsibilities currently held by staff due to recent unexpected staff changes. The senior managers and governors have not introduced satisfactory strategies for monitoring the effectiveness of all staff and the induction procedures are inadequate for new teachers, except for the newly qualified teacher who has a mentor and is completing an appropriate induction programme. Specifically, the school does not provide sufficient support for those teachers who have difficulty in managing the pupils' challenging behaviour. Opportunities are missed to share the very good strategies employed by the more successful staff with those who need guidance.
56. The accommodation is satisfactory but there are some areas where pupils are difficult to supervise and provide opportunities for the immature pupils to behave badly without being detected by staff. The new library area requires refurbishment and the stock of books requires improvement. Currently the library is underused. The school is scheduled to move into new accommodation within the next three years. The learning resources have steadily improved since the last inspection and French, music, history, geography, art and design, physical education and design and technology are well equipped to provide good support for pupils' learning. The school is adequately stocked with computers and software but delays in the school being connected to the Internet have hindered the progress made by some subject teachers in their use of ICT in lessons. In science, the learning resources are adequate to support the curriculum but in English and mathematics further learning resources are required to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully.
57. Overall, arrangements for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school's performance are unsatisfactory. Very recent support from the local education authority has been instrumental in helping the headteacher and governors to identify methods for collecting data and formal procedures for improving standards across the school. There has been insufficient time for those initiatives to have an impact on the school's performance. Procedures for performance management are now in place but not yet complete. One result of this weakness is that the school is not fully aware of the quality of its teaching and learning because there are few examples of rigorous, systematic and comprehensive observations of lessons across the curriculum. Although a series of observations has begun, not all teachers have been observed and the outcome of such observations is not yet sufficiently evaluated to

help teachers improve their own skills, but more importantly to enable pupils to improve their own achievements and seek higher standards.

58. Despite effective policies and procedures, and individual behaviour plans being in place for the management of challenging behaviour, a small number of pupils with very challenging behaviour can become the immediate priority when they are with inexperienced or temporary staff. When difficult incidents occur the school has no 'back up' system and staff have no easy way of summoning immediate help. New and temporary staff lack confidence when they have to physically intervene, resulting in the situation escalating and disrupting the whole class. It is a weakness that needs urgent attention.
59. The school has recently introduced strategies from the National Numeracy and Literacy Initiatives, but these are yet to prove successful in enabling teachers to develop their practice in the classroom so that all pupils are challenged and their learning extended and enhanced. The headteacher and governors do not yet ensure that teachers' planning is systematically and routinely linked to pupils' individual needs. The headteacher and governors rely heavily on the local education authority for systematic monitoring to evaluate the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' performance.
60. Many governors are new to the school and have yet to capture a comprehensive picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Their informal views are largely accurate and they are truly supportive of the work of the staff team. However, their opinions and judgements are not yet substantiated by data. They are aware of their weaknesses and have commenced a training programme to rectify the situation.
61. Financial planning and the use of the element of the budget they are responsible for, is good. The school was faced with a very significant overspend two years ago, but successfully reduced the sum significantly year by year. The bursar, headteacher and chair of governors have monitored and controlled the school's spending very effectively to achieve this reduction. The school has secure procedures for ensuring that money accruing to the school is well benefited towards those areas of work that need it most. Financial management is efficient. Spending for all purposes is linked to the school's strategic planning; management is efficient for ordering, auditing, banking and invoicing. However, the school is limited in the control it has over its budget, as the delegation of finances has not been returned to the school since it was placed in 'special measures' and the budget is still managed by the local education authority. Nevertheless, in the proportion of the budget they are responsible for, the bursar and senior staff are rigorous in ensuring that they seek best possible value for purchases made. Although governors have identified priorities for spending in order to raise standards, because they do not adequately monitor and evaluate the impact of major spending decisions on the standards of pupils' achievements, they are not fully following best value principals.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To continue to raise standards and further improve the quality of education and rectify the weaknesses for all pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - a) Improve pupils' attainments by:
 - i. establishing a coherent approach to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and provide training to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;

- ii. making better use of curriculum targets and the targets in pupils' individual education plans to improve attainment;
- iii. making better use of the individual education planning process by introducing a coherent system to identify the individual learning needs of pupils, set good quality targets with a firm focus upon learning that are used to guide teaching and regularly monitored and reviewed;
- iv. making better use of marking and assessment information to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work;
- v. ensuring that the end of year reports for Year 9 pupils contain information about the levels that they have attained in all the subjects of the National Curriculum;
- vi. raising the profile of the use of homework to encourage pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning; and
- vii. working closely with parents and the education welfare service to improve attendance and reduce the level of exclusions.

(Para refs: 2, 13, 19, 21, 24, 26, 36, 44, 46, 55, 56, 61, 71, 76, 78, 81)

b) Improve the consistency of quality of teaching and learning by:

- i. providing adequate training and support for new and supply teachers to enable them to meet pupils' individual learning needs and assist all teachers to focus on developing the skills pupils require to be successful learners;
- ii. ensuring a consistent approach to managing poor and challenging behaviour and further encourage pupils to take greater responsibility for own actions;
- iii. establishing a policy and training programme to enable all teachers to intervene and deal with aggressive and challenging behaviour safely; and
- iv. establishing procedures to share best practice so that all lessons are as well planned, relevant to the learning needs of the pupils and as interesting as the best.

(Para refs: 9, 10, 16, 38, 39, 57, 59, 60, 74, 81)

c) Improve the quality of the school curriculum by:

- i. ensuring that all statutory requirements are met, particularly those for teaching religious education in Years 10 and 11 and for physical education;
- ii. increasing the amount of teaching time available each day to bring this in line with national recommendations and provide more time to develop pupils' basic skills, particularly in literacy, numeracy and ICT; and
- iii. recognising the importance and opportunities provided by changes to the 14 to 19 curriculum from September 2002 and using these to develop accreditation that is more closely matched to pupils' needs and to their skills.

(Para refs: 22, 24, 25, 33, 46, 54, 114, 115)

d) Ensure that the work of the school and priorities are rigorously evaluated by:

- i. developing further a systematic approach to planning, monitoring and recording the teaching, learning, attendance and behaviour management so that the information gathered can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of school initiatives by the headteacher, senior staff and governors;

- ii. developing the role of the subject leaders to enable them to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation process in order to have a comprehensive overview of their subject;
- iii. agreeing criteria for judging effective teaching and learning in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning more accurately; and
- iv. making better use of assessment and review data in order to identify what needs to be done to improve pupils' rate of progress and raise their attainments.

(Para refs: 46, 54, 55, 56, 59, 61, 73, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	17	20	4	2	0
Percentage	2	14	33	39	8	4	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	50
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	15.9
National comparative data (EBD)	11.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data (EBD)	6.5

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	00/01	11	1	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	0 %	11%	0%
	National (EBD)	4%	37%	11%
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0%	0%	0%
	National (EBD)	1%	2%	2%

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	0%	11%	0%
	National (EBD)	8%	14%	12%
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0%	0%	0%
	National (EBD)	1%	2%	2%

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

Separate girls and boys results are not published because the number of girls taking part was less than ten.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	51
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	70	1
Other minority ethnic groups	8	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.2
Average class size	7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	700,387
Total expenditure	703,547
Expenditure per pupil	13,530
Balance brought forward from previous year	104,492
Balance carried forward to next year	107,652

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	52
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	24	18	29	29	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	18	24	12	18
Behaviour in the school is good.	6	35	12	41	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	6	18	6	71	0
The teaching is good.	41	18	12	18	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	41	6	12	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	53	0	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	29	18	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	0	12	0
The school is well led and managed.	35	35	0	18	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	47	0	24	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	35	12	18	12

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

ENGLISH

63. Although pupils make slow but steady progress in the first few years in school, all pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11 and achieve satisfactory standards. Pupils enter the school with low levels of attainment in English as a result of their previous learning experiences and their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Nearly one in three pupils have moderate learning or language difficulties and many lack confidence in their ability to read and write although they are more confident in speaking. The standards of pupils' spelling are particularly poor in Year 7 and even in Years 8 to 11 few pupils have the ability and understanding of how to tackle the spelling of unknown words and rarely make a serious attempt at spelling them independently. Pupils generally rely upon the staff to help with their writing, spelling and reading. By Year 11, those pupils who attend regularly have made at least satisfactory progress in the broader aspects of English and understand the use of various styles of writing and text. They have not made sufficient progress in independent learning but especially in spelling.
64. Pupils in Year 7 have significant difficulties in settling down to work and controlling their behaviour and this impedes the progress they make. The English teacher is persistent in her efforts to maintain the pace of the lesson and this technique results in pupils co-operating and completing at least part of the task. However, when their behaviour is more challenging, pupils do not show consistent positive attitudes to learning. On some occasions the temptation of a strong reward encourages pupils to make satisfactory efforts in their work in the short term but there are no effective long-term strategies in place.
65. By Year 9 pupils have improved their attitudes to learning and take a greater interest in their work. They are keen to discuss their work, for example issues surrounding the sinking of the Titanic and to compare what they have read from reports of the day with scenes depicted in the film. They talk with enthusiasm to visitors and are largely successful in writing an imaginative account of how they might have felt had they been a passenger.
66. Good quality teaching in Years 10 and 11 is specifically planned to appeal to the pupils' interests and experiences and by Year 11 they have deepened their understanding of a range of literature. Pupils have improved their skills of reading so that most can read fluently from information provided by the teacher. This may range from Shakespeare, poetry or factual material from advertisements. Where materials are well matched to their needs, pupils are able to make sensible suggestions about the content of the text. One group of pupils, for example, held a lively discussion about the used car market and what could realistically be expected in a second-hand car. A more able pupil pointed out that an eight-year-old car was highly unlikely to be in an 'immaculate condition' as it was described in the advertisement. Some pupils bring their experience of the world of work to lessons and provide advice to other pupils and staff about work which has been undertaken on their cars. One pupil, for example, was able to tell the teacher how she could check whether a new clutch cable had actually been fitted. These discussions are meaningful to the pupils and enable them to share their expertise thus boosting their self-esteem. However, although they may be knowledgeable about cars and their origins, many are less confident in their wider use of English. Some were able to define the abbreviation 'o.n.o.' but others had difficulty in recognising and remembering the abbreviation. More able pupils have some success in extended writing as preparation for their GCSE. However, even in

the best writing some basic rules of punctuation and grammar are broken. Overall the standard of writing in Years 10 and 11 is sufficient to gain lower grades in GCSE but remains somewhat simplistic in terms of narrative, style and expression. Nevertheless current work, that the teacher assessed against GCSE standards, indicates that pupils are on target to achieve grades D to G this year.

67. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Where the pupils make good progress it is closely linked to the quality of teaching particularly in Years 10 and 11 where the experienced teacher is particularly skilled at challenging the pupils to extend their skills. In the one lesson where there was clear focus upon developing the individual literacy skills of the pupils, two boys were given specifically focused tasks well matched to their abilities and the targets in their individual education plans. This task required them to put words in alphabetical order and the difficulty was the way the teacher had included two words beginning with 'ho'. This represented a real challenge for the pupils but with a little help they were able to understand and apply the rule. The teacher asked questions which tested the pupils' understanding and which helped them to identify work that they had completed during the lesson. Teachers are less rigorous in developing the pupils' use of self assessment to evaluate exactly how much they have learnt, understood and need to do to improve. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is satisfactory but difficulties in behaviour management result in a lack of concentration from a minority of pupils. Although pupils are told what the aims of the lessons are they are occasionally more concerned with squabbles they have brought back to the classroom from play or lunchtime breaks. In these cases the teacher is required to lay down clear boundaries so that learning opportunities for all the pupils are not compromised. The teachers' management of behaviour is inconsistent across the year groups. Where teachers have established good relationships, pupils work well, are respectful and make good gains in learning. Where pupils are less mature and more self-centred they have not developed an understanding of how their behaviour can affect others. Overall behaviour is good at Years 9 to 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but with significant problems arising in some classes.
68. The English curriculum is satisfactory overall and enables pupils to learn through interesting topics within lessons. The content of the curriculum moves pupils successfully towards the achievement of national qualifications in Year 11. However there are too few opportunities for pupils to use computer technology routinely in preparing, drafting, editing and refining their work. The schemes of work for English are derived from the National Curriculum and pupils' learning is well supported by the curriculum and by activities in lessons. The English co-ordinator has been at the school for less than a year. She had taken responsibility for the co-ordination of English shortly before the inspection and has the commitment and interest to raise the profile of learning in English so that all the pupils have developed an interest in the subject and want to do well. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to integrate the various strands of English and literacy together in order to promote a purposeful drive towards making literacy – particularly reading and spelling – part of the school's embedded principles. However, this will be a major task if the school is to raise standards significantly in spelling, writing, and reading and, to a lesser extent, in speaking and listening.

Literacy and the National Literacy Strategy

69. The school has recently introduced the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 3. All staff are aware of the significant numbers of pupils who experience difficulties with literacy. In its curriculum plans the school includes literacy as a focus for planning in English lessons and as an element in all other lessons of the curriculum. In discussions staff are positive that their plans and strategies for improving pupils'

standards of literacy are good. There are some small pockets of good practice and a commitment to ensuring that pupils improve their achievements and develop skills of independence in reading, writing and spelling which are not currently as good as they could be. Several pupils are very immature and do not yet appreciate the necessity of being independent in their learning rather than relying on teachers or learning support assistants whenever they have a problem. Although the staff have received training in the Key Stage 3 literacy strategy, they have not yet embedded this principle into all their work with pupils. Where they are alert to opportunities, teachers encourage pupils to use target words and display useful words and phrases in the classroom. They challenge pupils to improve their work by asking questions which stretch their thinking and they expect pupils to try their best before asking for assistance. However, such occasions are rare and teachers frequently miss opportunities to extend pupils' skills and thinking. For example, in discussion teachers will accept the pupils' first answers without challenging them to analyse their thinking in more depth and provide further reasoning and details. In the pupils' workbooks teachers frequently include a positive comment to encourage pupils to do more. However it is inappropriate to write comments such as 'excellent' or 'outstanding' when there are errors – sometimes up to six spelling mistakes on the written page. Teaching assistants are not sufficiently skilled in understanding how the pupils learn and the skills they need to learn on their own; pupils expect that adults will not just help but will complete some aspects of their work and this does not help them take responsibility for their own learning. The school has still to identify ways of ensuring that all lessons include a relevant emphasis on raising pupils' awareness and abilities in literacy.

70. The school has recently moved the library to a larger location. However, the move has not been linked to improving the stock of books, which is unsatisfactory. The current accommodation has the potential for providing a comfortable space where pupils can enjoy reading or researching. At present it requires further refurbishment and restocking to support the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. There are too few fiction and non-fiction books, poetry and drama texts are under-represented and very few books feature community groups or provide information on multicultural issues. Pupils do not often use the library and the computers do not have Internet connections. There are imminent plans to resolve this situation.
71. The school has made satisfactory progress in the provision for English since the last inspection when it was judged to need improved subject management. The school now has a clearly defined role for the co-ordinator and is developing better strategies for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the teaching by increasing observations of lessons. Whilst there is now a subject leader in place, the role has recently been delegated to a member of staff who has only recently joined the school. As a result some procedures regarding the identification of strengths and weaknesses are still not in place. However, the subject leader and staff are well placed to move the subject forward. Arrangements for literacy are unsatisfactory because the school has not identified clear strategies for raising the pupils' levels of achievement in reading writing and spelling. This is a priority area in the school improvement plan and an experienced literacy teacher has been appointed to take responsibility to manage this priority and raise the standard of literacy throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

72. Standards in mathematics are unsatisfactory overall because specific groups of pupils fail to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls or of those with mixed heritage backgrounds. However, pupils with language and learning difficulties and those with complex behavioural difficulties do not make the progress of which they are capable as they do not get equal access to learning because their needs are not adequately met. This represents deterioration in standards since the last inspection when pupils were making satisfactory progress in developing their basic understanding of the use of number. Pupils have an unsatisfactory start in mathematics when they join the school. Difficulties with retention and recruitment of teachers has affected Year 7 and 8 pupils who are taught by a number of non-specialist teachers who have insufficient training in the National Numeracy Strategy to be confident to teach mathematics. This is adversely affecting the progress pupils make. Throughout the school pupils with language and learning difficulties achieve little independently in mathematics because the teaching and planning focuses on the exercise to be completed and does not pay sufficient attention to establishing the mathematical concepts that underpin the mathematical operations. Pupils are not systematically taught how to use appropriate mental strategies to support their calculation skills and the less able pupils lack confidence in using and applying their mathematical knowledge when faced with number problems because they are not encouraged to articulate their thinking. Too often teachers and learning support assistants tell pupils how to solve the problem.
73. By the age of 14, all pupils understand place value up to 100 and choose the appropriate operation when solving problems involving metric measure. They are able to calculate ten per cent of a specific quantity. Most pupils confidently tackle problems involving shape, space and measure. They identify and calculate the area of a square and many can work out the area of equilateral and right angle triangles. Higher attaining pupils can identify the probability of specific situations by drawing up a probability scale. The higher attaining pupils achieve age-appropriate levels of attainment in mathematics but the others, remain at levels below and well below that expected for their age. Lessons frequently focus on the task and pupils with language and learning difficulties are unable to follow the teacher's explanations of how to complete the activity because they have not understood the underpinning concept. When this happens, pupils lose heart and behaviour deteriorates, frequently resulting in disruption that affects the learning of all the pupils. These factors have an adverse affect upon pupils' progress over time and too many pupils do not achieve the standard to which they are capable by the time they leave school. Last year only four out of nine pupils achieved a pass grade in GCSE.
74. Standardised tests are administered in mathematics when pupils enter the school and retaken at regular intervals as pupils progress through the school. These are used together with National Curriculum assessment track to pupils' progress. Pupils now have targets in mathematics but as yet they are not influencing planning and teaching and therefore not used to promote pupils' progress. Pupils work through a comprehensive scheme of work that is based on two commercial mathematics schemes to provide for two levels of ability. Comprehensive records are kept of what pupils have covered and planning indicates which pupils require more adult help but does not indicate the teaching strategies required to meet their individual learning needs. The planning and teaching is not influenced by pupils' individual education plan targets and appropriate approaches are not used to support the learning of pupils with more complex difficulties resulting in them failing to make the progress of which they are capable.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in mathematics for the 11 to 14-year-olds. Teaching in lessons is satisfactory for the 14 to 16-year-olds but some of the same unsatisfactory features that are evident in the teaching for the younger pupils are also evident in the teaching for the older pupils. In these lessons insufficient attention is given to teaching the skills that underpin the subject. Marking and assessment are not used to help pupils understand how to improve their work. There is not sufficient focus on the learning that needs to take place and insufficient knowledge of the teaching approaches to encourage pupils to articulate their thinking to solve problems. Pupils' learning skills are inadequately developed.
76. The subject leader has worked hard to update and maintain appropriate documents and records for the department and attended the National Numeracy Courses for secondary schools. However, the role requires developing to include monitoring, analysis of data, evaluation and strategic planning in order to have a strategic overview and to provide appropriate leadership and support for the other teachers who teach mathematics. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been slow. There is insufficient overall strategic planning and opportunities have been missed to adopt aspects of the strategy to improve the quality of learning for all pupils throughout the school. The subject manager has not implemented any aspect of the strategy in lessons with Year 9. There are insufficient learning resources to support those teachers who are trying to implement the strategy and they need more support and guidance to understand the under-pinning principles and methods in order to be successful. ICT is not used to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

77. Pupils are not achieving nearly as well as they could in science because of weaknesses in teaching and inadequate planning to meet pupils' individual learning needs. Pupils' skills and their knowledge and understanding of science when they enter the school are well below the level expected for their age. In 2001, standards were satisfactory and six out of nine pupils achieved pass grades in GCSE but the standard of work seen during the inspection would indicate that pupils are not going to achieve the same standards this year. There is no system in place to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their science background or to gain and use information from their earlier education to determine these. Consequently it is difficult to plan appropriately to meet pupils' individual needs and pupils' achievements in science, even taking into account their low levels on entry, and the progress pupils are making is poor. The levels pupils attain and the quality of education pupils receive in science has deteriorated since the last inspection.
78. Overall, the quality of teaching in science is poor. During the week of the inspection the subject leader who teaches most of the science lessons in the school was absent and classes were taken by a supply teacher. Consequently, much attention was given to a scrutiny of pupils' work in science, to talking with pupils and to looking at teachers' planning. Attainment throughout the school is well below that expected for their age and unsatisfactory in relation to pupils' prior attainments. Pupils are failing to make satisfactory progress at all levels. The scheme of work and individual lesson plans were available to the supply teacher but these were not sufficiently robust or detailed to ensure that the needs of individual pupils were identified and then met. This is having an adverse effect on pupils' progress. Planning is based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for pupils aged 11 to 16 but does not fully recognise the balance of the curriculum orders issued in 2000 as currently too much reliance is placed on textbooks. However, the scheme of work developed by the newly appointed science co-ordinator provides an adequate basis from which teachers can plan their lessons.

79. The poor quality of the teaching adversely affects pupils' learning and the quality of learning is poor. The learning objectives identified in these plans are focused on the content that will be taught and do not identify the skills which pupils will learn, particularly those skills associated with observation, recording and hypothesising. There is little emphasis on the investigative nature of science and consequently many of the activities are mundane and heavily focused on worksheets duplicated from textbooks. Pupils spend much time filling in one-word answer boxes and there is little opportunity for them to be involved in practical activities. Consequently, in many lessons, pupils quickly lose interest, become bored and their behaviour deteriorates. In these cases, the behaviour management skills of the staff are severely tested and often, the learning of the whole class is disrupted by the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils. Although work is marked there are few comments about how work could be improved or reference to the levels which pupils have achieved. Pupils are therefore not aware of what they need to do to extend or improve their learning. This was particularly noticeable for a group of Year 11 pupils who were revising for public examinations and who were not able to relate the questions on a past paper to their learning in science.
80. The management of science is poor. The subject leader has only been in post since September 2001 and has recently been away on long-term sickness absence. A supply teacher and other teachers on the school staff are currently covering her teaching role. She has developed an adequate scheme of work to fulfil statutory requirements but this has not been extended into individual lesson plans and these do not provide the necessary support for the present class teachers. The supply teacher does not give sufficient attention to the investigative aspects of science, or to those directly related to biology, resulting in insufficient opportunities to adequately develop appropriate skills and knowledge in these areas. Opportunities to capture and build on pupils' enthusiasm for practical work are missed and too many lessons are mundane and uninspiring. The school has good laboratory facilities and appropriate preparation space but does not have any technical support. This places additional pressures on teachers in preparing and setting-up appropriate equipment for practical science sessions. The use of ICT to support learning is at a very early stage of development in science and there was no evidence of its use during the inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Pupils make good progress in art and design and by the age of 16 many pupils achieve age-appropriate levels of attainment. All the pupils who complete sufficient course work are entered for GCSE. Even where attendance is poor the art teachers makes arrangements for pupils to keep up with the work they need to complete. However, there are a number of pupils whose attendance is so poor that they are unable to complete the work. Results overall are good with pupils achieving B to F grades in GCSE. The school has made good progress since the last inspection
82. By the age of 14, pupils are confident in using and handling a range of media. They are able to explore ideas and explain why they like or dislike a piece of work. They enjoy using ICT to assist them with the development of ideas and designs by selecting visual information and images that they develop and refine to their satisfaction. They have a sound knowledge of the print process and develop intricate prints, changing the colour combinations and detail to produce different effects. By the age of 16, pupils can confidently develop their sketches from observation into a unique piece of work that communicates their ideas and feelings. They are able to use the work of other artists as a starting point for their own work and many pupils have extended their knowledge and understanding of the materials they use to produce the effects and unique characteristics they wish employ. One pupil has become particularly interested in texture and uses this interest to develop his

paintings and prints whilst another is particularly interested in colour. One is attracted to detail and employs the most intricate design details in his work.

83. The quality of teaching and learning in art and design is consistently good. Pupils are very clear about what they have to do and the purpose of the task. They are encouraged to constantly evaluate their work against the learning objectives and this enables them to be constructively critical of their work and identify how they can improve. They are provided with a good range of interesting and challenging learning activities that build upon their prior learning and understanding. The classroom organisation and management of resources is designed to encourage pupils to select the materials and equipment they require for their design and to look after their tools and materials. All pupils have portfolios that are used to enable them to reflect upon their learning and progress. The work in art and design makes a considerable contribution to building pupils self-esteem and behaviour in art and design is usually good.
84. The subject is ably lead and managed by a specialist teacher who has continued to maintain the improvement observed at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator has developed an interesting and well-resourced range of modules to cover the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Consideration has been given to the contribution the subject makes for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and a range of modules are based on architecture from world religions and different cultures. The assessment systems are comprehensive and the information is used to plan appropriate intervention to support and develop the skills of pupils with specific difficulties. Excellent use is made of pupils' behaviour and learning targets to keep pupils focused on what they need to do to improve. This approach is effective in supporting difficult behaviour and behaviour in art and design is usually good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology and achieve satisfactory standards by the age of 16. Across the school pupils are given the opportunity to study design and technology through working with resistant materials and food technology. At present, these aspects of the curriculum are managed and accredited separately, but since the appointment of a new co-ordinator for food technology closer links are being developed between the two subject areas. This joint planning will ensure more coherent coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and lead to a wider range of accreditation opportunities being available to pupils. Both aspects are reported on in this section. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.
86. Pupils make satisfactory progress. At the time of the last inspection the design and technology department was about to enter the first group of selected Year 11 pupils for GCSE. This was successful and all those entered passed with F or G grades. This year, pupils will take either the nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement or, for the more able, GCSE. The quality of the course work that pupils are undertaking for these qualifications is generally close to that which would be expected nationally for pupils of their age. However, the quality of their written work and design work is below that which would be expected and reflects the weaknesses in pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. In food technology, pupils are entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement and most achieve well in the 'making' aspect, but again their generally weak literacy and numeracy skills limit their overall attainment. Across the school, pupils enjoy their work in design and technology and in food technology. This is reflected in their generally satisfactory patterns of behaviour in the workshop and kitchen, and in the care and pride they take in the artefacts that they make.

87. Overall, the quality of teaching in both design and technology and food technology is at least satisfactory and in one of the four lessons seen, it was judged to be good. Both aspects are well resourced, and pupils are able to use a range of machinery, tools and equipment that reflect current industrial practice. This enables teachers to provide a good range of interesting and stimulating activities. For example in design and technology, pupils in Year 7 have made a 'steady hand' game, using a wood and wire base with a simple electric circuit and are presently involved in making a 'ball race' game to extend their measuring, cutting and finishing skills. Year 8 pupils are developing their experience of mechanisms through an articulated 'funny face'. Through Years 9, 10 and 11 pupils link their work in ICT with that in design and technology and begin to use drawing boards and graphics packages to develop their design skills. These are then applied in Year 9 to making a pencil case/storage box in wood. For their project work in Years 10 and 11 pupils are making a toolbox. In food technology pupils make a wide range of products including pizzas, bread, sweets and confections as well as learning to plan and make full meals, snacks and sandwiches. There is good focus given to emphasising healthy living and healthy eating in all their work.
88. Teachers' planning identifies learning objectives and these are appropriately shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. However, generally these objectives relate to content rather than to skills and there is no clear indication in the planning of what individual pupils will learn and teachers do not use information in pupils' individual education plans to support pupils' learning. Consequently some pupils, in particular the more able, are not sufficiently challenged and they could achieve more. There is an appropriate amount of time allocated to a plenary session at the end of each lessons. These tend to cover behaviour issues and the completion of the pupils' points cards covering their behaviour and literacy targets rather than the skills identified in the learning objectives for the lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and skills and they use these well to demonstrate techniques and skills to the pupils. This is effective when they are working on a one-to-one basis and at these times the pupil makes good progress. However, when the teacher leaves to work with others, some impetus is lost and the pupil's progress slows. Oral feedback particularly in one-to-one situations is good and very helpful to pupils in developing their practical skills. However, feedback on written work does not clearly explain what the pupils must do to improve their work. The teachers rely heavily on oral feedback to provide regular ongoing assessment of pupils' practical skills. Although this is helpful at the time, pupils have no formal way of identifying their skill level or their progress in developing that skill over time. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology and staff use this and appropriate classroom and behaviour management skills to ensure a safe and productive working environment. Any disruptive behaviour is managed well and disturbance to the learning of others is minimised. Teachers and learning support assistants work together well. The learning support assistants make good use of their practical skills to guide pupils and help them to develop their skills.
89. Overall, the management of both design and technology and food technology is satisfactory. Appropriate schemes of work have been developed which provide an adequate basis for teachers' planning. Although the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered appropriately, links between the two areas to ensure coherence in pupils' learning have only started to be developed since the appointment of the new co-ordinator for food technology. The use of assessment based on National Curriculum levels has been started, but has not been used for a sufficiently long to have had an impact on pupils' achievements. There is no technician support for either design and technology or food technology. This places an extra burden on staff to set up equipment and maintain machinery.

GEOGRAPHY

90. Good progress has been made in geography since the last inspection and pupils make good progress. The teaching of geography is organised effectively to ensure that the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are fully covered. The newly appointed co-ordinator, who took up her post in September 2001, is revising the scheme of work using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) approved guidance to bring it in line with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
91. At present pupils' achievements in Year 11 are accredited using the nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement. However, the subject leader recognises that this qualification is not sufficiently stretching for a significant number of pupils and has introduced a short course GCSE for pupils in the present Year 10. For example two pupils in Year 11 are considered capable of achieving a distinction and to have the potential to do better than this. When they enter the school, pupils have had very varied experiences in their study of geography. Many have only a superficial knowledge of the topics identified in the National Curriculum and this, taken with their weak literacy skills, means their attainment is well below that which would be expected for their age. The work seen during the inspection shows that pupils are generally making good progress given their low starting point and they are achieving well.
92. Only two lessons of geography were seen during the inspection, and judgements are based on these and a scrutiny of pupils' work, talking to pupils and staff and on displays around the school and in the humanities teaching base. The quality of teaching is good and enables all pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Teachers' planning is thorough and has clear learning objectives that are tightly linked to what individual pupils are expected to achieve in the lesson. Lessons start with a clear explanation of these objectives and a useful question and answer session to consolidate previous learning. Good support is given to developing pupils' literacy skills by listing key words and getting pupils to write these in their books. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils then had to use these words in writing three sentences about a lava flow, further supporting their literacy development. In this activity the teacher gave clear recognition to the different literacy needs of individual pupils. At the end of the lessons there is a very structured plenary session in which the gains in learning are identified with each pupil and targets for the next session are set. These are linked to the behaviour and literacy target identified on the pupils' points card. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and uses this well to provide a good range of activities that thoroughly involve the children in their learning. For example, in a Year 10 lessons about volcanoes good use was made of pupils' previous learning and a high quality colour photograph of a lava flow, to stimulate their imaginations to write three sentences about what they might see, hear and smell if they were close to the flow. The quiet, yet purposeful manner of the teacher is very effective in settling pupils to their tasks and encouraging them to give of their best. Pupils enjoy their work in geography and the few outbursts are well controlled by the teacher and the disruption these cause to the learning of others is minimised. Generally, pupils are well challenged and the pace of lessons is brisk; however, occasionally individual timescales, linked to the targets and capabilities of each pupils for the completion of specific tasks, are not set and consequently not all pupils fully complete the task. Good feedback, both oral and written is given to pupils and they are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. However, these are not clearly linked to National Curriculum levels so that pupils can use the level descriptors displayed on the classroom wall to identify where they are and what they need to do to achieve the next level.
93. Although new to her post, the co-ordinator has quickly made an impact. The scheme of work is presently being revised to fully reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and in Years 10 and 11 to prepare pupils for GCSE

short course accreditation. Lessons are now appropriately resourced through a thorough reorganisation of existing resources and the purchase of new ones. The co-ordinator has developed opportunities for all pupils to carry out a local study and is planning to take a group of Year 9 pupils to Quarry Bank Mill to enhance their learning in geography and provide suitable opportunities for outdoor adventurous activities.

HISTORY

94. Achievement in history is satisfactory for the younger pupils and often good for the older ones in relation to their prior achievement. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. At present pupils' achievements in Year 11 are accredited by a nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement but the subject leader is introducing a GCSE short course for the Year 10 pupils because she is aware that the current course arrangement she inherited do not extend the more able pupils sufficiently. Currently many pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of the topics covered by the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and their achievements overall are below that expected for their age.
95. Pupils enter the school with a varied experience of history and have gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding. The teacher uses detailed day-to-day assessment to ensure pupils' gaps in knowledge are rectified and the teaching focuses on developing the skills pupils require to successfully study history at a higher level. What pupils are to learn is clearly communicated at the beginning of lessons and good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply and practice the new skills being taught. Excellent use is made of key vocabulary to aid understanding and develop discussion. This approach supports pupils with limited ability to articulate their thinking and effective discussion between pupils was observed in a Year 11 lesson where pupils discussed the factors that contributed to poor public health in the nineteenth century and compared the conditions with the way they live now. This process was successful in helping pupils to formulate their thinking and aid their understanding of what lead up to the improvements in public health. The teacher successfully models work on the blackboard and uses writing frames to support pupils with limited writing skills. For example, in a Year 9 class pupils were considering the amount of change that has taken place in the last century and selected key events that they recorded on a time line. Many pupils had difficulty organising the information and the teacher modelled a method of recording the information starting with three key events. The result is that pupils are able to work independently and produce written work of a reasonable standard. Pupils show an interest and pride in their work. Pupils who were observed to be disruptive in other classes settled to work and were pleased about what they achieved. The management of behaviour is good. The teacher is clear, persistent and non-confrontational. She has high expectations of pupils and they respond to the challenge. Pupils with additional needs relating to literacy or challenging behaviour are supported effectively and make steady progress.
96. The subject leader is in her first year of teaching and has already made a positive impact to the quality of teaching and learning in history. She has been quick to respond to the improvements required to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate programme in history by completely rewriting the scheme of work using the QCA approved guidance to bring it in line with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Assessment procedures are linked to the scheme of work and are very effective in tracking pupils' progress over time and identifying pupils' capabilities to set challenging targets. Improvements have been made to the range of learning resources to support pupils' learning. Opportunities are now being developed for pupils to enhance their learning through visits to local museums and historical sites.

The use of ICT to support learning is to be developed when the school is connected to the Internet.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. Pupils make steady progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and attain satisfactory standards by the age of 16. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The school uses a nationally recognised Certificate of Competence to accredit the achievements of pupils in Year 11. Generally pupils are successful in achieving this qualification but the teacher recognises that some higher attaining pupils are now achieving levels equal to GCSE standards. Most pupils who enter the school have very weak skills in ICT and against this low starting point they make at least satisfactory progress and for a minority, progress is good. However, the more able pupils could achieve more, particularly in Year 10 and 11. The use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum is very varied. Excellent use is made of a software package designed to develop pupils' composing skills in music. Good links are established with the work pupils are doing using graphics in design and technology and art and design. In French pupils have the opportunity to use appropriate software to develop their oral skills. In English, mathematics, geography and history, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning is at an early stage of development. Little use is made of ICT to support pupils' work in science.
98. Teachers undertake a careful review and analysis of pupils' ICT skills when they enter the school and use this to match work to pupils' needs. The schemes of work approved by the QCA are then used in an adapted form to ensure appropriate skills development based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. At this stage the scheme of work appropriately emphasises the development of pupils' basic ICT skills and little attention is given to the use of ICT as a tool for monitoring and control. The department is aware of this and sees this as a future development. In Year 7, pupils are appropriately taught keyboarding skills, but the planning can easily be adapted for older pupils if they enter the school without appropriate skills in this area. The effectiveness of this approach is somewhat compromised by the fact that the learning objectives for individual lessons do not clearly specify what each pupil is expected to learn. The work for pupils in Years 10 and 11, is based on the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) programme, but pupils' weak literacy and numeracy skills preclude them being entered for this qualification. Through Years 7 to 9 pupils practice and develop their basic ICT skills and are introduced to wordprocessing, the use of databases and spreadsheets and basic desktop publishing techniques. They use a good range of software including industry standard packages such as Microsoft Office and Microsoft Publisher. This work is structured through the use of specific tasks and projects such as setting up a database of their friends' addresses and designing posters. In Years 10 and 11 these skills are brought together and to complete their Certificate of Competence pupils have to prepare a portfolio containing tasks which demonstrate their skills using specific techniques and software; for example writing a letter, and constructing a client database for a business or organisation. For their final project, pupils in Year 11 are designing a flyer to advertise a sports centre.
99. The quality of teaching in the four lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they are very familiar with both the hardware and software. They use their knowledge and practical skills well to demonstrate techniques and skills to the pupils. Much of the work in ICT is appropriately undertaken on an individual basis by the pupils with support from the staff. This helps them to develop their independent learning skills. This is effective when staff are working on a one-to-one basis with pupils demonstrating how to use shortcuts and

format their work appropriately. At these times the pupils make good progress. However, pupils do not have an individual ready reference for the sequencing of these instructions and so rely on the staff to keep repeating them. This leads to a loss of impetus and the pupils' progress slows. At the start of each lesson the learning objectives are appropriately shared with pupils but these objectives relate to content rather than to the skills which will be developed and there is no clear identification of what individual pupils will learn. There are no firm timescales identified and consequently some pupils, in particular the more able, are not sufficiently challenged and they could achieve more. There is an appropriate amount of time allocated to a plenary session at the end of each lesson. These tend to cover behaviour issues and the completion of the pupils' points cards covering their behaviour and literacy targets, rather than on the skills identified in the learning objectives for the lesson. The staff rely heavily on oral feedback to provide regular ongoing assessment of pupils' practical skills. Although this is helpful at the time, pupils have no formal way of identifying their skill level or their progress in developing that skill over time. Pupils enjoy their work in ICT and staff use this, and appropriate classroom and behaviour management skills, to ensure a safe and productive working environment. Any disruptive behaviour is managed well and disturbance to the learning of others is minimised. Teachers and learning support assistants work together well. The learning support assistants make good use of their practical skills to guide pupils.

100. Overall, the management of ICT is satisfactory. Appropriate schemes of work have been developed which provide an adequate basis for teachers' planning. There is good ongoing assessment of individual pupils' skills, but little use is made of very good displays of pupils' work in the ICT suites to identify with pupils what they need to do to improve. There is no technician support for ICT and this places a considerable burden on staff to maintain the equipment and develop and evaluate new software and hardware to support pupils' learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

101. Attainment is good in French and the provision for French is a strength of the school. This represents very significant improvements since the last inspection when the subject was judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils throughout the school enjoy learning French and are challenged to do their absolute best by stimulating and imaginative teaching. The youngest pupils in the school are the least confident at speaking in French but nevertheless try hard and are largely successful in using the vocabulary of food and drink. They pay good attention and enjoy hearing short anecdotes about French life that makes their learning meaningful.
102. By the end of Year 9 the pupils are able to compose short sentences using the negative form and past tense to express their likes and dislikes. They respond quickly to the pace of work and the high expectations of the specialist teacher. They have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy working with illustrated flash cards and try very hard to achieve the very good accent modelled by the teacher.
103. By Year 11 most pupils have become independent learners and benefit from excellent opportunities to reinforce and extend their learning through the use of computer programs. There is friendly competition in the classroom as pupils strive to be first to translate a range of vocabulary. All are able to translate vocabulary from the world of work accurately. The target vocabulary includes words such as 'mécanicien', 'garçon de café', 'fermier' or 'infirmière'. The self-correcting computer program helps pupils to understand precisely how much they have learnt and to build upon their strengths by reinforcing their knowledge through a choice of games and activities.

104. As a result of very good teaching by an experienced and specialist language teacher pupils are motivated to do their best. They enter the classroom ready to learn and alert to the activities on offer. The teacher has created a very positive and stimulating learning environment within the classroom and the immediate external area where there are humorous word pictures of staff accompanied by cartoon-style illustrations. The teacher has worked hard to create a very good curriculum that concentrates on speaking and listening but gradually introduces the pupils to recording their thoughts in writing. By Year 11 pupils work towards a Certificate of Educational Achievement and this year two pupils are on target to achieve good grades.
105. The teacher ensures that all activities meet the individual needs of the pupils very well during lessons because he has an in-depth knowledge of their educational ability. By preparing them well he ensures that they have the necessary amount of self-confidence to speak in front of other pupils and to take part in role-play exercises. These activities help pupils to demonstrate their maturity by treating the tasks sensibly and take a pride in their work. However pupils in each class complete very similar written tasks and, as a result, the work of lower attaining pupils remains unfinished when it is too difficult. This is an area for improvement. The focus upon pupils' literacy skills within each lesson varies. In the best examples pupils are helped to think, analyse, write and spell words for themselves. However the teacher does not systematically draw the pupils' attention to the composition of words and the relationship between French and English vocabulary. Many pupils, across all age groups, have low levels of writing and spelling and lessons do not always include activities to help them find out how the language works.
106. General discussions, role-play and group activities in French make a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural awareness; they enjoy hearing about life in France. Resources are satisfactory but the subject would benefit from improved amounts of speaking and listening equipment such as tape recorders and more software.

MUSIC

107. Pupils make good progress and attainment in music is in line with standards found in mainstream school. Provision for music is a strength of the school and has developed very well since the last inspection when many aspects of the subject were unsatisfactory. A major strength, and an outstanding feature of the curriculum is the very effective and stimulating focus upon music technology. Teaching is very good and the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and musical skills, motivate pupils who are keen to work independently in composing and editing musical tracks. The tasks identified for pupils across all age groups promote their understanding of musical form and all pupils complete musical 'compositions' that they have formatted on the computer. By the time they reach Year 11 pupils regularly appraise, edit and modify extracts, evaluate their work and the extent of their success.
108. All pupils benefit from very skilled teaching which helps them to overcome their shyness or lack of confidence and to try harder in practical tasks. Their behaviour is almost always good and they make good progress as a direct result of these high standards and the very good relationships they have with the teacher. Pupils come to lessons with positive views of the subject and an eagerness to do well. Occasionally, some younger pupils in Years 7 and 8, have difficulty in resisting the lure of the instruments in front of them. Sometimes play them at inappropriate times or talk out of turn. However, the teacher has very good behaviour management skills and pupils very soon overcome their difficulties and select appropriate instruments for the task in hand. The teacher makes good links to other subjects on many occasions. When painting a word picture to accompany a ghost story, the teacher explores the

meanings of the vocabulary so that the pupils choose the most appropriate instruments and explore the different sounds they can make with each. Pupils therefore use their imagination to decide the best way of providing sound effects for such activities as a galloping horse, the falling rain, a creaking door or dripping blood. Pupils enjoy such challenges and revel in the more macabre aspects of the story.

109. At Year 8 pupils' work is well linked to history when the teacher sets work about the blues clearly within the social context of the time. The pupils are highly motivated by hearing about the poor conditions in which slaves were transported to America. They therefore understood more clearly the subsequent development of work songs, which reflected the slaves' lifestyles with their early reflections and commentaries on society. By Year 11, some higher attaining pupils are able to make such cross-curricular links themselves. For example, one pupil was able to define symmetry and to explain how the musical model on the computer screen was symmetrical and how he proposed to change and edit it. At this age most pupils are confident in sharing such thoughts and opinions with visitors. However, their ability to analyse and articulate the underlying reasons for their choices and decisions is not so well developed because they do not have sufficient verbal skills to express such critical thoughts with confidence. The extension of the pupils' ability to critically evaluate their work in this way is an area for development in music and in other learning contexts.
110. The curriculum for music is good and is continuing to develop in response to the pupils' progress and achievements. The teacher is developing a formal assessment framework to identify progress over time but as yet there are no procedures for recording each pupil's small and individual steps of learning and success. Resources are good for the present level of work but the school is aware of the need to increase the range in line with the subject's planned development, for example the establishment of a school rock group and increased musical tuition. The teacher and the subject are well placed to make a contribution to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development but these are not exploited at present.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. Pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable as they do not get a balanced physical education programme and do not develop an adequate range of skills. The school has been unable to appoint a physical education teacher and physical education is being delivered mainly by sports development officers supplied by the Salford Recreational Service. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about attainment and the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils achieve broadly age appropriate standards in games and are confident when using the trampoline. In 2001, six Year 10 pupils completed a GCSE short course and gained pass grades. Since the physical education teacher has left, the school is not able to build upon this success and provide an appropriate course for these pupils now they are in Year 11. The sports development officers that are currently teaching physical education do not have sufficient knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum for physical education to provide a balanced lesson. However their sessions do provide good opportunities for pupils to exercise and develop games skills but do not provide a coherent programme of physical education.
112. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place that covers the National Curriculum Programmes of Study but this is not being used as different officers attend the school each week and their lesson is based on a games activity, usually football. Boys and girls join in with equal enthusiasm and the lesson provides good opportunities for pupils to work together as a team. Behaviour is good and pupils respond positively to the session. However, pupils do not change for these sessions and although pupils' attention is drawn to safety issues and the wellbeing of other participants to promote

good sportsmanship, insufficient attention is given to helping pupils recognise the effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils are allowed to get too hot and are not given sufficient recovery time. Currently, no member of the school staff is taking responsibility for the co-ordination of physical education and there is no overview of the quality or appropriateness of the programme pupils receive. The provision for physical education is a weakness in the school and unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. Provision for religious education is unsatisfactory, as the school does not teach the subject to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Only parts of two lessons were observed during the inspection, one of which was led by a teaching assistant. There were very few samples of pupils' work to analyse. Whilst the work observed in classes was of good quality it is not possible to make secure judgements about the subject overall.