

INSPECTION REPORT

SAMUEL LAYCOCK SCHOOL

Stalybridge, Cheshire

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106280

Headteacher: Mr S. Andrew

Lead inspector: Mrs F. D. Gander

Dates of inspection: 17th – 19th January 2005

Inspection number: 268625

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2005

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11-17
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	126
School address:	Mereside Stalybridge Cheshire
Postcode:	SK 15 1JF
Telephone number:	0161 3031321
Fax number:	0161 3384638
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Fagan
Date of previous inspection:	19 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Samuel Laycock School is a secondary school for 129 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. There are 126 currently attending the school and at present there are twice as many boys as girls on roll. All pupils have a statement of special education need. A third of the pupils have additional needs including speech and language difficulties, conditions needing daily medication, visual and hearing impairment, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils from different cultural backgrounds is very low. There are no children from traveller families.

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below that expected for children of a similar age. The pupils' needs, particularly in Years 7 and 8, are more complex than at the time of the previous inspection. There is an increase in the number of pupils coming into the school whose primary education has been at a mainstream primary school. Pupils are largely from all areas of Tameside. A very small number of pupils leave or join the school during the academic year. Although a range of socio-economic backgrounds are represented, almost a half of the pupils are eligible for a free school meal, indicating that a substantial number are from low socio-economic bands.

The unsatisfactory provision at the Hattersley site closed in 2001, with all pupils now being located at this school. The school has an Active Sportsmark (2007), an Investors in People Award (2003), the Bronze ECO Award, a Careers Education Award, and a has recently acquired an Award for Connexions Excellence (ACE).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. D. Gander	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, special educational needs
9981	Mr Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
32374	Mr P. Edmondson	Team inspector	English, physical education, citizenship
16198	Mrs C. Etherington	Team inspector	Information and communication Technology, music, modern foreign language, religious education
23587	Mr A. Younger	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, geography

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
Sussex
BN21 3YB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which is continuing to improve. The strong leadership of the headteacher and the very effective partnership with the senior staff have resulted in good improvements to the quality of education, the teaching, and the learning environment. The overall good teaching, and the relationships in the school, along with the very high emphasis on personal and social development, results in pupils achieving well. They are confident to move to the next stage of education or training. The school has rightly recognised that pupils are coming into the school with additional medical, personal or learning needs, but it is not always able to meet the requirements of their statements because of insufficient support from outside agencies. Value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is good achievement by pupils in English, in art, design and technology, and physical education.
- There is a very good range of accreditation for Key Stage 4 pupils.
- There is very good provision for personal development and pupils have very good attitudes, behaviour and confidence.
- There is very innovative curriculum planning, assessment and target setting in art and design technology.
- There is a comprehensive and well organised careers education programme.
- The school provides a very good range of out-of-hours activities.
- The lesson planning, assessment, and use of targets in individual education plans (IEPs) does not sufficiently highlight the learning needs of the lower attaining pupils.
- There is an inconsistent approach to teaching, planning and assessment in mathematics and French.
- The additional needs of pupils as identified in their statements are not being met.

This school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Effective action has been taken on all the issues previously identified, although the one concerning planning and assessment still exists. This has been addressed, but because there are more lower attaining pupils now coming into the school, improvement needs to continue in this area. Pupils' achievement in ICT, and the teaching and learning in this subject have improved significantly, but it still could be used more in other subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Pupils' achievements and the progress they make is good overall. This is especially so in English, the combined art and design and technology course, physical education, and personal social, health education. In recent years there has been good achievement in science, but as the subject planning is currently being remodelled it is too early to judge the achievements of the current group of pupils. Lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not achieving as well as they might because the planning and assessment in some subjects does not sufficiently take into account their learning needs. The lack of therapy services to the school for those pupils who have it specified on their statements of special educational need is effecting their achievement in language and communication. Pupils' personal qualities are improved very well through **the very good spiritual,**

moral, social and cultural development. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the educational provision is good. Overall, teaching and learning are good. There are examples of very good teaching in English, art and design technology, music, and careers education. These lessons are very well planned with clearly identified expectations for learning for pupils of differing abilities. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Assessment is overall satisfactory but varies between subjects and, sometimes, teachers. The curriculum is good, being very relevant to the needs of the pupils, and enriched through an extensive range of out-of-hours clubs. The school is very caring and supportive, and advice and guidance for pupils is good overall. The partnerships with other schools, colleges and the community are very effective. This has a significant impact on the work of the older pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and the management of the school are good. A strength lies in the partnership between the senior staff and the headteacher. They have a clear understanding of how the school should improve and work hard to achieve it, and are beginning to use school self-evaluation to identify weaknesses. Many of the governors are new to the school and are just taking on their responsibilities. The governance is, therefore, satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the school. They report that high expectations are set, and that their children achieve well because of the dedicated and caring staff. Concerns were raised by a few parents about bullying. This was investigated and the team found that incidents are dealt with in the proper manner. Pupils report that they enjoy their time in school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are to:

- Improve the lesson planning, assessment, and use of targets on IEPs so that teachers can confidently meet the learning needs of lower attaining pupils.
- Monitor and evaluate more closely the consistency of teaching, planning and assessment in mathematics, and in French.
- Ensure that the additional needs identified in pupils' statements of special educational needs are met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In relation to the previous levels they were attaining when they entered the school pupils achieve well. They make good progress and gain a wide range accreditation in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' achievements at the end of Year 11 show that the school's performance is much higher than that of similar schools.
- Lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not achieving as well as they might in some subjects. This is better where teachers set different learning targets for different pupils.
- Tracking pupils' progress against targets in IEPS is difficult.
- Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is affected by insufficient attention to their speech and language needs.
- Pupils who demonstrate a specific talent, especially in PE, are nurtured, and consequently achieve well.

Commentary

1. There has been good improvement in the achievements of pupils since the last inspection. The school now offers a wider range of accreditation. Pupils in Years 10 and in year 11 gain recognition of their achievements through General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Entry level, OCR English, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), and by gaining a vast number of AQA units. The results for last year showed that the school performed higher than the average for similar schools. Pupils achieved particularly well in English, mathematics, science and PE, and especially in English and mathematics where over a third of the pupils entered in each subject received a GCSE grade.

GCSE A* - G	Number of pupils
English	10
Mathematics	9

GCSE entry level	Number of pupils	Level attained
English	8 (26%)	3
	5 (15%)	2
	1 (3%)	1
Maths	10 (38%)	3
	1 (3%)	2
Science	3 (11%)	3
	8 (30%)	2
	14 (53%)	1
PE	9 (34%)	3
	11 (42%)	2
	5 (19%)	1
RE	11 (42%)	3
Child Development	19 (73%)	3
	6 (23%)	2

2. In addition, nine pupils were awarded OCR English Entry Level, and there were 36 pupils awarded ASDAN. Twenty five pupils, equally 96 per cent awards, gained a Bronze award, while 11 pupils achieved the Silver Challenge Award. In addition, the links the school has developed with local colleges of further education and training providers has meant that pupils also gain recognition of their achievement in vocational courses. In 2004, the results for pupils on college placements were:

NVQ 1	Bakery	2
NVQ 1	Catering	2
NVQ 1	Engineering	1
NVQ 1	Distribution operation	1
NVQ 1	Vehicle fitting	1
Partial achievement	Foundation construction in Trowel operations	2
ABC certificate	Motor Vehicle Studies	2
LCCI certificate	Skills for working Life entry 2	10

3. These well planned programmes lead to very good achievement for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The very good results have been achieved because the expectations that teachers have of pupils' achievements are high. Also the pupils are matched to the most relevant and appropriate course, based on good assessment and individual teacher's knowledge of pupils. Pupils' achievements at colleges are particularly significant as pupils are well prepared for beginning their next stage of education. Parents speak particularly highly of this aspect of the school's work as they see that their children have increased self-esteem, motivation and confidence.

4. While older pupils or higher attaining pupils are achieving very well, a different picture is beginning to emerge lower down the school. The staff have worked very hard to improve the planning of the courses and the lessons, so that the learning objectives for pupils are clear and can be assessed. The levels of attainment of pupils coming into the school have lowered over the last three years. The school has recognised this and has succeeded in reorganising classes so that in each year group there are two classes of different abilities. This means that teachers can alter the lesson content, and the way in which they teach, to match the learning needs and styles of pupils. Some teachers do this very well, such as in English, art, design technology and PE, but it is not consistent across the school. It sometimes varies between teachers within subjects. There are examples of teachers expecting pupils of different abilities to achieve the same, and this leads to some pupils not achieving as well as they might.

5. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are used to support pupils' learning. The staff have spent a great deal of time developing the present system, but the IEPs contain too many targets for each pupil. Because the pupils are taught by many teachers and because of the large number of targets set, it is very difficult for teachers to be aware of them all and to include them in their lesson planning. For example, in mathematics the analysis of the school data has shown that all pupils do not achieve as well in the aspect of 'Shape, Space, and Time' as in 'Number'. Although this is now being addressed in numeracy lessons, it is a priority target for many pupils but is not being reinforced in other subjects as much as it should. The school recognises this and is aware that staff find it very difficult to identify which are the priority targets and track pupils' progress against them. There is a need for the school to refine the process so it is more manageable and effective.

6. The school has a large number of pupils who have additional needs identified on their statement of special educational need. These include speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. In some statements these have been written into both educational and non educational sections of the statement. The school has no access to occupational therapy for the thirteen pupils who have it identified on their statement. Of greater concern are speech and language needs of the pupils. Currently 38 pupils have it identified on their statement, but the support from the Speech and Language Service ceased in the summer of 2004 and the school has no access to the minimum requirement of advice and support. It is evident when listening to some pupils communicating that they have difficulty in making themselves understood and in understanding the complexities of adult language. Without the advice and support from speech therapy service the teachers have not been able to plan language programmes, set targets for improving communication, and meet the legal requirements of some pupils' statements.

7. Pupils who show a particular talent achieve well in physical education (PE). This is due to enthusiasm of the specialist teacher and the adaptation of the National Curriculum, so that all pupils can access a PE programme that is appropriate to their individual needs. External accreditation is a

very important element of and over the last two years every pupil has gained a GCSE Entry Level award. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are encouraged to take on the role of coaching as part of their AQA Units of Accreditation and GCSE Entry Level course work. The good achievement is very well supported by the out-of-hours programme where a large number of pupils participate in well-organised clubs. These clubs are community as well as school based, and pupils are often coached by specialist coaches.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. The school has very good arrangements to promote pupils' personal qualities. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are both good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance has improved, and unauthorised absence and exclusion levels have decreased.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and in the wider community is now very good.
- Over their time at the school, pupils' attitudes to their work become increasingly mature and they gain in independence.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Arrangements for preparing pupils to live in a multi-cultural society are too informal and could be improved.

Commentary

8. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attendance was found to be unsatisfactory. The school has made very good improvement in raising attendance and reducing unauthorised absence. For example, the authorised absence has decreased by 3.5 per cent over the last three years. The school rewards good attendance with attractive certificates at the end of each term. First day of absence telephone calls home ensure that there is very little unexplained absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.8	School data	0.2
National data	8.2	National data	1.8

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

9. Much effort has been put into promoting good behaviour in pupils and in developing positive attitudes to work. Very good behaviour and anti-bullying policies have been introduced recently, following consultation with staff, governors, parents, and with pupils through the school council. These are under review, but are working well, and they are supported by clear codes of conduct that state what is expected of pupils, and what staff and parents will do to promote high standards in this aspect. Exclusions are rarely used; the number for last year being unusual and were linked to a few pupils with severe behavioural difficulties. Some were transferred to other special educational provision.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	126	20	0

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

10. Pupils understand and enjoy participating in the ‘Colour Scheme’ which offers them the chance to work upwards through a series of certificates and rewards. There are clear sanctions and a report system to monitor those who have difficulties in maintaining the expected standards of attitudes and behaviour. The deputy headteacher takes responsibility for monitoring incidents and exclusions, and is vigilant in watching out for any developing patterns or escalations. Pupils interviewed agree that behaviour has improved under the new systems and feel that staff are ‘more strict’ and deal promptly with any incidents where pupils feel unsafe. All of these systems result in the school being a well-ordered learning community. Behaviour in lessons is usually very good, and pupils behave well at break and lunch times. Thank-you letters from local employers are very complimentary about pupils’ attitudes when they participate in education and business partnership events.

11. Pupils become increasingly mature and independent as they progress through the year groups. They are keen to learn and concentrate well in lessons, even those where the teaching lacks sparkle. They try hard in all tasks and extra-curricular events and there is a high level of take-up for lunchtime activities and out-of-hours clubs. Some older pupils take responsibility for organising activities, for example, setting out equipment and refereeing lunchtime football. Pupils in all year groups have opportunities to serve on the school council and representatives and their deputies take their responsibilities very seriously.

12. Daily assemblies take a range of formats, with some being led by senior staff, some having pupil participation, and others having input from a variety of local faith leaders and other visitors. There is a weekly celebration assembly where pupils’ achievements are announced and shared with the whole school. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on a range of spiritual and moral issues. For example, one assembly observed asked pupils to consider how people’s exterior personae might be very different to how they feel inside. They were asked to consider how people might have hidden talents. This was exemplified by the use of Russian dolls which fitted inside one another and were opened to reveal yet another one. Prayers and hymns are shared with enthusiasm but also with appropriate reverence. Assemblies make a strong contribution to the positive ethos of the school and reinforce it on a daily basis. Some teachers give time at the ends of lessons for pupils to reflect on their achievements. Individual teachers have introduced self-evaluation at the ends of study units, giving pupils opportunities to participate in reviewing their own learning, for example in music, art and technology.

13. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and do much to help others in the form of fundraising for charities. For example, in inspection week they were collecting monies for tsunami victims through an innovative scheme where they drew round their feet and then covered the ‘footprint’ in coins. Their moral development and awareness of how society works are enhanced by participating in elections for the school council, and hearing feedback from older pupils representing the school in the local pupil assembly. Informal arrangements whereby pupils can choose to sit with friends of any age at lunchtime ensure that this is a very social occasion, and pupils respond well to opportunities to work collaboratively in lessons, creative activities and team sports.

14. Arrangements to promote pupils’ cultural development are good overall. There are many examples of pupils learning about their own cultural heritage, popular culture and other cultures in English, history, geography, religious education, art and music. However, their sense of what it is like to be involved in living in a multi-cultural society is developed only informally. Subject

documentation shows it is not an integral concern in planning, and this particular aspect still needs further development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of the educational provision is good. Teaching is good overall, with some examples of good or very good teaching. The curriculum is good, meets all statutory requirements, and there is a very extensive range of additional curriculum opportunities which enrich the curriculum. These are supported by the very good links the school has with other schools, colleges and the community. Care and welfare are very good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are good overall. The quality and quantity of the accommodation are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, and there are examples of very good or excellent teaching that result in pupils achieving very well. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Not all lesson planning shows the different learning outcomes for lower attaining pupils.
- The use of specialist subject teachers helps pupils' achieve well.
- Assessment and target setting in art and design technology are of a very high standard.
- There are very high expectations for attitudes to learning and very good relationships between staff and teachers are evident.
- The quality of assessment varies across the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(4%)	7 (16 %)	15 (33%)	18 (41 %)	3 (6 %)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

Commentary

15. Overall teaching is good, and in almost all subjects there are examples of very good teaching. Almost all teachers teach the higher attaining pupils well. Their planning is supported by clear indications of what they want the pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson. Although the profile of teaching shows that a great number of lessons were good or better, there were some unsatisfactory examples observed during the inspection. There is no one particular subject where teaching is weaker or less motivating, but there are occasions when it is not as good as it could be, such as in mathematics, science and religious education. In these subjects, the unsatisfactory teaching occurred because the work set and the activities chosen did not help pupils learn. They found it difficult to follow or understand. Some teachers are not yet proficient in planning for lower attaining pupils, mainly because they do not plan what they want each pupil to achieve. Evidence of this can be seen in samples of pupils' work where the work set is the same for higher and lower attaining pupils, but pupils with the greatest difficulties do not finish the tasks. In mathematics there are examples of pupils completing too many work sheets containing the same task, and not being moved onto more complex learning. Teachers have worked hard to improve the quality of lesson planning from the last inspection, however the learning difficulties of the pupils have become greater over the last few years, and an emphasis on improving planning for these pupils needs to continue

16. The use of teachers who are subject specialists contributes well to pupils' achievements in most subjects. Pupils achieve particularly well in English, art, design and technology, and physical education, and in personal, social and health education (PSHE). The very good subject knowledge of teachers means that pupils are expected to use a wide variety of materials and skills. There are

some excellent examples of planning in the combined course of art and design technology. Here two teachers work extremely well together. Lesson planning shows what pupils are expected to have learnt at three different levels. These outcomes are clearly linked to assessment and are beginning to be linked to target setting. Samples of work are kept in pupils' files with comments and assessment details. This gives a clear view of what pupils have achieved and also informs the teachers of the next stage of learning.

17. The expectations that teachers have for pupils' behaviour during lessons and pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. This means that pupils are interested in their work and remain on task; often when perhaps they do not understand what the teacher wants them to learn. Teaching assistants play an important part in this role and are very aware of when pupils are not working as well as they might. Some teachers make the lessons interesting by using a wide range of resources, and by relating the learning to everyday occurrences. This is particularly evident in the ASDAN sessions, and in the PSHE lessons. Because teachers are committed to developing personal as well as subject skills, activities often require pupils to listen, take turns, work independently or collaboratively, and to celebrate each other's success. Homework is used to extend and reinforce learning.

18. Assessment is overall satisfactory. The school has developed a good range of assessment so that staff know what levels of the National Curriculum pupils are attaining, especially in English, science and information and communication technology. This information, along with the information from mathematics that is analysed nationally and comparison with other similar schools are made. The staff therefore know how well their pupils perform both individually and as groups. However, in some subjects the assessment arrived at for individual pupils is not supported by evidence from work or tests, and the record keeping varies too greatly between teachers and in some cases is imprecise. For example, in mathematics, the assessment is a series of ticks on a sheet. It is not dated nor does it provide a level which the pupil has achieved. The effect of this can be seen in the wide difference between the teacher's assessment/ predicted level and the actual level achieved in the end of Year 9 test results. Assessment is much better in Years 10 and 11 where the accredited courses provide a framework for assessment. It is also very good in PE where the assessment forms the targets for pupils to achieve and is therefore informing planning at a very individual level.

The curriculum

The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities. These are enhanced very well by other curriculum experiences. Resources and accommodation are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of externally accredited courses at Key Stage 4 has a significant positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Preparation for Post 16 education is enhanced by a very good careers education & guidance curriculum.
- Extra curricular activities, visits, and external experts, significantly enrich the opportunities for learning and participation in sport.
- The planning does not give enough consideration to the different needs or abilities of pupils.

Commentary

19. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and an appropriate range of learning activities is provided for pupils. All subjects, including French are taught. In most subjects, the planning that teachers follow ensures that pupils sufficiently gain in knowledge as they move through the school. The provision for PE is a strength; providing a wide range of activities. The school has introduced citizenship and the Key Stage 3 strategy. It has modified this so that it is more relevant to the pupils in the school. Some pupils in Key Stage 4 have a curriculum which is tailored to meet their emerging needs, such as a greater amount of time on link courses. Independence and life skills are further built upon as the pupils move through the school.

20. The school uses a range of specialists for advice and support, very effectively to enhance the curriculum and opportunities. The 'Connexions' agency attends the school frequently, and works with pupils giving them very good guidance on further study and careers. This service speaks very highly of the organisation and effort the school makes so that pupils can have worthwhile and valuable experiences. This is reflected in the recently awarded Connexions Excellence accolade. Many Year 10 and 11 pupils attend courses at Tameside College and this gives them first hand opportunities to find out about education and training opportunities there. Teaching assistants work closely with the teachers to ensure that pupils can take part in the college links and in the work experience programme.

21. The pupils' good achievement is very well supported by an extensive out-of-hours programme. The various clubs, including the drama club, garden club, computer club and various sporting clubs enhance learning. A large number of pupils participate in sport and other physical activities due to these well-organised clubs. Transport does not appear to be an issue due to the commitment of the staff and their positive partnerships with parents. These clubs are community as well as school based and are often strengthened by input from specialist coaches.

22. Curriculum planning has been a focus for development since the last inspection. Examples of outstanding practice have evolved, such as in the combine art and design technology course. Here the planning of topics or units of work has learning outcomes at three different levels identified in them. These are used by the teachers when planning each lesson. This in turn provides very clear learning targets for pupils to achieve or in some instances surpass. This preciseness in the curriculum planning allows for any teacher to take the lesson and be completely informed about the overall learning objective and what is expected for each pupil. However, although most subjects have clear objectives and outcomes for learning, some do not provide teachers with the means to plan for individual needs, especially for the lower attaining pupils in the younger classes.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with good support and guidance and involves them very well in aspects of the school's development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to ensure child protection are very good.
- Very good, trusting relationships underpin the family ethos and, hence, new pupils settle into the school very quickly.
- Although the school provides good support for pupils in partnership with several agencies, many pupils do not receive certain therapies to which they are entitled.

Commentary

23. The school has made several good improvements since the last inspection. This includes reviewing and refining its procedures. As a result, staff are very well informed about the school's child protection policy, and the designated person deals with any issues effectively. Good practice includes the need for all staff to acknowledge receipt of written guidelines. General health and safety risk assessments are undertaken as required, and the arrangements for first-aid are very good. The school works closely with appropriate agencies in raising awareness of safety matters. For instance, pupils take part in the 'crucial crew' initiative where they learn about basic emergency procedures. Parents spoke highly of the care and consideration given to the welfare of their children. Pupils said that they felt safe and secure.

24. Staff know pupils well, and because of this pupils are very confident in staff and enjoy very good relationships. They feel that they can turn to adults in school if they have any worries. For example, in the absence of a school nurse the many pupils who require regular medication have trusting and supportive relationships with the senior staff who have to undertake this responsibility.

The school regularly consults with all pupils, and staff value their ideas. This is carried out through questionnaires, but pupils can also express their views through the school council. Through this they learn about democracy and decision-making. For instance, the school environment is much improved following pupils' concerns. New Year 7 pupils are able to take part in three induction sessions in the summer term before they start. All new pupils, including those starting at other stages are introduced to the school and its learning routines very effectively.

25. Pupils' records are appropriately detailed about their personal, academic and welfare needs. Information is used well to provide good advice, support and guidance. The school works effectively with several agencies to support learning. For instance, specialist teachers attend the school regularly to support the hearing and visually impaired. The school has recognised the importance of this, especially as the additional needs of pupils coming into the school has increased. However, the school is short of regular speech and language therapy, and many pupils have been removed from the lists of the service without it being amended on their statements of special educational need. There are also a number of pupils who also have an occupational therapy needs on their statement but as there is no input from this service into the school, it is unable to meet the statutory requirements of the statements. It is apparent when speaking with pupils that many have language difficulties, and when observing pupils in PE – there are a number with co-ordination difficulties.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has an effective partnership with parents. Links with other schools, colleges and the wider community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very good opportunities to express their views and make suggestions.
- Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning.
- Very good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum.
- Very good college links result in many positive outcomes.

Commentary

26. The school has maintained these aspects since the last inspection. The headteacher and staff are very approachable and they are always pleased to discuss parental concerns. A questionnaire is sent to parents each year and this helps to identify issues and enables parents to influence the school. For instance, the school has changed its homework and behaviour policies recently, following parents' suggestions. Information to parents about the school and their children's standards and progress is good. Bright and attractive newsletters give very good information about pupils' work and achievements. Parents have three opportunities in the school year to discuss their children's progress. Annual reviews and school reports provide good information to parents about what their children know, can do, and understand. Staff and parents use the home and school diaries well to exchange information on a day-to-day basis.

27. The school regularly organises workshops and information events for parents to advise them on how they can become even more involved in their children's learning. For instance, events have included careers evenings, and workshops in literacy and numeracy. Parents work well with staff in addressing attendance, behaviour, and learning problems. They help with homework as much as they can and encourage their children to do their best at school. The school is looking to develop a parents' and teachers' association to develop the partnership further.

28. School trips are carefully planned to link with topic work. Community venues include art galleries, museums and other places of interest. Visitors include theatre groups who give performances relevant to courses of study, or on themes, such as bullying. The school has an excellent link with the Rotary Club. Volunteers regularly listen to readers and also conduct mock interviews with older pupils to develop their skills. Local businesses are also involved very well, for instance, they provide work experience placements for many pupils. The link with the Education

Business Partnership contributes to the success. The school puts much back into the community, for instance, through fundraising for charities and good causes.

28. The school works very hard to develop mainstream school experiences for pupils. There are many joint events held regularly with other schools. Dance is a very strong aspect with many chances for pupils to give performances. All Year 10 and many Year 11 pupils attend national vocational courses or take part in an 'alternative curriculum' at Tameside College. This enables them to receive college tuition to gain qualifications or valuable practical experience in areas such as cookery, mechanics and building trades.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, along with the senior managers have created a strong sense of common purpose which focuses upon high expectations, and the raising of pupils' achievements.
- Monitoring and evaluation of academic standards in mathematics could be more rigorous, and there is insufficient comparisons of standards in different subjects.
- New staff are well looked after and there is a very good programme of professional development.
- Finances are carefully managed.

Commentary

29. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, ensuring very clear direction and purpose. He has a clear plan to continue to improve the quality of education. He is firmly focused on providing the pupils with an effective curriculum and high standards. The headteacher is frequently seen about the school, and is readily accessible to pupils, staff, parents and governors. There is very effective teamwork between the headteacher and deputy head teacher and they set a good example to other staff. They are supported well by two senior managers, and important duties are carefully allocated and responsibilities are clearly defined. Pupils and staff feel valued and motivated, thus reinforcing the school's very good ethos of inclusion. Governors are proud of their school and ensure that statutory requirements are being met. Many governors are new to the role of governorship, and therefore are relatively inexperienced. They are keen to develop their role and they share a good understanding of the views and wishes of parents. Good attention has been made in addressing weaknesses identified by the previous inspection and there has been good improvement since. For example, the school has been very successful in improving pupils' attendance and their behaviour. This was done, in the first place, by very careful monitoring and evaluation of absences and incidents, and then using the information to raise standards.

30. The school has not given the same attention to detail in the monitoring of some educational standards. The quality of this varies between subjects and is dependent of the effectiveness of the co-ordinator, and while individual co-ordinators monitor and evaluate the standards in their subject well, they do not make enough comparisons between the standards achieved in each subject. For example, there are important differences between the standards being achieved in English and mathematics by the same groups of pupils. There is also a disparity between teacher assessments and test results in Year 9 mathematics. While these have been acknowledged, the underlying reasons have not been evaluated. The inexperience of governors surfaces here in their lack of involvement in the monitoring of academic standards. Minutes of their meetings show that, although governors keep a good check on attendance and behaviour, they rarely pose questions about standards being achieved in different subjects.

31. Governors play an important role in setting the headteacher challenging targets and reviewing his performance. The school has held Investor in People (IIP) status for many years,

recognising its commitment to staff training and welfare. Performance management is very well established and independent assessors have judged procedures as very good. An extensive programme of training is in place. Opportunities are often based on performance management needs but they also recognise personal and professional development opportunities. Great care is taken to support new staff. The staff handbook is a very good, comprehensive and informative document and senior staff carefully mentor new teachers.

32. The school is in very good financial health. The surplus in this year's budget has been allocated for repairs and improvements to the premises, and the proposed increases in staffing to facilitate the work place reform. In last month's LEA audit the school received a good rating and the comment 'The headteacher and bursar work well together to provide a very orderly and well controlled approach to the task of handling the finances of the school.'

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	945147
Total expenditure	919406
Expenditure per pupil	7296

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	63500
Balance carried forward to the next	89241

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING and SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The overall provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and results in pupils making good progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Standards in writing have improved.
- Teachers have too little access to advice and support from speech and language therapy in order to address the communication needs of younger pupils.
- The range of external accreditation at Key Stage 4 is a strength, and the assessment of pupils is good.
- The curriculum is supported by a good range of resources.

Commentary

33. Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are set into two groups according to ability, which helps to make teaching focussed and more effective, especially for the higher attaining groups. Lessons are generally well planned, though some of the activities for the lower attaining classes lack pace and challenge. However, these pupils are still making good progress overall. Plenary sessions are well organised and teachers made good use of open-ended questions to reinforce learning. Staff know their pupils very well, which helps to motivate and engage them and generally makes lessons enjoyable events. The assessment information from the school indicates they come into the school attaining below National Curriculum levels and make significant progress by year 11. The highest attaining pupils progress to Level 3 of the National Curriculum in reading; showing good progress overall. An example of this was observed in a Year 11 ASDAN lesson, where pupils read the contents of a worksheet to their peers confidently and willingly with some intonation. Teaching assistants are an integral part of the planning within the lessons, and are used very well both in supporting individual or groups of pupils, or by teaching the whole class. For example, in a Year 7 class, the teaching assistant carried out the introduction to the lesson on the use of adjectives and similes. The pupils responded very well, clearly indicating that this was a regular feature of their learning.

34. Good progress is being made in writing, which is an improvement since the last inspection, where it was satisfactory. The marking policy of the school is adhered to, with teachers correcting pupils' work with encouraging comments both on the content and how the work could be improved. The levels of attainment when pupils enter the school in Year 7 is generally lower than they were. Pupils in Year 7 use capital letters and full stops in a limited way. By Year 9, most pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly, and pupils understand the basic grammar concerning adjectives, nouns and verbs. They write simple reviews on the out-of-hours clubs, and on books they have read, such as 'The Witches' by Roald Dahl. In Years 10 and 11, pupils work on writing for different purposes when they follow the syllabus of their Certificate of Education or GCSE courses. Best writers know the conventions for writing letters. They produce good free writing that is well organised, characterised by good descriptions and is imaginative and clear. The best work approaches level 4 of the National Curriculum. However, there is little evidence of the use of computers in English lessons to support pupils to develop their writing skills in drafting and re-drafting their work.

35. Although the school is currently without a speech and language therapist, and there is a significant number of pupils who need to have access to speech and language therapy written into their statements, the staff work hard to create opportunities for pupils to improve their communication. Currently the older pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening, because there are good opportunities created across all areas of the curriculum. However, some of the younger pupils in the school have greater difficulties in communicating or understanding. Currently there are no targets in place for them, and some have been removed from the therapy lists. The assessment results for speaking and listening for the lower attaining classes indicate that pupils in Year 8 are working below National Curriculum levels. This is not currently affecting standards at the end of Year 11 where pupils are working between P8 and Level 2 of the National Curriculum.

36. Pupils' levels of attainment are recognised and achievement is evaluated. This is especially the case in Year 10 and 11 where pupils can access a wide range of externally accredited courses, including Units of Accreditation, GCSE Entry Level Certificates and GCSE's, in which pupils succeed. Nine pupils in Year 10 were entered for and gained a GCSE Entry Level Certificate. In Year 11, 42 per cent of pupils gained a GCSE pass, and 44 per cent gained a GCSE Entry Level Certificate. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is good, and is the result of the good leadership and management of the subject. On entry to the school, all pupils are assessed for their reading skills using a commercial test. The co-ordinator has used this test for a number of years and is able to show individual pupil progress over time. The school submits pupils' assessments for national analysis via Durham University. The information on reading, writing, and speaking and listening has not yet been fully analysed to set individual targets for pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

37. Literacy is reinforced throughout the curriculum. Vocabulary is developed well through key words on each subject and much time is given to discussion and evaluation of work. Reading and writing are used consistently across the curriculum, such as in design and technology where pupils have read, record, explain and evaluate.

Modern foreign languages

French

Provision in the subject is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.
- Higher attaining pupils make good progress in speaking but less progress in reading and writing.
- The subject leader knows what levels pupils attain but assessment information does not record pupils' strengths or identify where they need to improve.

Commentary

38. Little improvement has been made since the last inspection. Subject leadership is now satisfactory and achievement is satisfactory rather than good. French is now taught only to pupils aged 11 to 14 years. Lessons observed during the inspection were of satisfactory quality and analysis of pupils' work showed that they achieve satisfactorily. Some changes have been made to the curriculum content to reflect the wider range of special needs of pupils, but study units are not planned to address these. They do not include references to the different types of learning needs of pupils of different abilities, either within each class or across the year group, disadvantaging the lower attaining pupils and those with additional special educational needs in particular. Resources remain satisfactory but have not been upgraded to include reading books in the target language. There is too little use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.

39. Some pupils of high attaining pupils make good progress, especially in listening and responding to the language. This progress is due to some strengths in teaching, including good choice of topics that interest pupils and the effective use of games and practical activities that give plenty of repetition when new vocabulary is introduced. There is good reinforcement of learning from previous study units through targeted questioning that revises greetings, numbers and colours at the start of each session. However, less attention is paid to reading and writing activities and, consequently, pupils make less progress in these aspects.

40. There has been little change in assessment procedures. The National Curriculum levels that pupils attain are recorded, but there is little attention paid to assessing what they know and can do in each aspect of French so that appropriate work can be planned for the next steps of learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over a third of all teaching is good but the quality varies across the school.
- Some teachers are not sufficiently varying tasks to meet individual needs; as a result, higher attaining pupils make better progress than lower attaining ones.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is poor
- Leadership and management of the curriculum and teaching is weak

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, as is achievement. However, the quality of teaching varies between the three teachers, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. Nearly all of the good teaching occurs in classes for higher achieving pupils. For example, in a good Year 9 lesson, on the topic of using a protractor to measure angles, work was very well adapted to meet individual pupil's needs. Worksheets were adapted so that pupils who had missed a previous lesson were helped to catch up, and special equipment was provided for a visually impaired pupil. This attention to detail, however, is not always present and many lessons involve every pupil in a class group being faced with the same expectations. The weakest teaching, a little of which was unsatisfactory, is nearly always with the lower attaining group. Teachers have great problems in meeting the needs of these pupils and struggle to provide them with tasks that are suitably simplified and clearly explained. Too often the pupils in the lower group are given the same work as those in the upper group but expected to complete less of it. One of the results of this is that while higher attaining pupils get satisfactory results in GCSE (38 per cent gained GCSE A*-G in 2004) and entry level examinations, the lower attaining pupils have very little success in gaining AQA Unit Awards.

42. No suitable records of pupils' progress are kept. Assessment takes the form of a checklist of skills acquired in the current year. There is no evidence of on-going records and the available data is not dated, so there is no way of knowing whether a pupils' progress is accelerating or decelerating. One of the results of these weak procedures is that there is a huge difference between teacher assessments and statutory test results at the end of Year 9. Last year, for instance, teacher assessments predicted that 22 per cent of pupils would attain Level 4, and a further 25 per cent of pupils Level 3. In the statutory tests only 15 per cent of pupils made Level 3 and none Level 4. Teachers' planning for lessons makes no reference to any assessment data or personal targets and it is very clear that assessment is not being used to respond to individual needs.

43. Leadership and management of the subject are weak. Too much comfort is taken from the fact that, generally, pupils achieve slightly better here than in other similar schools. There is not enough concern for the fact that in Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievement in English overtakes their achievement in mathematics, and that targets for Year 9 mathematics are being lowered at the same time that they are being raised in English. There is insufficient monitoring of the curriculum and this leads to imbalances, especially in Year 7, where nearly all of the work done by pupils is

number work. This denies pupils the opportunity to learn about many of the more interesting aspects of mathematics, such as data handling and shape, space and measure. No overall check is made of the number of lessons dedicated to different parts of the mathematics curriculum. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching within the department; one lesson has been observed this year. There has been a decline since the previous inspection.

Numeracy across the curriculum

44. There are satisfactory links between mathematics and other subjects. This is very dependent on individual teachers to include this in their planning. It is a strength in design and technology, but more emphasis could be provided in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and this is the result of good teaching in the past.
- Pupils with the greatest learning difficulties find the activities and the level of communication difficult to follow.
- The curriculum has met the needs of the higher attaining pupils in the past and is now being remodelled to take account of those with greater difficulties .
- Not enough emphasis is placed on the reinforcement of literacy, numeracy and ICT within lessons.

Commentary

45. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific skills, understanding and knowledge, and to achieve well. This is especially the case for the older pupils whose learning difficulties are not so complex. The results of the teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 for 2004, and the range of accreditation that pupils achieved in Year 11 shows those pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 11, 94 per cent achieved a GCSE Entry level. These standards have generally been maintained over the last three years. There are generally no differences in those achieved in the different aspects within science. These standards have been achieved because the school uses a specialist science teacher for the subject. Following the recent retirement of the long-serving science teacher the school has maintained this tradition and has recruited another one who is a science specialist.

46. Teaching and learning on the week of the inspection was satisfactory overall. The behaviour of pupils was good in most lessons and this meant that pupils could be trusted to work in small groups on their investigations. However, in one lesson where the investigation work was not described clearly and simply, pupils were unsure of what they had to do and achieve. Many of these pupils have low levels of communication and understanding, and there is currently no use of additional symbols or pictures to aid this. In addition, the expected outcomes for each pupil had not been planned for. The organisation of the practical activity was not well thought through and left some pupils in each group without an active role in the investigation. This has been identified as an area for development and is being fully supported through the school's Key Stage 3 Strategy. In classes where there are higher attaining pupils, their enjoyment of the practical side of science is evident and contributes well to their good progress.

47. Good improvements have been made to the science curriculum since the last inspection, with the introduction of more opportunities to plan, predict, observe, and consider what has happened during investigations. The new teacher has rightly identified that the curriculum is now not fully meeting the needs of all the pupils and has begun to remodel it so it is more appropriate. All areas of science are given appropriate coverage. Teachers build on this knowledge and understanding in other subjects, such as in design and technology, and in art and design.

48. The link with other subjects of the curriculum is good and is providing pupils with opportunities to transfer and reinforce their learning. However, not enough consideration is given to how pupils may reinforce literacy or numeracy within the lesson, such as by producing extended pieces of writing to describe their observations and ideas. The use of ICT within science for learning is also any area which could have greater attention. While the school, has invested in an interactive whiteboard and this is used very well by the teacher to motivate pupils, and also to reinforce and assess their learning, more use could be made of ICT by pupils to collect and display data and information – there is very little evidence in their workbooks of it being used for this purpose.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communications technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils now have satisfactory achievement in the subject and unsatisfactory teaching and learning has been eliminated.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Teachers with access to interactive Smartboards are starting to make good use of them to enhance the quality of lessons.

Commentary

49. The introduction of dedicated teaching of ICT since the last inspection has ensured that pupils of all ages make consistent progress that is at least satisfactory. The underachievement for older pupils found at the time of the last report has gone and all pupils enjoy participating in regular ICT lessons. The improvements in teaching and learning are starting to pay dividends, and some younger pupils are starting to make good progress in the subject. They become confident users of a range of programs and applications, including the internet.

50. Although the subject leader and main teacher of ICT is not a subject specialist, she has worked hard to improve provision. She has had training to enhance her own skills, and works closely with subject advisers to ensure a better quality curriculum through a rolling programme of reviewing what is taught to each year group. As her confidence and subject knowledge grow, teaching and learning become better and there were examples of good teaching with the two youngest age groups. The school now has an ICT suite with sufficient computers for pupils to work individually, and room to work in pairs or small groups. There are many strengths in teaching, including use of a good range of strategies, high expectations for behaviour and safe working practices. There is the full inclusion of pupils with additional special educational needs in all parts of the lesson. Technical support from the ICT technician is well used, but other support staff are not always effectively included in planning to ensure that they are used to their full potential in supporting pupils' learning.

51. The subject leader has already established satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. She has devised an appropriate subject development plan listing some key priorities. She works informally with teachers of other subjects in some joint projects. However, lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work in other curriculum areas show that pupils' ICT skills could be better promoted in other subjects, and their existing skills could be drawn on to support their learning more effectively. For example, too little use is made of pupils' word-processing skills to draft and redraft writing in English.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. Although computers in other classrooms are not well used with pupils, those teachers who have interactive Smartboards are starting to use them well. For example, in a good quality maths lesson, there was very good use of the board to help pupils learning about money to see what coin combinations could make 50 pence. In a successful music lesson, the board was used to share learning objectives with pupils and later to display video clips of extracts of different music genres.

HUMANITIES

There is insufficient evidence on which to base secure judgements concerning two of three subjects in this area of learning. Only one geography lesson was observed and no history lessons. Inspectors spoke to both subject leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Geography

53. Geography is taught in Years 7, 8 and 9. A well-taught Year 8 geography lesson was observed in which the teacher successfully led a discussion about a previous lesson where pupils had visited the city centre in Manchester. Perceptive questioning ensured that all pupils were drawn into the discussion of a wide range of geographical topics such as proximity to other cities, the importance of water supply and the level of the land. In this lesson, pupils achieved well. Pupils' past work shows that they often enter the school with a very low level of understanding. Their early work in Year 7 focuses on such basics as identifying human features of the landscape, such as houses and shops and comparing them with physical features, such as lakes and forests. By Year 9, pupils' work is showing much more sophistication as pupils cover topics, such as *Industry* and *Environmental Issues* in detail. At the end of each topic there is good self-evaluation, which clearly demonstrates how much pupils are enjoying the subject. Geography is also contributing well towards improving pupils' literacy skills through promoting factual writing.

History

54. History is taught in Years 7, 8 and 9. Year 7 pupils have recently completed a project on 'The Normans'. Their booklets contain a satisfactory range of work, mainly worksheet based, but nevertheless interesting and varied. Most pupils remember that the major battle of the period was the Battle of Hastings. It is a weakness of the subject that there is no evidence of work being sufficiently varied for pupils of different ability and as a result, the booklets of lower attaining pupils contain a lot of unfinished work. Limited pupils' work was provided for other year groups but enough to show that pupils have learned a little about life in England and Scotland between 1625 and 1714 and also about the discovery and colonisation of North America. The teacher has produced many good quality visual resources and encourages older pupils to record simple facts without the need for worksheets.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject curriculum is good and pupils enjoy learning about a good range of major world faiths and makes a good contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal development.
- All pupils have satisfactory achievement as a result of satisfactory quality of teaching and learning.
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently detailed to identify the next steps in pupils' learning or to inform the planning of appropriate work for lower attaining pupils.

Commentary

55. Pupils have opportunities to learn about and compare many major world religions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism and Judaism. They benefit from having specialist teaching who has a confident knowledge of the different faiths and traditions, and of the locally agreed syllabus. Satisfactory subject leadership has ensured that units of study are taught at an appropriate age to support pupils' understanding. For example, younger pupils learn about the more factual aspects of religion such as symbolism, sacred books and buildings and important beliefs of each faith. Older pupils tackle more moral and social issues, such as care of the elderly, abortion, drugs abuse, homelessness, and the roles that charities take in society. Visits to places of worship and to a homeless shelter and input from visiting speakers enhance pupils' understanding and make their learning come to life.

56. Teaching seen during the inspection was mostly of a satisfactory quality. Analysis of pupils' work confirms that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and that pupils' achievement is also satisfactory. There are many strengths in teaching, including good relationships with pupils and a culture of mutual respect. Pupils know that their answers and contributions to lessons will always be valued. The discussions held promote pupils' speaking and listening skills, and their reading and writing skills are also developed through the subject. Where teaching is less effective, there is a lack of focus on key learning objectives, and activities are not always suitable to convey difficult concepts to pupils of lower ability, such as what people gain from a successful marriage and what are the effects of divorce. Religious education gives pupils knowledge about faiths and traditions and supports their spiritual, moral and cultural development. The opportunities given in lessons to work together in pairs and groups promote pupils' social development, and there are many good links between subjects, in particular with citizenship.

57. Assessment procedures do not give enough detailed information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the subject and do not inform planning of appropriate work for pupils of different capabilities.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, and design and technology

The school delivers all the elements of these two subjects as one course within the design and technology department. It is therefore not appropriate to report on them separately.

Provision in these two combined subjects is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching and learning, with the excellent team teaching by the two teachers being a strong feature.
- The quality of the planning and assessment is exemplary.
- There could be a wider range of accreditation for the pupils.

Commentary

58. Pupils achieve well in this area of the curriculum because there is an innovative approach to the subject, and the quality of the teaching is very good. The school has combined the two subjects together but in doing so has not lost sight of the different elements within the subjects, such as food technology. There is joint planning between the two teachers, so that the topic being studied is a theme across both subjects. The lessons start with all pupils in the year group together, and the overall objective of the lesson is taught to all pupils by the two teachers. Both use clear and simple communication, and constantly reinforce and check that all pupils understand. Both teachers' enthusiasm communicates itself to the pupils, which motivates them to answer questions with eagerness. Teaching assistants are very well briefed about which pupils they will be supporting, or working with. Both assistants are very able to teach individual or small groups of pupils. A good example of this was observed when a pupil returned to lesson having missed the beginning. The

assistant immediately went and worked with the pupil and completed the introduction with him individually. The lessons have been organised so that each teacher takes his/her specific aspect of the subject and although this relates to their subject experience, that is either art, or design technology, or food technology, the teachers frequently exchange subjects. It is not unusual for the male teacher to be teaching food technology; thus breaking down any expectation of male/female roles for pupils. The teaching of the lesson objectives is very evident in all lessons, with very precise organisation, a good balance between discussion, written work and practical/investigation work. Both teachers and support staff have high expectations of the pupils and this creates an effective team, and as a result learning is very good.

59. The quality of the planning is outstanding. This is not only because it has been developed so that it identifies the learning outcomes for pupils of differing abilities, but links these outcomes in the form of assessment. The recording of what pupils have achieved, and whether it was below or above that expected, means that teachers have the means to make secure judgements about the levels pupils have attained. The system has been taken a step further by keeping evidence of pupils' work with a record of the assessed outcome. The expected outcomes are being developed into target setting for pupils.

60. Improvement since the last inspection is very good, with all pupils completing AQA units of accreditation. These are used effectively, along with elements of the ASDAN accreditation to recognise pupils' achievement. As yet the school has not entered pupils for any other accreditation which could be used when accessing further education.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good achievement in music because the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal development.
- Although not a music specialist, the subject leader provides good quality leadership to develop and improve the subject.
- Assessment is satisfactory but is not yet used effectively in planning.

Commentary

61. Music is taught only to pupils aged 11 to 14 years. Analysis of pupils' work and observations of lessons during the inspection confirm that pupils make good progress in music. The quality of teaching is consistently good, with one very good lesson seen. Strengths in teaching include high expectations for what pupils will achieve, both in the subject and in their behaviour in class. Lessons give a good range of activities so that pupils can experience performing pieces and composing their own music. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with specific difficulties so pupils of all abilities are fully included in all aspects of the learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and comment constructively on their own and others' work.

62. The opportunities for pupils to respond to music of a wide range of genres and to reflect on their own progress through the self-evaluation forms that are completed at the end of each study unit promote their spiritual development. Pupils work together well when they are rehearsing and performing. Their cultural development is enhanced through appraising music from different periods of time, studying a variety of examples of popular music, and playing instruments from many different cultures.

63. The subject leader has improved her own knowledge of music through attending courses and working with specialist musicians and advisors. She has improved the curriculum by reviewing what is studied and by incorporating good use of information and communications technology into the teaching and learning. The ongoing programme of upgrading resources has ensured that pupils

have access to a good range of instruments. There are now more opportunities to participate in activities such as drumming workshops and sessions with visiting professional musicians, in addition to school performances and trips to concerts. This is good improvement since the last inspection.

64. Targets set currently are for whole classes and do not identify what individual pupils need to do to improve. The system of assessment has just been reviewed to cover all ability levels. It has now been refined so that recorded information on pupils' progress in music will be able to show the next steps in learning. This information will also enable staff to identify those pupils who are gifted and talented in music to participate in a new specialist project within the local authority.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils show high levels of maturity.
- External accreditation is a very important element of the physical education.
- The subject is well taught and very effectively led and managed.
- The pupils have access to a very good range of after and out of school activities.

Commentary

65. Pupils make good progress in physical education. This is due to the careful attention by the specialist teacher in adapting the National Curriculum, so that all pupils can access a physical education programme that is appropriate to their individual needs. Based on all the inspection evidence, including photographic evidence, pupils in all years are developing performance skills in all the areas of the National Curriculum: games, athletic and gymnastic activities, dance, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities. In games, pupils throughout the school are learning tactics and are developing an understanding of team games and learning to accept rules. They are using games skills in sports including football, basketball and cricket. Pupils are learning gymnastic skills, for example a Year 9 class were learning how jump over a box. Lower attaining pupils were starting with bunny hops and balance activities, while higher attaining pupils were practicing the basic shapes in flight off the box.

66. Pupils thoroughly enjoy physical education. They work safely and sensibly with equipment, wear appropriate clothing and exercise a high level of self-discipline, listening and responding well to sometimes quite difficult instructions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 take this one stage further by taking on the role of coach as part of their AQA Units of Accreditation and GCSE Entry Level course work. Other pupils respond positively to taking instructions from their peers, showing a high level of maturity.

67. In Key Stage 4, external accreditation is a very important element of the physical education programme. In 2003 and 2004, every pupil gained a GCSE Entry Level award. In 2003, 22 per cent gained the highest award for this qualification. In 2004, it increased by 16 per cent; indicating very good progress.

68. The quality of teaching is consistently good, generating an enthusiastic response from pupils not only in lessons, but also in out-of-hours' clubs. These run every school night of the week and some at lunchtimes. They are generally well attended and are very popular with the pupils. The school benefits from the skills of an enthusiastic, specialist teacher, and the subject is well led and managed. Lesson activities are well planned. There is a good balance of demonstration, instruction, individual practise, working in pairs and where appropriate, team games. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and time and teaching assistants are generally used well. The physical education curriculum is strengthened by the pupils being able to access local sporting facilities,

including Hyde Cricket Club, The Cliff training ground, Manchester Youth Games and an Outdoor Pursuits Residential centre in Derbyshire.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the provision of the subject but the main strengths are that:

Main strengths and weaknesses

- It contributes well to pupils' very good personal development.
- There is very good provision for developing an awareness of the world of work.
- The staff team has developed the subject very well.

Commentary

69. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is seen as having high priority in school. There is an emphasis on building self-esteem, confidence, and developing relationships. Along with this, the school places very high emphasis preparing pupils to enter the adult world of leisure, training and work. A very relevant curriculum for PSHE has been developed. This is linked closely to the ASDAN accreditation and also pupils have opportunities to gain accreditation in Child Care. To complement this some pupils in Year 11 also have good opportunities to enhance their social skills through a joint placement with colleges for part of the week. Pupils have very good opportunities in discrete lessons, tutorial times, and assemblies, and out-of-hours clubs for advice, guidance and support. This contributes very well to their personal development, behaviour and attitudes. Lunchtime arrangements effectively promote pupils' self-help skills, while providing opportunities for developing relationships and social skills, and healthy eating. Pupils show a growing knowledge about local communities, people's jobs and roles in society, community issues, the world of work and their role as citizens.

Citizenship

70. The citizenship element of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, it is very well supported through the links the school has with the local community and pupils' access to events outside school. Within the taught curriculum the co-ordinator has developed schemes of work that use aspects of the QCA programmes of study. These have been appropriately adapted to the needs of the children. Citizenship is taught as a separate subject from Year 8, and all pupils follow the Community Asdan Award Challenge Modules. Older pupils also study AQA Units of Accreditation in 'Participating in a Citizenship Activity', 'Racism' and 'Law Making and Pressure Groups'. The school is currently developing a unit based around 'Democracy'. Pupils have also been involved in 'Operation Christmas Child', raising the awareness of poorer cultures and children. The curriculum is well supported by visits from outside agencies, including the Police Forum.

Work related curriculum

71. PSHE contains a very good provision for careers education. This is extremely well led by the deputy head teacher. The school uses the Connexions service very well to deliver and support this aspect of the curriculum, and has recently been awarded the Award for Connexions Excellence (ACE). Work experience is very well established with all pupils accessing during their final two years in school. With the changing needs and abilities of pupils, the school has ensured that all have equal opportunities to access work experience. Careers education is well supported by the link courses in the local college of education. These link well with the placements, such as for catering or vehicle fitting, and give pupils a valuable insight into this vocation for when they leave school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

*In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*