

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DERBY HIGH SCHOOL**

Bury, Lancashire

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105355

Headteacher: Mr Gerald Wilson

Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward  
11049

Dates of inspection: 25 - 29 June 2001

Inspection number: 187978

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Radcliffe Road  
Bury  
Lancs

Postcode: BL9 9NH

Telephone number: 0161 764 1819

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Young

Date of previous inspection: 29 April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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11049	Mark Woodward	Registered inspector	Business studies	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) The school's results and achievements How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22695	Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Science	
17709	Alan Giles	Team inspector	Physical education	
15186	Jeffrey Hardman	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
21785	Veronica Kerr	Team inspector	Mathematics	
27296	Akram Khan	Team inspector	Urdu	
4373	Peter McKenzie	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Derby High School is an average-sized 11-16 comprehensive school, serving 931 pupils from a range of areas of Bury some of which are relatively disadvantaged. Twenty three per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The proportions of girls and boys are even although there are more girls in Years 10 and 11 and more boys in Years 7 to 9. Twenty three per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language, which is high, and six per cent are at an early stage of learning the language; the great majority are of Pakistani heritage. Around a quarter of the pupils are on the register for special educational needs which is above the national average, and 2.8 per cent of pupils have statements, which is broadly average. The standards achieved by the pupils on entry to the school are broadly average in relation to national standards. There are fewer pupils whose attainment is either very high or very low than in an average school.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Overall the school is effective. It is very effective in promoting pupils' personal development, positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. A high proportion of pupils gain GCSE passes; the distribution of grades reflects the standards achieved on entry to the school with fewer higher and lower grades than in an average school. Pupils are taught well. The headteacher and senior staff have successfully created an ethos in which pupils are expected to behave well and have positive attitudes; this helps them to learn. There is a very good emphasis on enabling all pupils to gain GCSE qualifications. Other aspects of management are weaker: pupils are not assessed accurately in all subjects and their progress is not monitored systematically; senior and middle managers do not monitor the quality of teaching well enough; and the school does not have a strategic improvement plan. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

### **What the school does well**

- Lower attaining pupils, those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve well, particularly at GCSE, because of the good support that they are given and the policy of entering all pupils for GCSE examinations.
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, geography, music, physical education, Urdu and drama.
- Teaching is good overall and there are particular strengths in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, music, physical education, religious education, drama, Urdu and for pupils with specific learning difficulties.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are great strengths; these are promoted well by the school's effective pastoral care system.
- The attendance of the pupils is good and the procedures to encourage good attendance are excellent.
- The organisation of teaching groups by attainment levels helps pupils to learn.
- Careers education, including the arrangements for work experience, is good.
- Creative and personal skills are developed well through music and drama.

### **What could be improved**

- The achievement of pupils in design and technology in Years 7 to 9, in non-GCSE religious education in Years 10 and 11 and of higher attaining pupils in science and modern foreign languages.
- Assessment, and its use to monitor pupils' progress and improve curricular planning.
- The timing and organisation of the school day to maximise the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- The curriculum for religious education, which does not meet statutory requirements.
- The monitoring by senior and middle managers of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Long-term planning and the way that it is supported by financial plans.
- The amount of administrative support available to teachers and managers.
- The procedures to ensure child protection and health and safety.
- The accommodation for drama, music, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education and for administrative staff.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1996. Since then it has made satisfactory progress. GCSE and National Curriculum test results have remained in line with national results, the quality of teaching has improved, with a substantial rise in the proportion of very good or excellent lessons. Not enough progress has been made in tackling some of the key issues raised by the 1996 inspection. Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress remain unsatisfactory despite work that has taken place in this area. Information and communication technology is now used well to enhance pupils' learning in some subjects such as English, but other subjects such as mathematics still do not make good use of it. The library still does not support pupils' independent learning well enough. Staff are consulted more about issues facing the school, but they still do not have enough opportunity to influence decisions. Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved to a satisfactory level but subjects, including religious education, still do not offer enough opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16-year-olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b> well above A average above average B average C below average D well below E average
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	C	B	C	A	

Standards are average compared with national standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 and the achievement of the pupils is satisfactory throughout their time in the

school. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. Lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve well as a result of the specialist support that they receive. The school met its GCSE targets in 2000; the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE passes was well above average. Compared with similar schools, results in the National Curriculum tests at age 14 and GCSE results were well above average in 2000. Boys achieve higher results than girls in both the National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations compared with boys and girls nationally. A lower than average proportion of pupils gain the highest GCSE grades. The trends in both National Curriculum test results and GCSE results are below the national trends over the past five years. Pupils achieve particularly well in English, mathematics, geography, music, physical education, Urdu and drama. Achievement in all other subjects, including science, is satisfactory except in design and technology in Years 7 to 9 and religious education in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are average by the end of Years 9 and 11.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	The pupils are very positive about the school. They are keen to learn and concentrate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils feel secure and well-supported.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good both among the different groups of pupils and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Attendance is higher than the national average. This reflects pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the excellent procedures that promote good attendance.

The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are great strengths of the school. The school builds on the positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils on entry to the school to ensure that they develop these attributes further as they move towards becoming responsible citizens. Pupils show a high level of respect for each other, their teachers and property.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

In the 154 lessons seen teaching was satisfactory or better in 99 per cent, good or better in 70 per cent and very good or excellent in 33 per cent. This is a higher than average level of performance in secondary schools and there is more very good and excellent teaching than at the time of the last inspection.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in Urdu and good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, music, physical education, religious education and drama. In all other subjects it is satisfactory. The teaching of pupils with specific learning difficulties is very good. Good support is also given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language; this is one of the key reasons why lower attaining pupils and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Not enough emphasis is given to meeting the learning needs of higher attaining pupils. The teaching of literacy and information and communication technology is satisfactory but the teaching of numeracy is not planned well enough.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced except for religious education which does not conform with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The complex timing and organisation of the school day create an obstacle to the raising of standards, particularly in subjects with a practical dimension such as design and technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good, and the great majority of pupils following a curriculum which leads to success at GCSE. The school works closely with the local education authority to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well because of the high quality of support that they get from specialist staff and classroom teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social	Opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and an understanding of moral issues are good. Opportunities for cultural development have improved since the last

and cultural development	inspection but the pupils still have too few spiritual experiences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Form tutors and year heads know the pupils well and support them very effectively. Procedures for promoting good attendance and behaviour are very strong and make a very positive impact on the opportunities pupils have to learn.

The school is a harmonious community. This is due in large part to the care that is shown for all pupils and the decisive action that is taken to maintain good order and positive relationships. While the pupils are well looked after, the procedures for child protection are not satisfactory because teachers and managers are not up-to-date with the latest guidance. There are also weaknesses in the school's health and safety arrangements.

Pupils' opportunities to develop creative skills, particularly through music and drama, are better than in most schools and this contributes well to personal development. There are embryonic developments in the curriculum for gifted and talented pupils but overall provision is modest. Pupils are not assessed with enough accuracy to enable their progress to be measured effectively. This means that teachers and managers cannot fully evaluate how successful they are in raising pupils' levels of achievement, which in turn adversely affects the degree to which teachers modify their plans to meet pupils' learning needs. The school tries to involve parents in supporting its work but has limited success. Parents are generally satisfied with the information that they receive and the welcome they are given in school.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Effective overall. The strength is in the development of an orderly learning environment in which almost all pupils gain GCSE passes but not enough emphasis is given to making sure that pupils achieve optimum academic results or to planning for the long-term development of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors offer a wide range of skills in areas such as business and management. They are well led and are guided by a commitment to help all pupils develop both academically and personally. They do not have a strong enough role in developing long-term plans and have not ensured that all statutory requirements, particularly for the teaching of religious education, are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This area of the school's work is unsatisfactory at both senior and middle management levels. The monitoring of teaching, linked to analyses of its impact on the progress of different groups of pupils, is not rigorous enough.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is not closely enough linked to long-term improvement goals and the procedures for ensuring that the best value is gained from the available budget are

	inadequate.
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Accommodation is unsatisfactory, for a variety of reasons, in drama, music, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education; in all cases this affects standards. Staffing and resource levels are satisfactory overall although the library is not good enough to develop pupils' independent learning skills and there are too few computers to ensure that all pupils have adequate opportunities to use information and communication technology to develop their learning.

**PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils make good progress</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become more mature and responsible</li> <li>• The school is approachable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about pupils' progress</li> <li>• Collaboration between the school and parents</li> <li>• The consistency of homework setting</li> <li>• The level of resources, particularly for information and communication technology</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents that: the quality of teaching is good; pupils are expected to work hard; pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility; teachers and managers are approachable; and that there are not enough computers to support pupils' learning. Homework, reports on pupils' progress and the school's links with parents are satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall; progress is good for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are broadly average, as they are when pupils enter the school. Standards are therefore similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory with some pupils, such as those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieving well. A great strength is the proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSE passes. Boys outperform girls compared with boys and girls nationally in both the National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations. There are greater variations in the standards achieved by girls, boys and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds than were reported at the time of the last inspection. The school met all of its GCSE targets in 2000. Deficiencies in the school's procedures for assessing pupils and monitoring their progress mean that the school is not able to show clearly how well different groups of pupils achieve.
2. Good teaching, the good behaviour and positive attitudes of the pupils, high expectations that pupils will gain GCSE passes and the good support given to pupils with special educational needs and to those with English as an additional language make the most significant contribution to pupils' achievement. Assessment information is not accurate enough and it is not used to monitor adequately the progress of different groups of pupils and to plan work to meet most appropriately their learning needs. The organisation of the school day, accommodation issues, the curriculum for religious education, the use of information and communication technology to promote learning and the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils achieve well in all subjects are the other factors that need tackling to raise standards further.
3. Standards on entry to the school are broadly average as measured by pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests taken when pupils arrive in Year 7. The range of attainment levels in the school is narrower than generally found: there are fewer pupils performing at either very high or very low levels. Overall, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly boys, have weaker skills in English when they arrive at the school than other pupils. Their knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics and science are also lower.
4. Taking into account National Curriculum test results and the quality of work shown by pupils in lessons and their books, standards, compared with national standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are: above average in mathematics and physical education; average in English, science, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, history, geography, music and religious education; and below average in design and technology and art.
5. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is: good in English, mathematics, geography, music and physical education; satisfactory in science, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, history, art and

religious education; and unsatisfactory in design and technology. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good; it is very good for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

6. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 were average compared with pupils' results nationally in English and mathematics and below average in science. Results fell in all three subjects between 1999 and 2000 and the trend in results over the past five years is below the national trend. Compared with the results of pupils in similar schools (based on the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals), the results in 2000 were well above average in all three subjects. The gap between the results of European and Asian heritage pupils narrows between the tests at the end of Year 6 and the tests at the end of Year 9 except in science, where European heritage pupils continue to perform relatively better. Compared with the performance of boys and girls nationally, boys performed better than girls over the past 5 years in English and mathematics. In science, boys performed relatively better in 2000 and 1997 while girls performed better in 1998 and 1999.
7. Teachers' assessments in other subjects at the end of Year 9 are inconsistent and, in some cases, inaccurate.
8. The local education authority's analysis of National Curriculum test results shows that pupils made relatively better progress in English and mathematics than pupils in other schools in Bury over the past three years. Progress in science was less good for the pupils who took the Year 9 tests in 1998 and 1999 but in 2000 it was similar to the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics relative to other schools. Results at the end of Year 9 compared with pupils' results nationally suggest that in 1999 and 2000, they were broadly in line with the results that the pupils achieved in the tests at the end of Year 6 in all three subjects; English results were the strongest and science results the weakest. Girls maintained their advantage over boys compared with girls and boys nationally between the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1996 and the tests the same pupils took at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 and boys maintained their advantage over girls compared with boys and girls nationally between the 1997 and 2000 Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 tests.
9. Taking into account examination results and the quality of work shown by pupils in lessons and their books, standards, compared with national standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are: well above average in Urdu; above average in mathematics and physical education; average in English, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, history, geography, music and GCSE religious education; below average in science, design and technology and art; and well below average in religious education for those pupils not following the GCSE course.
10. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 is: very good in Urdu; good in English, mathematics, geography, music and physical education; satisfactory in science, design and technology, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, history, art and GCSE religious education; and unsatisfactory in religious education for those not taking the GCSE course. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good; pupils with

specific learning difficulties make very good progress. Pupils with statements typically achieve pass grades at GCSE.

11. GCSE results between 1997 and 2000 were average in relation to national results and well above average in terms of the proportion of pupils gaining five or more pass grades. In 1999 the results were above average in relation to national results. Compared with similar schools (based on the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals), the results in 2000 were well above average while in 1999 they were very high. The trend in results over the past five years is below the national trend. Asian heritage pupils gained high results in 2000; 73 per cent gained five A\*-C grades compared with 51 per cent of all the pupils. Compared with boys' and girls' results nationally, boys performed relatively better than girls over the past four years.
12. The gifted, talented and more able pupils are achieving national average standards, with a few doing better than that. In 2000, the proportion of A or A\* GCSE grades was around half the national average. However, 18 per cent of pupils gained A or A\* grades in English, which was average for the subject nationally. This is a high level of performance in a subject which all pupils have to take and in which those with English as an additional language are potentially at a disadvantage. The school is rightly concerned about the lower percentages of A and A\* grades in most other subjects, for example, science.
13. Pupils achieved relatively higher GCSE results in English, mathematics and science in 2000 than they did in their other subjects. They achieved relatively lower results in history, information and communication technology, English literature and design and technology.
14. Comparing pupils' GCSE results in 2000 and 1999 with the same pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 1998 and 1997 respectively, the school's performance is broadly average overall, but well above average in terms of the proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSE passes.
15. One of the school's great strengths is that almost all pupils leave with GCSE qualifications and the great majority with at least five. The school enters almost all pupils for GCSE examinations; in some years, such as 1999, every pupil left the school with a GCSE qualification. This is better than most schools achieve, particularly schools that take a similar range of pupils. By helping all pupils, whatever their attainment levels, to achieve GCSE qualifications, the school ensures that they are well placed to continue in education or to develop satisfying careers when they leave the school.
16. The work to raise the standards of Asian heritage pupils is very effective, particularly in improving their English skills. Asian heritage pupils enter with standards in English, mathematics and science below those of other pupils. By the end of Year 9, this gap has almost closed and, by the end of Year 11, the same pupils get better GCSE results than other pupils. In the last three years they out-performed European heritage pupils in the majority of subjects at GCSE, including English. A clear indication of the school's success in raising the performance of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds can be seen in the ethnic composition of classes. When pupils enter the school, few pupils from

minority ethnic backgrounds are placed in upper sets. As the years progress, the ethnic balance of upper sets becomes more even.

17. Literacy standards are broadly average by the end of Years 9 and 11. This is largely due to the effective support given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Their needs are met well, which means that they are able to take the opportunities offered by the curriculum. There is an intense focus on literacy in English which is effectively embedded in day-to-day teaching. In other subjects the development of literacy skills is not systematically planned. For example, science was an area identified to trial key words following a literacy audit and there was some evidence in the lessons observed of an emphasis on a technical vocabulary but this was not a consistent feature of planning and teaching. Displays around the school are generally of a good standard with a rich literacy content and all classrooms feature subject-specific word banks. Overall there is evidence of good practice in literacy at individual, or in some cases departmental, level but this has not yet been drawn together into a robust whole-school approach which ensures that pupils receive a high level of literacy support in every lesson.
18. Most pupils come to the school with skills that are good enough to enable them to cope with the mathematical demands of most subjects, although standards in the numerical elements of science are a relative weakness. Pupils who struggle with number work are given particular attention in the small teaching groups in mathematics lessons. This support is becoming increasingly effective as the techniques developed in the National Numeracy Strategy are fully employed. The responsibility of all teachers to consider and contribute to this aspect of education is yet to be tackled. There has been no recent audit to identify the numeracy skills needed by pupils to cope with the demands of the curriculum. The school cannot therefore co-ordinate the approach to common mathematical techniques that are used in different subjects, for example: graphs in science and geography; measurement in design and technology; and the use of co-ordinates and enlargement in art. The school has not yet identified ways in which all teachers can contribute actively to improving pupils' skills in this vital area of education.
19. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly average. This is mainly the result of the specialist teaching and the good use of computers in subjects such as English and music. Mathematics, science, art, geography and Urdu do not make enough use of computers to help pupils learn.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

20. As also seen during the last inspection, pupils have very positive and enthusiastic attitudes to school. Most pupils behave very well in lessons. They listen carefully, are willing to answer questions and often remain on task. When they are given opportunities to use their knowledge and understanding in lessons, they follow instructions, work well together and display responsible and mature attitudes to their work; for example, in an information and communication technology lesson Year 9 pupils worked well together to use the Internet. They discussed, in a sensible and mature way, the options that were open to them to download information from various sources. In a Year 9

science lesson, pupils worked very well together to operate a fair test on the solubility of different types of water and discussed and compared their results with each other.

21. Behaviour in and around the school is very good as it was at the time of the last inspection. At the beginning of each lesson most pupils settle very quickly and listen carefully to teachers' instructions; older pupils generally set an example to younger ones. By being very visible around the school, senior managers and teaching staff reinforce the school's expectations of behaviour and this has a very positive impact both on pupils' behaviour and their levels of achievement. The number of permanent exclusions was below average in 2000/2001 and the number of fixed term exclusions typical for the size of the school. The proportions of pupils excluded from among the different ethnic heritage groups are broadly in line with the relative size of those populations within the school.
22. Pupils have a very clear knowledge and understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Year 8 pupils are appointed "buddies" to Year 7 pupils; they guide them through the first few weeks of their move to the senior school and befriend them and help them if necessary. In addition, the well-ordered school prefect system ensures that no pupil feels isolated. Bullying, sexism and racism are not tolerated and the few unacceptable incidents of behaviour are extremely well managed. The pastoral system is very effective in responding to issues arising out of pupils' behaviour. Anti-racist attitudes are promoted via classroom displays; for example a United Nations pledge signed by pupils was seen in one classroom
23. Pupils respect their own property, school property and the property of their peers. Although classrooms are left open and pupils have open access to classrooms before and after school, no incidents of theft or vandalism take place. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson and a Year 9 information and communication technology lesson, pupils treated computers sensibly and with respect.
24. The overwhelming majority of pupils respect and accept the school rules. The code of conduct is based on reward and sanctions which are well known to pupils; they understand that unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated.
25. Pupils are given very good opportunities to take initiative and exercise personal responsibility. Two pupils from each form are elected to the Forum, which also includes representatives from other agencies that serve the community and the local authority. The Forum provides a useful debating chamber in which pupils can share their views with peer groups and have them listened to. Pupils also act as receptionists, form captains, vice captains, energy monitors, library monitors, team leader prefects and prefects and they offer assistance to the school during school productions in lighting, sound and stage management. They also help at parents' evening with refreshments and act as greeters.
26. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils relate very well to teachers and each other, and in lessons are able to work very harmoniously and well together in pairs or groups. In a Year 10 careers lesson, for example, pupils worked well together discussing a range of careers in pairs simulating

employer and employee interviews. Teachers promote good relationships between boys and girls and pupils of different ethnic backgrounds by encouraging them to work together.

27. Attendance, at 91.6 per cent during the term before the inspection, is good. In the year before the inspection it was 92.5 per cent, which was above the national average for secondary schools. Pupils arrive at lessons on time and latecomers are required by teachers to give an explanation when they are late. Attendance has risen since the last inspection.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR PUPILS TAUGHT?**

28. In the 154 lessons seen teaching was satisfactory or better in 99 per cent, good or better in 70 per cent and very good or excellent in 33 per cent. This is a higher than average level of performance than in most secondary schools and it is higher than at the time of the last inspection. In that inspection only 13 per cent of lessons were judged very good or excellent. The improvement in teaching is largely due to the use of a wider range of strategies to stimulate and motivate the pupils. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good.
29. The quality of teaching is: very good in Urdu; good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, music, physical education, religious education and drama; and satisfactory in art, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, history and business studies. The teaching of pupils with specific learning difficulties is very good. No subject was judged unsatisfactory for its teaching.
30. Good support is given to pupils with English as an additional language both through the work of the support teachers and assistants and that of classroom teachers, who are sensitive towards the pupils' needs while ensuring that they receive appropriately challenging work. This is one of the key reasons why pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
31. Teachers show a good awareness of pupils with special educational needs although individual education plans are not specifically used to inform planning. Support staff are well used in the majority of lessons, for example, in enabling individual pupils with literacy difficulties to complete comprehension activities successfully and ensuring that pupils engaged in group work maintain their concentration. In an art lesson, a visually impaired pupil was given good support in choosing colours with the result that a more satisfying composition was created. In another lesson, a support assistant was effective in helping a class containing several pupils with behavioural difficulties to maintain good attitudes and behaviour. In geography there are not enough assistants to support pupils with special educational needs and there is a lack of consistency in the way they are allocated to classes.
32. In the most effective class teaching, work is well matched to needs and pupils are motivated and challenged. In a Year 9 geography lesson, for example, pupils worked in groups to identify the features of a successful town and were motivated by the fact that the teacher recognised the merits of all the well-argued responses. In a Year 10 science lesson, class discussion, together with a series of practical demonstrations, was well used to enable pupils to

understand the concept of waves. Teaching is less effective when pupils go through sequences of tasks before the teacher has assessed whether they have understood enough to move on.

33. The teaching of pupils withdrawn from lessons to address specific learning difficulties is very good. Assessment is very well used to inform planning, with lessons building on difficulties encountered in previous lessons. There is an emphasis on confidence building, with very thorough preparation for writing tasks so that pupils are equipped with ideas and vocabulary to enable them to participate fully.
34. Not enough emphasis is given to meeting the needs of higher attaining, gifted and talented pupils. There is no process for formally identifying them and therefore programmes for meeting their needs are dependent upon the setting arrangements and the planning of individual teachers or departments. This is particularly an issue in science and modern foreign languages. In mathematics, around 15-20 pupils take GCSE a year early and the teaching that they receive prepares them well for the examination.
35. In Urdu, the teacher uses his good command of the language to prepare tasks that challenge all the pupils and build well on their prior learning; this enables them to make progress at an appropriate pace. Lessons include a range of stimulating activities which encourage the pupils to use the language confidently.
36. All the English lessons observed during the inspection were good or better. This was due to teachers' high level of subject knowledge, the appropriate balance of challenge and support for the pupils, and good planning which ensured that interesting activities were well matched to the pupils' levels of attainment. The influx of teachers to the department over recent years has brought many new teaching approaches. As a result the learning environment for the pupils in English is very rich and this has a positive impact on standards.
37. In design and technology good teaching overcomes unsatisfactory curriculum arrangements to enable pupils to achieve at a satisfactory level overall. Neither 35-minute nor 70-minute lessons are suitable for the full range of design and technology activities, particularly practical tasks, and, as a result, pupils are not able to achieve results that reflect their capabilities or the good teaching that they receive.
38. One of the key strengths of the teaching is teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Pupils benefit because the work that they are set reflects the interest that teachers have in their subjects; this motivates them to produce good quality work which enhances their learning.
39. The very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils create conditions in the classroom which enable teachers to teach effectively and pupils to learn. Pupils generally arrive at the school with constructive attitudes to work. The school's practices are very effective in building on this and ensuring that pupils' willingness to learn and behave well is maintained and further developed. Teachers manage the pupils well in the classroom, using the positive discipline system effectively.

40. Day-to-day assessment is better than the arrangements for assessing pupils over time, but it is still a weaker aspect of the teaching. It is unsatisfactory in science, design and technology and information technology. In science, for example, some books are infrequently marked and the marking is not always helpful in showing pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
41. The learning of pupils is good overall. Throughout the school it is: very good in Urdu; good in English, mathematics, geography, music, physical education, religious education and drama; satisfactory in information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, history, art and business studies. In science, learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In design and technology, learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.
42. Pupils respond well to the good quality of the teaching by trying hard in all subjects. They enjoy meeting the challenges and make most progress when these are well matched to their levels of attainment. The organisation of classes by pupils' performance in each subject has a positive impact on standards, particularly as pupils are frequently moved between classes when they make faster or slower progress than their peers.
43. Pupils are interested in the work that they are given and sustain concentration well. This is very much linked to the range of activities that many teachers include in their lessons. In music, for example, pupils compose and perform individually and in groups while whole-class teaching sessions ensure that they learn how to use musical techniques to improve the quality of their practical work.
44. Information and communication technology is used well to help pupils learn in English, design and technology and music. It is not used effectively to support pupils learning in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history, geography, art and Urdu. Some subjects indicated that they had difficulty in booking computer rooms but the rooms were found to be unused for a significant proportion of curriculum time.
45. The English department gives a good focus to the teaching of literacy skills and some good work is undertaken in other subjects to support pupils' learning in this key area. The momentum of whole-school action on literacy has slowed recently. The teaching of numeracy is largely done within mathematics and pupils are able to apply number satisfactorily in the other subjects of the curriculum. There is, however, no whole-school strategy for the teaching of numeracy which is unsatisfactory, given the needs of pupils in this area and the national focus on improving pupils' basic skills.

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

46. The curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14 fulfils statutory requirements, although the new National Curriculum orders for 2000, which detail the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects, are not fully implemented. Difficulties in enabling all pupils in each subject and year group

to use the limited computer equipment partially explain why pupils are not provided with a full range of activities in all subjects. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory in both the quality and breadth of learning opportunities. All pupils study French and the higher attaining pupils also learn German from Years 8 to 9. The time available for the teaching of two languages in Years 8 and 9 is inadequate. Urdu is not available until Year 10; the curriculum would be enhanced, and pupils' opportunities to develop their language skills increased, by making it available at an earlier stage. There is now a reasonable allocation of time to music and art and all pupils now experience drama as part of their English course. This is an area that was criticised at the last inspection and has been rectified.

47. For pupils aged 14 to 16, the curriculum does not fulfil the statutory requirements. The time allocation and curricular arrangements for religious education, for pupils who are not taking GCSE in the subject, are inadequate to cover the agreed syllabus. The GCSE option, which is both popular and successful, does not of itself meet statutory requirements, as it does not include a component dealing with Christianity. However, GCSE religious education is a very valuable subject option that is particularly appreciated by pupils of Asian heritage. The time allocation for personal and social education and private study periods, which take up over 7 per cent of teaching time, is high. This time is not always used effectively. Apart from the issues concerning religious education, the curriculum is broadly balanced and offers a good range of learning opportunities. All pupils take the dual science option through to GCSE and a high proportion take a GCSE in a modern foreign language. The proportion taking two modern foreign languages is very low. The opportunity to take GCSE in Urdu enriches the options available and is taken by many pupils of Asian heritage. GCSE in business studies has been taken for some years and is now available as a GNVQ qualification. The last inspection reported the formation of a working party to consider the curricular provision for gifted and talented pupils. Apart from the "fast track" group in mathematics, who take GCSE in Year 10 and then start to study Advanced Level, there is little evidence of particular attention being given to the needs of such pupils. The school does not monitor the take-up of subjects in Years 10 and 11 by gender or ethnic heritage.
48. The deployment of specialist teachers, with the exception of religious education, is good. Years 7 to 9 are taught religious education by the acting head of department, who is a specialist, and a temporary teacher, who is not. Non-specialists do three quarters of the religious education teaching in Year 10 and the subject is not taught to Year 11. Otherwise, non-specialist teachers teach very few classes.
49. The length of the teaching week, which is 24 hours and 34 minutes, is below average (25 hours, which in 1999-2000 was provided by 72 percent of schools). The timetable is very complex, three different patterns for the school day occurring each week. There are at least seven different lengths of lesson, varying from 30 to 72 minutes. These unnecessarily complex arrangements compromise the quality of teaching and learning. The very short lessons are most unsuitable for practical subjects such as design and technology and physical education. In the longest lessons, pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration in subjects such as modern foreign languages and mathematics. The organisation of the curriculum does not allow the optimum use of the learning time available to each subject. Furthermore, the variation in length of

lesson makes it difficult to ensure that each subject receives its full allocation of time.

50. Overall, pupils enjoy equal access to all parts of the curriculum and the setting arrangements ensure that subjects are taught at an appropriate level of difficulty and by methods that suit pupils' strengths as learners. This is one of the major factors that enhance pupils' learning. Pupils with English as an additional language are more numerous in higher sets as they progress through the school. This shows that they make good progress and that the school's arrangements for moving pupils between sets in response to their changing rates of progress are effective. The school gives careful attention to the needs of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The effectiveness of this care is evident in the successful GCSE performance of these pupils.
51. Pupils do not have equal access to the curriculum in modern foreign languages. Only the top sets in French are allowed to take up German in Year 8, a fifty per cent reduction from the situation that appertained at the last inspection. The numbers of pupils following two modern foreign languages to GCSE is very low. Urdu is available only from Year 10 onwards.
52. Around 25 per cent of the pupils are from Asian heritage backgrounds. Of these, about one quarter are in the early stages of English language acquisition, which represents 6 per cent of the school population. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is provided by the Curriculum and Language Access Service, which is bought in from the local education authority. The school pays most of its standards fund ethnic minorities achievement grant to the local education authority, which then provides a subsidised service amounting to 1.65 full-time-equivalent teachers and a one-day-a-week classroom support assistant. This service provides high quality support. All pupils admitted to the school are already known to the service and categorised according to support needed. Many pupils are fluent in English but may still need language support in specific subject-related vocabulary or language outside their cultural understanding. However, the service works mainly with those pupils who need language skills to access the curriculum. Members of the service provide termly targets for all these pupils.
53. The service also provides good support for individuals and families. All families of pupils who will receive help are visited before pupils are admitted to school. A teacher from the service examines school activities to ensure that they provide equal access for all pupils. They also help pupils in Year 10 with study skills and attend a careers evening targeted at pupils of Asian heritage which is also open to others. They also provide an analysis of the setting and banding structure in the school, to ensure that Asian heritage pupils are placed in groups which meet their ability in the subject and not their level of language acquisition.
54. The school made a positive start to developing literacy across the curriculum well in advance of national developments. A literacy audit was carried out and subject areas were identified for pilot work. The early impact of this work has not been sustained across the school and, although practice is very good in some areas, this is not consistent and literacy developments are not always embedded in planning and teaching.

55. Although the teaching of numeracy within the mathematics curriculum is good, the school has yet to develop a whole-school approach to this important area. The school has not identified the numeracy demands of different subjects and cannot therefore co-ordinate the teaching of these skills. In general, teachers are unaware of their responsibility to contribute to pupils' competency in numeracy.
56. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good, with the great majority of pupils taking, and successfully passing, GCSE examinations. The school is often successful in helping pupils with statements to achieve GCSE passes. A small group of pupils do not take modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11 in order to follow a vocational course. The deployment of support staff in lessons gives appropriate priority to pupils with statements to ensure compliance with statement requirements. Pupils with less significant needs are given valuable additional support to develop basic skills through the 'Successmaker' software program. The two categories of need that together comprise the great majority of pupils on the special educational needs register have specific provision made; there is a withdrawal programme for pupils with specific learning difficulties which is well taught by specialist staff and good additional support is provided in some lessons to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. The organisation of the curriculum enables smaller teaching groups to be created and withdrawal to support literacy development to proceed without pupils missing work from a number of different lessons; this is effective. Good use is made of local authority provision, the school working closely with the authority's pupil learning centre to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
57. There are embryonic developments in the curriculum for gifted and talented pupils but overall provision is modest. A member of the senior management team has shared with staff her evaluation of the in-service training material on "Meeting the needs of the more able and gifted pupils." The school has not identified its gifted and talented pupils and is not providing opportunities to extend such pupils in a systematic manner. There are isolated promising developments in some subjects such as drama, mathematics and music. In mathematics, for example, a small number of pupils entered for GCSE examination at the end of Year 10, have achieved commendable results. Some pupils benefit from instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities. There is a need to identify, provide extra enrichment activities and to monitor, evaluate and promote further these positive developments, including raising parental expectations of their children's potential in order to maximise the achievement of able pupils.
58. The school has a well-planned programme to prepare its pupils for life outside school, although teachers do not always use the lesson time effectively. The main focus of this personal, religious and social education is citizenship. Well-prepared documentation produced by the head of department, including teacher notes and pupil booklets, aims to develop knowledge skills and understanding so that the pupils can participate in society as informed and responsible citizens. The programme looks at a wide range of topics in both key stages. These include health issues such as sex education and drugs awareness, safety, bullying, relationships, justice law and order, and political awareness. A number of outside agencies, such as the Fire Service, the Police, and a drugs awareness unit visit the school to make presentations. The personal, religious and social education programme also includes a significant unit on careers. This too involves outside agencies, including careers advisors and representatives from local colleges.
59. Pupils are given very good career guidance at the school. All Year 10 pupils are entitled to participate in the "Bury Compact" student charter course, which

assesses students' suitability for work over a two-year period from Year 10 until they leave school. The course works as a very suitable module to prepare pupils for the world of work, and involves a two-week period of work experience, which pupils must complete successfully to obtain the charter certificate. The school has very strong links with the local authority careers guidance service, who come into school regularly to advise Year 10 and 11 pupils on career choices. The clerical administrator at school organises the clerical aspect of work experience well and the library has a variety of publications to advise pupils on which further education courses to follow, or which career to take.

60. The school has good links with local industry and uses them well to facilitate a successful work experience programme. Over 90 employers are involved, including public services such as hospitals and the Fire Service. The Compact scheme, a partnership with industry which integrates vocational activities with other aspects of the curriculum, has been well developed since the last inspection and is benefiting all pupils. The school has recently undertaken the development of a work-related curriculum to meet the needs of pupils who are experiencing difficulties with attendance and behaviour. This work is the basis of an application for "inclusion" funding from the LEA and progress to date indicates that it will be successful.
61. Links with feeder schools and colleges are satisfactory. Information about pupils before their arrival at the school helps to ease their transition from primary to secondary education. This is used well by heads of year. The results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 are passed on to the school and these are helpfully analysed by the local education authority. Departments have limited knowledge about what is taught in the primary schools and this means that the Year 7 curriculum does not always build smoothly on what pupils have already learned. The school has links with colleges which help the pupils to make informed decisions about further study.
62. The school has a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities from which all pupils can benefit. All departments offer extra help and tuition out of lesson times and this is greatly valued by pupils who have missed work through absence and in the run-up to examinations. The range of sporting activities is satisfactory and caters for both boys and girls. The number of school teams is limited by the fact that some of the physical education staff carry major whole-school management responsibilities. The music department makes a major contribution to extra-curricular opportunities and the number of pupils involved is high. The financial support that the school gives to pupils for individual instrumental tuition is of great value and enables many pupils to take advantage of this provision. Productions that involve drama and music are very popular and large numbers of pupils take part. There is a good variety of visits to museums, art galleries and other places of interest. Pupils also can take advantage of several sorts of residential experiences, including outdoor pursuits and skiing trips. However, there are no visits designed to complement the teaching of modern foreign languages.
63. At the last inspection the school was asked to give a higher priority to the spiritual development of pupils. This area remains unsatisfactory. The only direct focus on spiritual matters is through school assembly and for most pupils this occurs only once a week. The definition of spiritual provision underlying

the school's thinking is narrowly religious. There has therefore been no attempt to identify opportunities that arise in the wider curriculum. Subject departments do not include policies outlining the ways in which their subject could contribute and there is little awareness in teachers. This is resulting in lost opportunities. Apart from occasional moments in English, music and art where an experience such as the reading of a poem gives pupils an insight into a world beyond their own, subjects are contributing very little. The school does not fulfil the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

64. The provision for moral development is good. At the individual level within school, pupils show clear understanding of right and wrong. They fully accept the rationale behind the school rules and are comfortable in acceding to them almost all the time. The fact that classrooms do not have to be locked and that pupils can be given more individual responsibility than is usual in many schools, bears witness to the high standards of respect for person and property that prevail in the school. Teachers are good role models in the way they conduct themselves and in the respect they afford to pupils. A high moral tone pervades every aspect of the school's work. The prefect system is very effective in giving older pupils opportunities to accept responsibility and the relationships between prefects and younger pupils are very constructive. Pupils are also given many opportunities to consider wider moral issues. The personal, religious and social education programme involves pupils in the consideration of important ethical issues such as abortion and racism. They are encouraged to think about evidence, question pre-conceptions and to form thoughtful personal judgements. In subjects such as geography, history and science they are given good opportunities to consider major world problems such as poverty and ecological damage.
65. Provision for the development of social skills is good. Work in English, drama and history is particularly effective in raising pupils' awareness of the consequences of different sorts of behaviour on relationships. Within a secure environment, they study directly the sources of conflict between individuals and groups and learn skills that can be used to resolve conflict. Several departments, including English, modern foreign languages, art and geography use group work very well. They do not allow pupils simply to form friendship groups but organise different combinations of pupils to ensure that boys and girls can learn from each other and that pupils of differing ethnic origins have opportunities to work together. The racial harmony and very good order evident in the school are important outcomes of the attention given to pupils' social maturation. Throughout the inspection pupils were very impressive in their open, confident and friendly responses to their visitors.
66. The provision for cultural development was unsatisfactory at the last inspection. The school has responded to the criticism: provision has been improved and is now satisfactory. Changes in the curriculum to increase the amount of time available for art and music have been very effective in raising pupils' awareness of worldwide culture. The music produced on gamelan instruments was a source of great pleasure to the pupils playing and their audience. The school has improved pupils' opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in drama. Work in English and art gives pupils good insight into cultures other than English. The emphasis on the cultural aspects of work in modern foreign languages is not strong and some departments, for example, science and mathematics, have not yet recognised

the potential cultural dimensions of their subjects. This is partly because the school has not placed enough emphasis on this area; there is no whole-school policy nor are there departmental policies to shape teachers' approach to this work.

67. Pupils of Asian heritage constitute approximately a quarter of the school roll. Although the attention given to promoting racial harmony is effective, celebration of the cultural heritage of this group of pupils is limited to a few areas. Pupils study a range of art forms from many parts of the world. Some work in English is relevant and there is a very good display of recently acquired books about different cultures in the library. Elsewhere there is little evidence of attention to Asian culture.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

68. The educational and personal support and guidance of pupils at the school are very good. Pupils from all ethnic heritage backgrounds relate very well to each other and all pupils receive good support from staff. Parents are rightly confident that their children are offered a high level of pastoral support by the school.
69. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Pupils are rewarded by staff for good behaviour and the behaviour management policy is consistently applied throughout the school. Pupils know, and respond well to, the high expectations of them to behave well. The school has recently begun to monitor incidents of racist behaviour and keep records. On the basis of this evidence, most of the incidents take place in Year 7, which may indicate the need for pupils to re-adjust to the secondary setting and assimilate the values of the school. The academic remove system, whereby pupils are temporarily excluded from classrooms for inappropriate behaviour, is a very positive measure in ensuring that any incidences of anti-social behaviour, including racism and bullying, are dealt with decisively.
70. Attendance is good. It was over a percentage point higher than the national average during the last academic year. The school has excellent strategies for monitoring and improving attendance and has appointed a part-time member of staff to track absenteeism. In addition, the local authority's local welfare officer works in the school for two and a half days a week and liaison with her is excellent. Registers are marked electronically recording system, are accurate and neat and fully comply with legislation. The school positively promotes good attendance and behaviour by the awarding of small prizes, raffle tickets to obtain larger prizes, merit certificates and other awards. A particularly successful initiative by the school is the Bury Compact Pupils' Charter Scheme. This scheme runs for a period of two years and embraces attendance, punctuality, social code of behaviour, work, careers education and work experience. Pupils who successfully complete this course are well equipped to go on to further education or employment and the course is much valued by staff and pupils alike.
71. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development. Form tutors and year heads work extremely well

together and year heads who commence with Year 7 now stay with their group of pupils until they leave school at Year 11 for the next stage of education. This policy ensures that teachers know their pupils very well. The strengths of relationships between teachers and pupils, mentioned in the previous report, have been maintained.

72. Child protection procedures are unsatisfactory. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer but has not received up-to-date training, nor have the senior management team or year heads. Child protection is not included as a module in the induction procedures for newly qualified teachers. The school has a child protection policy, which is linked to the local authority procedures but this policy is brief and not known to all staff. A child protection exhibition is mounted by the school annually, but staff are not obliged to study it and there is no record of whether they have done so. Regular liaison does, however, take place between the school and the appropriate agencies regarding child protection matters.
73. The school has not had a recent audit of its health and safety procedures: some departments do not carry out regular COHS (Control of Hazardous Substances) inspections. In several of the boys' toilets hot water taps were not working, hand dryers were not working and there was no soap available for hand washing. During the inspection week a fire practice was observed: pupils and all personnel vacated the school safely and speedily and were accounted for before being re-admitted to the building.
74. The school has only one fully qualified first aider who is in possession of an up-to-date certificate. The remaining two first aiders have the one-day certificate appropriate to their departmental needs. This level of first aid provision is insufficient to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate level of medical attention at all times. Accidents are recorded appropriately. A local authority nurse visits the school regularly to offer confidential drop-in facilities for the pupils, and her work is much appreciated by them.
75. Weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress at the time of its last inspection in 1996 led to this aspect being judged a major concern; it remains a concern. The inspection report identified the need for the school to "introduce an effective whole-school assessment policy linked to National Curriculum requirements which can be used to inform lesson planning and the more accurate monitoring of attainment and progress". The school has had its current assessment policy since the beginning of the year. This is linked only partly to National Curriculum requirements and the outcomes of assessment are not yet been used systematically to modify teachers' planning or to monitor pupils' progress accurately.
76. The school collects and collates assessment information on each pupil including their results in National Curriculum tests, reading age tests and other nationally recognised tests. This is a good process because the information is given to all teachers which helps them to see the relative strengths of each pupil. However, the school and departments do not do enough analysis of assessment information to establish how well individual and groups of pupils perform; for example, the school does not look at how much progress higher, middle or lower attaining pupils make during their time in school in each subject. It also does not work out the relative progress made by pupils from

different ethnic heritage groups and of girls and boys. This information would be useful in showing where the school was most successful and where it might focus its energies to raise standards further.

77. Assessment is a real strength of the modern foreign languages department; pupils' progress is monitored well and the information is used effectively to improve teaching and learning. Assessment and progress monitoring are good in mathematics and music and satisfactory in English. In all other subjects there are weaknesses; for example, in geography the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are not accurate.
78. Testing is well used to identify pupils with special educational needs, with a number of tests used on entry and with good use made of re-testing to check progress. Review procedures are thorough, with regular reviews for all pupils at Stage 2 and above of the Code of Practice. These reviews appropriately involve staff, pupils, parents and the services of the local authority. Reviews of pupils with statements meet requirements. These more formal reviews are significantly enhanced by regular checks on progress, with the special educational needs co-ordinator meeting weekly with each year head and with support staff. Individual education plans contain clear targets, although some are too generalised to be of practical use in lesson planning and some contain numerical targets without a system for verifying whether these have been achieved.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

79. Parents have satisfactory views of the school. Inspectors agree with parents that: the quality of teaching is good; pupils are expected to work hard; pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility; teachers and managers are approachable; and that there are not enough computers to support pupils' learning. Homework, reports on pupils' progress and the school's links with parents are satisfactory although these were areas of concern for a significant minority of parents.
80. Only a small number of parents come into school to work; they are welcomed by the school when they volunteer. The school has a Parent Teacher Association, but very few parents are members of it. The association arranges social events and raises valuable funds to support educational initiatives. Parents subscribe to the home/school agreement, and the school diary supplied to pupils is made available to parents and their comments and contributions are monitored and welcomed by staff. Parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time if they wish to discuss their children's progress. They are contacted regularly by the school about matters of concern, and about pupils' attendance.
81. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator attends parents' evenings, parents receive copies of individual education plans and they are appropriately involved in reviews of pupils' progress.
82. The school arranges a parents' evening each year for the parents of pupils in Years 8 to 11 and three parents' evenings for pupils in Year 7: one meeting before they enter the school, one meeting after the first term and one meeting

after the first year. In Year 7 this is a very high level of contact which shows the school's commitment to the welfare of the pupils. Parents' evenings are sometimes held before reports are issued which means that parents do not have an opportunity to reflect on pupils' progress before meeting teachers.

83. Information provided by the school is generally satisfactory. The school has produced a professionally prepared brochure, which contains useful information for parents and meets all the statutory requirements. Regular newsletters are sent to parents giving information about activities within the school. Some of the school's documentation has been helpfully translated into Urdu.
84. Reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory. The format contains useful sections and is clearly laid out. Pupils' achievement grades are recorded as well as further information that helps parents compare their children's performance within the school. The reports do not indicate how well pupils achieve compared with national standards. Strengths and targets are indicated; these are sometimes identified well but in other cases they are too vague. There is inconsistency within departments as well as between departments.
85. The school has good transitional arrangements for new pupils. Prospective pupils and parents attend the school for a taster session and after selection, parents of new pupils are invited to come into the school to meet form tutors and heads of year to discuss any items of concern they may have.
86. The last inspection report stated that parents value consultation evenings but they are not generally well attended and that the school is unable to develop a sense of school community among parents; these comments remain valid.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

87. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher, governors and staff have been successful in prioritising and maintaining GCSE standards and a very orderly learning environment. Development planning and the monitoring of the quality of the school's work are weaknesses.
88. The mission statement and aims are mainly met. The headteacher has two key priorities: the maintenance of GCSE results and the maintenance of good order in the school. Pupils, whatever their levels of attainment, are encouraged to achieve academic success and to develop as responsible citizens. In most years, all pupils achieve at least one GCSE pass and a much higher proportion of pupils than average nationally achieve at least five A\*-G GCSE passes. A good illustration of the effectiveness of the school in promoting personal responsibility is that the pupils feel safe in leaving their possessions in classrooms which are generally left unlocked and available to the pupils throughout the day. The school provides a stimulating and caring learning environment in which pupils show a desire to achieve. Strong links with the community and other educational establishments enhance learning. Links with parents are satisfactory but procedures to measure whether pupils make optimum progress are not rigorous enough, nor is the school's planning to ensure that resources are used efficiently.

89. For many years the headteacher has analysed GCSE performance and discussed with departments and individual teachers whether the results were as high as they could be. This is a valuable process which has helped to focus attention on the need to make sure that pupils achieve the examination results of which they are capable; however, it does not go far enough in establishing why some teachers and departments are more or less effective than others. What is missing is a systematic process through which heads of department and senior managers analyse the effectiveness of each department's performance by comparing the achievements of individual pupils, and groups of pupils, alongside observations of how well they are taught. The lack of formal links between senior and middle managers prevents this from taking place effectively. During the last year the introduction of performance management has helped to improve the quality of the school's work in this area but it is very much at an early stage compared with most schools.
90. The senior management team fulfils traditional curriculum and pastoral roles. A great strength is the work that they do in ensuring that pupils behave well. This they do by being very visible around the school and by taking a firm line when pupils do not conform with the expectations of the positive discipline system. They also provide the last link in the pastoral chain which is effective in helping to prevent pupils from being excluded from school and in improving pupils' attendance.
91. Staff are consulted more about issues facing the school than they were at the time of the last inspection but they still do not have enough opportunity to influence decisions. This is largely because of the lack of formal structures linking the roles of senior and middle managers. Working relationships between layers of management lack cohesion.
92. The school benefits from governors who offer a wide range of skills in areas such as business and management; the committee structure enables the governing body to cover its work efficiently. They are well led and are guided by an appropriate commitment to help all pupils develop both academically and personally. Parents are strongly represented and they take a keen interest in the school's work. Governors do not have a strong enough role in developing long-term plans for the school and have not ensured that statutory requirements are fulfilled for: religious education at Key Stage 4; the use of information and communication technology to promote learning in mathematics, science, geography, art and Urdu; a daily act of collective worship; and some aspects of health and safety.
93. The development plan is not an adequate document to guide the school forward either in the short or long term. It contains a brief review of the previous year's plan but there is insufficient analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the action which is therefore needed. A number of aspects identified by the current inspection as being in need of attention do not figure highly in the plan.
94. Leadership and management are: very good in music and Urdu; good in English, mathematics, science and physical education; satisfactory in design and technology, modern foreign languages, geography, art and religious

education; and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology and history.

95. In music the department is successful in helping pupils to develop their creativity and understanding. The department is well organised, fulfils National Curriculum requirements and ensures that pupils enjoy and learn from a wide range of musical experiences in the classroom, during instrumental lessons and through extra-curricular music groups. Another well led subject is English where the head of department has developed a culture in which teachers expect high standards from the pupils and collaborate effectively as a team. The management of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory because there is little whole-school planning to ensure that pupils gain appropriate learning experiences through the use of computers in all subjects. In history, little information is gathered or analysed about the performance of pupils in the subject and therefore development planning is also weak.
96. Few heads of departments monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching well enough. This is particularly an issue in English, modern foreign languages, history, geography, art, physical education and religious education. While teaching is good in most subjects there are inconsistencies which are not tackled effectively. Also, opportunities are missed for effective teaching strategies to be shared.
97. Spending on administrative staff is low compared with other schools. The office staff ensure that the school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis, but the effect of the low spending is that they cannot perform many functions that would enhance the effectiveness of the management of the school. For example, all assessment data is entered into a computer software package by one of the deputy headteachers. This very time-consuming task reduces the time available for performing more appropriate management tasks. The low spending on administrative staff also adversely affects the extent to which management information is available. The school does not analyse pupils' progress in enough detail to show how well individuals and groups of pupils achieve. This limits the extent to which successful practice can be shared and action can be taken to tackle weaknesses. Accurate financial information is also not easily accessible.
98. The school was last inspected in April 1996. Since then it has made satisfactory progress. GCSE and National Curriculum test results have remained in line with national results and the quality of teaching has improved but not enough progress has been made in tackling some of the key issues identified in the 1996 report. Arrangements for assessing the pupils remain unsatisfactory despite work that has taken place in this area. Information and communication technology is now used well to enhance pupils' learning in some subjects such as English, but other subjects such as mathematics still do not make good use of it. The library remains underdeveloped as a resource to support pupils' independent learning. Teaching has improved, the proportion of very good or excellent lessons having risen substantially. Staff are consulted more about issues facing the school, but they still do not have enough opportunity to influence decisions. Cultural provision has improved to a satisfactory level but subjects, including religious education, still do not offer enough opportunity for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness.

99. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs takes account of the Code of Practice. There is a policy in place and a member of the governing body appropriately oversees the school's provision. Governors take an active interest in special educational needs, for example, in monitoring staffing levels. Governors report annually to parents although the report lacks detail on the implementation of the school's provision. There are informal links between senior staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator, and links with pastoral staff are very good, with weekly meetings held between the special educational needs co-ordinator and each year head. Links with academic staff lack formal structure. This impedes the efficiency with which pupils can be guided towards achieving their learning targets. The school's records of individual pupils are well organised and up-to-date. Links with outside agencies are very strong with, for example, the school hosting a termly multi-agency meeting to review pupils' needs and how they are being met; the school has been successful on a number of occasions in arguing the case for a statutory assessment to be undertaken. The school works closely with the authority's Pupil Learning Centre. Funding is well used to meet pupils' needs at different stages of the Code of Practice.
100. The school finances were last audited in 1999. Procedures were mostly good and only two items were highlighted for attention; governors have approved management action to deal with these issues. For three years the school has put into a contingency fund, an under-spend of about £30,000 a year. This has been appropriately targeted at improving the fabric of the building, much of which is in poor condition.
101. The annual spending plan does not have clear enough links to the school development plan. The starting point for each year's spending plan is to calculate the cost of maintaining the existing provision. In addition, governors' curriculum and buildings committees make requests for financial allocations to support their areas. This process has too little flexibility and fails to acknowledge that priorities may change. The school development plan has insufficient influence on the budgeting process. Financial and development planning is on a one-year basis, which is too short-term to be fully effective.
102. Some subjects, such as mathematics, science modern foreign languages, history, geography and art do not make enough use of the school's information and communication technology resources.
103. The governors' finance committee meets every term to appropriately monitor the progress of the budget. The bursar prepares budget reports but she does not attend meetings either of the senior management group or of the governors' finance committee, which limits her effectiveness. The school buys in the services of a budget manager from the local education authority. This person is not based in school and does not have a computer link to the school. This results in the budget manager and the bursar being unable to reconcile each other's actions other than by entering information manually from written reports. Particularly in the case of the bursar, this is an unsatisfactory situation which causes extra work; it is not cost-effective.
104. The school follows the code of practice laid down by the local education authority for ensuring that purchases represent value for money. However,

there is no clear understanding of how the school's financial model compares with those of other schools.

105. Within the school's context and the satisfactory achievement of the pupils, Derby High School is an effective school. In consideration of the average expenditure per pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money
106. There are sufficient qualified teachers deployed to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum except in religious education, where some non-specialist teachers carry out this responsibility. This has a detrimental effect on standards of attainment in the subject. In addition the school has insufficient administrative staff, resulting in senior teachers carrying out too many clerical tasks and the office staff being over-stretched. The headteacher has also recognised the need for increasing the level of support for pupils on the special educational needs register. This has been achieved through the appointment of additional support staff. The support for pupils with English as an additional language has increased since the last inspection and this has enhanced the learning opportunities of the pupils.
107. Arrangements for professional development are good and opportunities are provided for teachers to update their skills. Requests are made both in the context of the priorities in the school development plan as well as to meet the personal aspirations of individual members of staff. The member of the senior management team responsible for staff development is also on the local education authority steering group for professional development and this helps to ensure effective monitoring of the quality of the local in-service programme. In some instances the senior management identify specific needs in the school and advise teachers of opportunities to improve their teaching skills. In addition, while respecting the confidentiality of the performance management process, staff are invited to address their needs through the staff development process.
108. The quality of support and the induction of newly qualified teachers and those teachers new to the school are good. Detailed guidance is available on procedures and these are implemented effectively. Insufficient guidance is given to them about child protection issues.
109. The accommodation overall is unsatisfactory, and is hindering progress in a number of subjects. Some of the shortcomings identified in the last inspection report have been addressed including the refurbishment of: the changing rooms for physical education; two science laboratories; and one food technology room. The school has also been extensively repainted inside. In addition, major work has been carried out on the roof, which was leaking badly and affecting the internal paintwork. The school has made a bid to the local education authority for ramps.
110. The accommodation is unsatisfactory in music, physical education, drama, design and technology and modern foreign languages. In physical education, the lack of indoor space is restricting progress in the subject. In drama, there is a lack of suitable indoor space, and teachers have to use the hall when they can. As the hall is used as a thoroughfare, there are regular interruptions to lessons. In design and technology, the rooms are too small for the number of pupils in the teaching groups, and in modern foreign languages, the rooms are

not suitable, making access to resources difficult. In addition, the sound insulation is inadequate, and the noise of passing trams regularly disturbs lessons. In music, there are no practice rooms, and the acoustics are poor in the teaching rooms.

111. The grounds are spacious and well maintained, and pupils can play and socialise well outside the building, during their breaks. However, much of the paintwork on the exterior of the building is peeling, and there is a demountable room, used as an office, which is in very poor condition. The entrance hall is also used as a dining room; this is an unsatisfactory situation as it is cramped and creates an unwelcoming impression to visitors at lunchtime. The accommodation for office staff is poor. The main office is a cramped room with little storage space; working conditions within it are unsatisfactory and it is testament to the commitment of the office staff that the day-to-day running of the school is efficient.
112. The school has a satisfactory range of resources. Those in English are particularly well matched to the needs of older pupils, and those in music and religious education are good. While resources in modern foreign languages are generally good, there are not enough for the teaching of Urdu. More resources are needed for graphics in design and technology.
113. The ratio of computers to pupils is a little below the national average but a new suite of machines has recently been provided by the local education authority; these will be installed in time for the next academic year.
114. The library, as at the time of the last inspection, still has only limited computer resources and fewer books than in similar schools. It is not a good enough resource to enable pupils to develop appropriate independent learning skills. A significant number of old books have been removed, and new texts include some dual language books and multicultural fiction. Pupils' suggestions are taken into account when replenishing stocks and they use the library enthusiastically at break and lunchtimes. It is efficiently managed and run with the help of a qualified assistant librarian and an enthusiastic team of trained pupil librarians.
115. Most of the corridors and departments of the school are displayed with examples of pupils' work, photographs and records of achievement that celebrate success and support learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- 1) Raise achievement in design and technology in Years 7 to 9, non-GCSE religious education in Years 10 and 11 and of higher attaining pupils in science and modern foreign languages.

(Paragraphs: 2,4-14,34,37,41,47,57,92, 147-156,167-174,207-220,242-250)

- 2) Improve the assessment and progress monitoring of the pupils by:

- developing more accurate assessments of pupils' performance;
- using assessment information more effectively when planning work to meet the learning needs of all pupils;
- analysing the performance of individual pupils and groups of pupils to establish how effective the school and individual subjects are in raising pupils' levels of achievement.

(Paragraphs: 2,32,40,75-77,131,155,158,168,174,190)

- 3) Improve the timing and organisation of the school day to maximise the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

(Paragraphs: 2,46-57,142,167)

- 4) Ensure that the curriculum for religious education meets statutory requirements.

(Paragraphs: 2,47-48,92,242-250)

- 5) Improve aspects of the management of the school by:

- making the support and monitoring of teaching quality the key task of senior and middle managers (an area highlighted by the school's development plan);
- creating a plan for the development of the school over the next five years with indications of how proportions of the available finance are to be spent;
- increasing the hours worked by administrative staff so that teachers and managers have fewer administrative, clerical and day-to-day organisational tasks.

(Paragraphs: 2,87-115,132,166,182,193,195,220,241)

- 6) Improve the procedures for child protection and health and safety by:

- ensuring that the named person for child protection is up-to-date with current legislation;
- developing a system for ensuring that staff are updated at least annually on child protection issues;

- ensuring that staff new to the school have appropriate briefings on child protection issues and the school's procedures;
- ensuring that all staff know who is the named person for child protection;
- conducting a full health and safety audit;
- ensuring that safety checks are conducted in accordance with statutory guidelines.

(Paragraphs: 2,72-74)

- 7) Improve the accommodation for drama, music, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education and for administrative staff.

(Paragraphs: 109-111,135,171,216,233,241)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	69

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	30	37	29	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	931	
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	216	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	26	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	223	

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	216

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	44

### Attendance

Authorised absence	per cent
School data	7.3
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	per cent
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	88	97	187

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	57	62	56
	Girls	71	62	55
	Total	128	124	111
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	68 (77)	66 (65)	59 (59)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (37)	36 (39)	19 (21)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	61	60
	Girls	61	63	58
	Total	97	124	118
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	52 (77)	66 (71)	63 (64)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24	35 (41)	21 (24)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	76	82	158

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	37	76	76
	Girls	42	77	78
	Total	79	153	154
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	51 (50)	98 (99)	99 (100)
	National	47 (47)	91 (88)	96 (94)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38 (40)
	National	38 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	per cent success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	8	75 per cent
	National		

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	9
Indian	1
Pakistani	200
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	2
White	675
Any other minority ethnic group	37

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	4	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	4	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	34	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	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**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	56.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	316

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	86
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	
Key Stage 3	24.1
Key Stage 4	20.7

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2428267
Total expenditure	2393949
Expenditure per pupil	2577
Balance brought forward from previous year	58862
Balance carried forward to next year	93180

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	931
Number of questionnaires returned	170

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	46	6	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	49	48	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	45	5	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	54	12	2	3
The teaching is good.	38	56	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	45	18	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	49	5	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	32	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	24	49	15	4	7
The school is well led and managed.	33	52	4	3	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	54	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	44	11	2	19

All other issues raised by parents are covered in the main body of the report.

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

**ENGLISH**

123. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are in line with national averages. The achievement of pupils, whatever their levels of prior attainment, is good, as are the quality of teaching, learning and the leadership and management of the subject.
124. The department has made good progress since the last inspection with clear evidence of a unified approach to matching work to learning needs. The breadth of assignments now given to pupils ensures support and challenge for the whole range of attainment. The use of information and communication technology is well integrated into planning and raises standards by increasing pupils' confidence and independence. Homework tasks often emphasise research using information and communication technology. The library has benefited from updating since the last inspection, with the English team taking an active role in buying decisions. The library now provides a sound text resource for English supporting pupils in research and background reading.
125. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were average compared with national results in 2000; they were well above average in 1999 and 1997 and have been generally higher than results in mathematics and science over the past four years. Girls outperform boys among both Asian and European heritage populations although boys' results are better than girls' in relation to the results of boys and girls nationally. Pupils of Asian heritage enter the school with a wide range of skills in English, but generally below those of European heritage pupils. By the end of Year 9 the gap has narrowed significantly although pupils of European heritage still perform a little better, particularly in writing. In Years 7 and 8, pupils of all levels of attainment demonstrate the use of a technical vocabulary to describe language. They can use these terms confidently and accurately. In Year 9 pupils at all levels of attainment make confident oral responses to questioning about texts which are often complex and challenging. The English department's strong focus on literacy has a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve in reading and writing. By the end of Year 9 these are broadly average with almost all pupils able to read and write sufficiently well to enable them to take GCSE or GNVQ courses.
126. GCSE results were broadly average in both English and English literature in 2000 and 1999. The proportion of pupils gaining A\* or A grades in English was in line with the national average in 2000 and well above the proportion of pupils gaining these very high grades in mathematics and science. In 2000, pupils did relatively better in English than they did in their other subjects but relatively worse in English literature. Pupils of Asian heritage gained higher results than European heritage pupils in both 2000 and 1999. The policy of entering almost all the pupils for English GCSE is very effective in giving pupils the opportunity to achieve well in the subject and to leave school with a valuable qualification. In Years 10 and 11 pupils demonstrate accuracy in using and applying technical vocabulary. The good skills in speaking and listening which the majority of pupils have developed are not always matched by standards achieved in writing. The department has rightly identified the

need to focus on support for writing as a priority in order to continue to raise standards in this area.

127. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported in English and achieve well. Pupils who join the school with little knowledge of English progress rapidly and by the end of Year 11 almost every pupil achieves a grade at GCSE. Expectations are high and pupils' performance is tracked carefully. Written assignments are appropriately designed to consolidate language skills and pupils are given a good range of opportunities to gain confidence and fluency when speaking.
128. The organisation of teaching groups by pupils' levels of achievement (sets) in English has a positive impact on their achievement. The regular and detailed review of pupils' progress means that the department is able to move pupils between teaching groups to maximise opportunities to learn. The arrangement to move more boys into top sets in Year 10 and postpone decisions about the level of GCSE entry is one example of a positive response to the review process. Pupils of Asian heritage, particularly boys, achieve well and some pupils, who enter the school with a limited knowledge of English, achieve very well. The profile of sets shows that pupils of Asian heritage tend to move into higher sets as they get older, reflecting the good progress they make. Although review at individual pupil level is good, further analysis of achievement by groups of pupils, built on a detailed profile of attainment on entry, is needed. This will ensure that trends can be identified and the department can plan for improvement across all individual groups of pupils.
129. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching is a considerable strength of the department: all lessons observed were good or better. All teachers are appropriately qualified and have secure subject knowledge. Some employ a rich background knowledge to enhance their teaching. Expectations are uniformly high, resulting in a very good response from the pupils. Teachers use a well-judged blend of challenge and support which has a clear impact on raising standards; for example, in a lesson where pupils were grading each other's spoken presentations, the teacher effectively encouraged them to give an appropriate level of detail to justify their assessments. The good pace established in lessons grows out of detailed planning which is carefully matched to the learning needs of the pupils; for example, a grid designed for top set Year 10 pupils to record information about the background to an African poem was appropriately structured to encourage pupils to make independent choices. The same grid was used for pupils in lower sets but with the addition of more headings to provide the extra support that these pupils needed.
130. Assessment is well used to help teachers plan future work. Weaknesses noted in persuasive writing in Year 9 have led to a greater emphasis on thorough research and more focus on the skills needed to organise this style of writing. Planning refers in detail to coverage of the National Curriculum, ensuring that all elements are covered. The department has integrated work on media and moving image into schemes of work well and with considerable enthusiasm. Teachers use a variety of approaches in lessons, which is appreciated by pupils. The introduction of individual whiteboards in a Year 7 lesson ensured that every pupil was involved with the activity and the teacher could immediately identify any difficulties.

131. The quality and consistency of marking within the department are not of a uniformly high standard. When their work is not consistently linked to National Curriculum levels, pupils do not have a clear enough idea of their attainment measured against national expectations. At its best marking offers both encouragement and targets for improvement. At times, however, marking provides pupils with too little support in moving forward.
132. The leadership and management of the English department are good. Strong leadership has led to high expectations and a unified approach from all members of the team. The department is outward looking, recognising that English has a central role in raising standards across the school. Monitoring of teaching performance only takes place informally and no protected time is available to enable this important activity to be built into the department's work. The lack of this scrutiny diminishes the opportunity for the team to evaluate the impact of its work systematically and for individual teachers to benefit from an important aspect of professional development.
133. A notable feature of the work of the department is the emphasis on pupils working together in a collaborative and co-operative way. Teachers consistently move pupils into different working groups, often ensuring a gender and ethnic mix. Pupils respond with maturity and enthusiasm to these opportunities and group work is never less than positive. Teachers stress the need for pupils to think how to share resources and this makes a significant contribution to the development of their social skills. The ethos of the department is one which promotes high expectations in every area.
134. The school made a positive start to developing literacy across the curriculum well in advance of national developments. A literacy audit was carried out and subject areas were identified for pilot work. The early impact of this work has not been sustained across the school and, although practice is very good in some areas, this is not consistent and literacy developments are not always embedded in planning and teaching. There is an intense focus on literacy in English which informs teaching at all levels. In geography, pupils use subject-specific vocabulary very well and there are good word banks in classrooms. Science was an area identified to trial key words following the audit and there is some evidence in lessons of an emphasis on technical vocabulary but this is not a consistent feature of planning and teaching. Displays around the school are generally of a good standard with a rich literacy content and all classrooms feature subject-specific word banks. Overall there is evidence of good practice in literacy at individual, or in some cases departmental, level but this has not yet been drawn together into a robust whole-school approach which ensures that pupils receive a high level of literacy support in every lesson.

## **DRAMA**

135. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C GCSE grades in drama was slightly above average in 2000 and below average in 1999. Good teaching for pupils in every year is equipping pupils with a range of skills that support their learning across the curriculum. They are able to use drama conventions successfully and are confident in developing ideas which they refine well. Drama is rightly regarded as a strength of the school, providing many pupils with a rich experience both in lessons and through extra-curricular activities. Teaching is a strength: all the lessons observed were good or better. Planning is detailed

and ensures that from Year 7 onwards, all pupils are supported in exploring a range of dramatic techniques which build confidence and skill. Pupils respond well to these opportunities and demonstrate maturity and thoughtfulness in their work. The lack of suitable accommodation for drama has a significant impact on the continuing development of the subject. The use of the hall provides a barely adequate space as it is used as a thoroughfare throughout lessons. It is a tribute to both teachers and pupils that levels of concentration are so good given the consistent levels of disruption. The other space used for drama presents health and safety issues as the layout makes it impossible for the teacher to see all the pupils when they are engaged in group work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

136. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are above average compared with national standards. All pupils achieve well largely due to the good quality of teaching and learning. Leadership and management are also good.
137. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. Standards are higher, teaching is better and the assessment of pupils' work has improved. There is high morale within the department and potential to improve still further.
138. Results in the tests for 14-year-olds matched the national average in 2000 and were well above the results obtained in similar schools. This level of attainment has been maintained over the last five years. Boys' results are slightly better than girls'. Results in mathematics are similar to those in English and better than in science. Evidence gathered during this inspection shows standards to be above the national average among pupils currently in Year 9. As these pupils entered the school with attainment close to the national average, this represents good achievement by all pupils. Pupils are successfully tackling difficult work in all branches of the subject, but their improvement in number work is particularly marked. Recent changes in teaching methods, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, encourage pupils to work things out for themselves and give them a lot of mental arithmetic practice. The improved numeracy skills are enabling pupils to learn other parts of mathematics, such as algebra and geometry, much more effectively. This was evident, for example, in a lesson on simultaneous equations where Year 8 pupils were able to predict that the graph drawn for an expression including a "squared" value would form a curve.
139. Results in the GCSE examinations taken in 2000 were above the national average and have been so for the last three years. A higher proportion than nationally, gained the higher grades (A\* to C) and a higher proportion achieved pass grades (A\* to G). At this school 98 per cent of pupils obtained a GCSE in mathematics compared to only 90 per cent nationally. When results are compared to similar schools and to those of pupils who were of a similar standard at age 14, they are very high. In contrast to the national picture, boys do slightly better than girls. Over the last three years, there has been no significant difference in the results gained by pupils of different ethnic origins. Standards observed during the inspection fully match the recent results. Pupils across the span of attainment are working at appropriate levels. The records of test results for the present Year 11 (including the already published results of

the group who took GCSE last year) indicate a similarly high pass rate and a slightly larger proportion of higher grades. The highest attaining pupils in Year 10 have already taken the GCSE examination and are making a start on Advanced Level work. The lowest attaining pupils, including several pupils who have special educational needs, can all use Pi to calculate the circumference of a circle and show a level of understanding that should guarantee a GCSE grade next summer. At all levels of attainment, pupils' standards in algebra are a particular strength. The improvement evident in the attainment of all pupils across Years 10 to 11 shows good achievement.

140. Teaching is good throughout all years. Of the lessons observed, none were less than satisfactory and 90 per cent were good or better. A major feature of teaching is the very high expectations that teachers have of what their pupils might achieve. By carefully matching the difficulty of work to the pupils' strengths and giving constant encouragement, they are able to instil confidence, which leads to pupils themselves sharing the high expectations. Low attaining Year 7 pupils, who have difficulty in retaining knowledge, are able to calculate perimeters and areas of irregular shapes, are starting to understand properly the difference between these two measures and are thoroughly enjoying their lessons. Detailed planning, which varies both the degree of difficulty and the sorts of learning opportunity, underpins most lessons. Where pupils have difficulty in grasping abstract concepts, such as the perpendicular height of a triangle, teachers are skilled at finding practical illustrations that help the pupils to understand. Many pupils are mastering multiplication tables for the first time because of the imaginative and enjoyable "games" that are used as warm up activities at the beginnings of lessons. A particular skill, evident in much of the teaching, is the ability to engage all the pupils in the class. Small "whiteboards" and digit cards enable all pupils to answer questions simultaneously and to find out immediately if they are right or wrong. This ensures that all pupils are actively involved and having to think. It also allows teachers to spot immediately any pupils who are not following the work. Most lessons end with a summary of the main points covered and a check on pupils' learning. This motivates the pupils because it shows them the progress they have made. The wide range of learning opportunities, which are often very stimulating and almost always successful, is producing pupils who have very good attitudes towards the subject. They value their studies, work hard and behave very well.
141. The attention to literacy within the mathematics curriculum varies. Some teachers are very skilled and use the latest techniques well to help pupils master the technical terminology of the subject. Others lack awareness of this important facet of teaching and are in need of training. The use of information and communication technology to enrich the learning of mathematics is unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to the limited access to computers which means that, despite the teachers' expertise and enthusiasm, they are unable to give pupils a full range of opportunities. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is real insight into the problems arising from behavioural or learning difficulties, and lessons are carefully designed to help such pupils learn effectively.
142. Two factors are limiting progress. The present timetable arrangements, which consist of some lessons that are very short and others that are unusually long (over 70 minutes), do not allow for optimal use of the time available. In

particular, it is difficult for pupils to sustain maximum effort throughout the longer lessons. The school's lack of formal procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning is limiting the professional development of staff in areas such as the National Numeracy Strategy and the teaching of literacy skills.

143. The staffing structure of the mathematics department is good. A mix of long-serving teachers and recent appointments is providing stability and the refreshing and stimulating effect of new ideas and enthusiasms. The modification to the Year 7 to 9 curriculum, which is largely the responsibility of the second in department, is already resulting in improved standards. There are also sufficient staff to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties are always placed in small groups and taught by teachers who are gifted at meeting their problems. Similarly, the most mathematically gifted pupils are taught in small groups from Year 9 onwards. This enables them to make rapid progress, take the GCSE examination in Year 10 and spend Year 11 on the foundations of Advanced Level work.
144. Overall leadership and management of the department are good. The constructive relationship between the head of and second in department is resulting in significant improvements. For example, the development of the curriculum across Years 7 to 9 includes a radical improvement in the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. The department now has comprehensive data based on National Curriculum levels. This is being well used to track pupil progress and is becoming the basis for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching.
145. Most pupils come to the school with good enough skills to cope with mathematical demands of most subjects, although the standards in the numerical elements of science are a relative weakness. Pupils who struggle with number work are given particular attention in the small teaching groups in mathematics lessons. This support is becoming increasingly effective as the techniques developed in the National Numeracy Strategy are fully employed.
146. The responsibility of all teachers to consider and contribute to this aspect of education is yet to be tackled. There has been no recent audit to identify the numeracy skills needed by pupils to cope with the demands of the curriculum. The school cannot therefore co-ordinate the approach to common mathematical techniques that are used in different subjects; for example, graphs in science and geography, measurement in design and technology, and the use of co-ordinates and enlargement in art. The school has not yet identified ways in which all teachers can contribute actively to improving pupils' skills in this vital area of education.

## **SCIENCE**

147. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average in comparison with national standards. At the end of Year 11 they are below average. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory; it is good for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. While teaching is good overall, work is not well enough matched to the learning needs of all the pupils particularly higher attaining pupils. Leadership and management are good.

148. Pupils make satisfactory progress during their years in the school and science education has improved since the last inspection in 1996. Insufficient use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning remains an issue.
149. Science education at Derby High School has many strengths. In both 1999 and 2000 the proportions of Year 9 pupils reaching the target Level 5 in the teacher assessments and National Curriculum tests were broadly in line with national averages. Boys' and girls' results in both years were similarly close to the national picture. The proportions of pupils gaining the higher Level 6 were lower than the national averages in 1999 and 2000.
150. The spread of GCSE results compared with the results of pupils nationally is similar to the pattern observed in the National Curriculum tests at age 14. In 1998 and 2000 49 per cent and 52 per cent of the year groups reached Grade C or better compared to the national figures of 48 per cent and 49 per cent; however, only 5 per cent and 4 per cent reached or passed Grade A, compared to 10 per cent and 12 per cent nationally. In 1999 all the figures were almost identical to the national ones, while in all three years, pupils of Asian heritage achieved higher grades than their peers.
151. The department is very successful in helping those who find science learning hard (including pupils with special educational needs and/or those with difficulties with working in English) – but it is less successful in helping higher attaining pupils to achieve as well as they could. The department is particularly strong in working on the nature and processes of science – here, even pupils with low levels of attainment have some good theories and some idea of how to test these theories fairly. Higher attaining pupils are good, but not as good as they could be, at making up, discussing, and testing explanations. This is largely because they are not given enough opportunities to explore and test their understanding of the things that they have learned.
152. The great majority of pupils enjoy the subject and attend well in lessons; the pupils who are particularly good at science enjoy it too, but rarely claim it as their favourite subject or as a subject they love.
153. Most lessons have more strengths than weaknesses and the overall quality of science teaching is good. Particularly widespread strengths include:
- the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and how to teach it (in particular, as already noted, the nature and processes of science);
  - the teachers' planning of lessons to ensure these move fast and offer a good variety of activities and resources;
  - the general success of the teaching methods used (including role play and presentations by the children);
  - good management of often large classes in often difficult situations (for instance during tricky demonstrations and practical work).
154. In the best lessons teachers plan work to meet clear learning targets for the different groups of pupils which they monitor through the effective assessment of each pupil. In these lessons the resources often include information and communication technology and/or the thoughtful use of audio-visual equipment such as overhead projection, video and digital photography.

155. Not all teachers use such techniques routinely. Assessment procedures not rigorous enough or consistently applied, homework is not used to develop pupils' learning as well as it might be and there is too much emphasis on learning scientific facts and skills rather than the development of pupils' scientific understanding, especially by higher attaining pupils.
156. The teachers form a good team of caring and hard-working people; management and administration are good; teaching meets National Curriculum requirements except for the use of information and communication technology; there are good systems for developing teaching schemes (though the schemes need to have clearer objectives and indications about how information and communication technology and ongoing assessment will contribute to improving pupils' learning). There is unusually good support for pupils with special educational needs and, at the end of their time in the school, almost all pupils enter for and pass the double science GCSE examination.

### **ART AND DESIGN**

157. Standards of work are below average at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. Achievement in all years is satisfactory, considering the pupils' below average attainment in art on entry to the school at the start of Year 7. This is because the teaching is satisfactory overall, with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Leadership and management of the subject are also satisfactory.
158. Since the last inspection, improvement has been unsatisfactory. The department has increased its emphasis on the study of the art of other cultures, and there is more artwork on display around the school. As a result, the subject now makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. However, neither standards nor the quality of teaching and learning have improved. The monitoring of pupils' performance in the subject is unsatisfactory, and assessment is not linked to the standards of the National Curriculum. This means that pupils do not know how well they are doing, and the subject reports do not give parents a clear picture of the progress that pupils are making.
159. In Years 7 to 9, pupils can produce work in two and three dimensions, by drawing, painting, printing and modelling in clay, for example. Their oil pastel work is vigorous; for example, drawings influenced by the work of Hundertwasser show that pupils are competent in their use of the material. They also produce interesting clay pieces in low relief, which are brightly coloured and lively in appearance. However, pupils' painting and drawing skills are below average, because their drawing is laboured and lacks confidence, and their use of paint is crude. In addition, there is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' work.
160. Results in the 2000 GCSE examination, from the small number of pupils taking the course, were well below average, with less than half of all pupils gaining grades at A\*– C against a national average of two-thirds. Results in previous years show that standards vary from year to year, from above average to well below average. This reflects the variations in prior attainment by those pupils who choose to do the examination course. A scrutiny of current work in the school shows standards to be below average.

161. Achievement in all years is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their skills in handling materials and processes, and in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. This includes pupils with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils, and those pupils from minority ethnic groups.
162. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In the best lessons, there are good demonstrations, which produce high levels of interest and engagement. For example, in a lesson on making clay heads, the teacher swiftly modelled a head in front of the pupils, and showed them how to produce textured hair by forcing clay through a sieve. This produced very good levels of interest, and very good learning was the result. Lessons are also well prepared and planned, and this means that pupils can get down to work quickly and learn at a good pace. However, weaknesses are seen when work is very directed by the teacher, with little opportunity for pupils to explore and experiment with the materials. In addition, too much of the work is completed on a small scale. These factors limit learning to a satisfactory level overall.
163. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Strengths of the teaching include good coaching on an individual basis, and good teacher-pupil relationships. These strengths produce good attitudes and good learning in the best lessons, because pupils are given good advice and are attentive. Weaknesses are seen when materials are used unimaginatively, and pupils are not excited or inspired by the work they are given to do. In addition, there is not enough emphasis on observation work, so that pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills and confidence in recording from life.
164. In Years 10 and 11, pupils use a variety of materials and processes in their work, and high levels of engagement are seen as a result of the good coaching which they receive. High attainers show good research skills when developing their projects, and some interesting and thorough study sheets can be seen as a result. Pupils' composition work is strong, and they produce interesting paintings based on landscape ideas. Their drawing and painting, however, lack confidence, and their use of line is insensitive.
165. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, because of the good individual coaching and the good planning and preparation of lessons. This produces good levels of application in their work.
166. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Regular meetings are held, and the subject development plan recognises appropriate areas for attention. The monitoring of teaching and learning, however, is unsatisfactory, and not enough has been done to raise the quality of this important area of the work of the department.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

167. Standards are below average compared with national standards at the end of Years 9 and 11. The achievement of the pupils is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are good and

leadership and management satisfactory. Lessons are too short which means that pupils cannot produce high quality work in the time available.

168. Standards at the last inspection were average and pupils were insufficiently challenged. At this inspection standards are below average, despite good teaching, because of the time available for lessons and curriculum planning issues. The last inspection stated that the department should “harness the common thread that unites aspects of the subject”; this still needs to be done. The last inspection identified the issue of assessment, particularly in Years 7 to 9. The department is currently trialling a new assessment system. This is a positive development but arrangements are over-complex. Consideration should be given to the administrative requirements of this system and how it is likely to inform planning for future learning.
169. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below average compared with those achieved by pupils nationally. Schemes of work are insufficiently co-ordinated to provide ensure that pupils’ designing and making skills develop progressively through the different aspects of the subject during Years 7, 8 and 9. The challenge of the work does not increase sufficiently and this limits the standards that the pupils are able to achieve. Teacher assessments carried out at the end of Year 9 indicate very low standards compared with teacher assessment nationally. While standards are low they are not as low as that indicated by the teacher assessments. Procedures for assessment are a weakness of the department.
170. The school enters pupils for full and short GCSE courses. Over the past three years results have remained below the national average overall but have varied across the separate elements of food, graphics and resistant materials. Food has shown an improvement each year and those pupils following a short course achieved results in the past two years which match the national average. Graphics results matched the national average in 1998 but results in 1999 were very low, especially in the short course. Results in 2000, when no short course was offered, improved significantly. However, despite this improvement results are still low. Results in resistant materials were in line with the national average in 1999 but fell significantly below the national average in 2000. While girls achieve grades much higher A\*-C grades than boys, the proportion of pass grades is higher among boys.
171. The teaching within all design and technology disciplines is good. This is a strength of the department, which ensures that, despite a number of unsatisfactory factors, pupils are able to achieve as well as they do. For example, pupils in a Year 9 food lesson were split into two groups for safety reasons. The length of the lessons and the physical size of the room in relation to the number of pupils in the group were both factors which worked against the teacher. In order to achieve the lesson outcomes the teaching had to be conducted at a rapid pace. Ingredients had to be prepared and ready for the oven within a time scale inappropriate to effective teaching. This was dictated by the cooking time required in order for the products to be ready before the end of the lesson. Despite the best efforts of those cooking and the teacher, this was not achieved. While this activity was taking place, the teacher also had to support the learning of those not cooking. This combination of inadequate time, and large groups within a small room, compounded by poor resources, also adversely affects standards in Year 10 GCSE graphics. A

group of 26 are timetabled in a standard classroom with poor facilities inappropriate to the teaching of a GCSE course. Despite all the problems, this area of design and technology attracts most pupils on to the course.

172. Pupils learn at a satisfactory level in Years 7 to 9 and they learn well in Years 10 and 11. Learning is good in Year 7. In a resistant materials lesson in Year 7, pupils were taught about mechanisms. The teachers then provided part-constructed units which the pupils had to assemble correctly. This assembly required pupils to use their mathematical skill to measure hole centres for the fitting of dowel rods. The measurement and drilling had to be accurate for the finished mechanism to function correctly and pupils in two groups that were observed succeeded in achieving this objective. Discussion with these pupils revealed that they fully understood what they had to do and were confident in using the tools that they needed. Similarly two Year 7 groups that were seen baking also demonstrated a secure range of skills, knowledge and understanding about their ingredients and what they needed to do to complete the task successfully. Curriculum planning weaknesses through Years 7 to 9 mean that this high level of skill development is not built on well enough.
173. Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons are key factors in enabling them to achieve as well as they do. This was clearly evident in food technology lessons when pupils, without any prompting, prepared work areas, taking responsibility for hygiene before and at the end of lessons. They presented the utensils used for inspection by the teacher, having first completed washing up and the cleaning of the work area in readiness for the next lesson.
174. The management of the department is satisfactory and provides for a cohesive team. However, the key issues which must be addressed to raise standards further are improving the quality of assessment and the quality of curriculum planning for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Other aspects which have a detrimental effect on standards are the organisation of the timetable, the length of lessons and the size of teaching groups in relation to the size of rooms.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

175. At the end of Years 9 and 11 standards are average in relation to national standards. Pupils' achievements are good mainly because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive and their behaviour is good. These factors result in the good quality of learning in geography. Leadership and management are good.
176. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory progress. The department makes more use of information and communication technology and ensures that all pupils have access to equipment that extends their work. However, this is still at an early stage and there needs to be a greater planned use of computers, for example, for data logging in weather studies or the use of fax and email to make contact with schools in other countries. A major weakness in the curriculum is the very limited use of fieldwork in Years 7 to 9. This has a negative impact on learning. The late introduction of fieldwork affects all pupils, but it particularly limits the progress of higher attaining pupils.

177. When pupils arrive in Year 7 they have had a very mixed experience of geography. The good teaching in Years 7 to 9 enables pupils to make good progress to achieve average results at the end of Year 9. In 2000, 51 per cent of pupils attained grades A\* to C at GCSE compared to the national average of 52 per cent. Almost all pupils achieve a GCSE grade and the department is successful with low attaining pupils. However, the proportion of pupils achieving high GCSE grades is well below average. The girls' results were higher than the boys' but the difference was very similar to the national pattern. The trend in grades A\* to C over the last three years has been upwards. The attainments of pupils taking GCSE in 2000 were slightly below average when they started the course in Year 10 and therefore their achievement was good. This is because of good teaching that prepares pupils well for the demands of the GCSE course.
178. By the age of 14 pupils have a good grasp of basic geographical skills and the higher attaining pupils are confident when using grid references and compass directions. The lower attaining pupils make good progress but they are less sure about basic map skills. The majority of pupils can locate and name many of the main features on world maps and they can use photographic evidence to make sensible geographical comments. A group of higher attaining girls recognised many of the urban features on a photograph of a market town and were able to use appropriate vocabulary such as CBD (Central Business District). The majority of pupils are confident in descriptive work but find it difficult to deal with reasons based on evidence. This is improving and the involvement of pupils in thinking about their work is having a very positive effect. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic about their work and very appreciative of their teachers.
179. Teachers are good geographers and demonstrate their own enthusiasm. This helps pupils to make good progress and has a good impact on their learning. There are very good tests and these are marked in a professional way, although sometimes marking does not provide enough information to pupils about how they might improve their work. Although National Curriculum levels are given for some pieces of work, the department does not measure pupils against National Curriculum levels in formal assessments. This is one of the reasons why some over-optimistic grades are awarded to pupils at the end of Year 9. While teachers do modify some material for pupils with individual learning needs, they rely too much on the setting arrangements to determine their planning needs. There are good opportunities for oral work but the use of writing frames for whole classes limits the higher attaining pupils from developing and exploring ideas in their own way. Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory help and can participate in many of the lessons, especially the oral work. However, there is too little in-class support.
180. By the age of 16, the majority of pupils can carry out geographical enquiries with guidance from teachers. Standards in this area of the subject are broadly average; they are not higher because insufficient time is given to such activities in earlier years. The current Year 10 pupils are benefiting from changes in the teaching that enables them to develop better skills. They are improving their ability to present and interpret data. The Year 10 lessons on how to present data and examining the difference between 'describe' and 'explain' were good. However, the reluctance of many pupils to present reasons and explanations limits their ability to achieve the highest GCSE

grades. One Year 10 pupil provided a detailed description of Edenfield, based on an examination of a range of data, but did not reach any conclusion or explanation that the settlement is a commuter village. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop the higher-level skills or develop their own questions and lines of research. Teaching is good overall and interests the great majority of pupils.

181. The pupils make good progress throughout the school. They learn the factual material and their books contain evidence of detailed attention to each topic. There is some attention to the skills needed in geography but this is not as high a priority in teachers' planning as it could be. The long-term planning refers only to the themes and topics and not to the other aspects of the National Curriculum.
182. The management of the department is satisfactory. A well-experienced head of department ensures that teachers work well together in a supportive atmosphere. The development plan does not give sufficient priority to strategies designed to raise standards, especially of higher attaining pupils. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not yet rigorous or formalised, although teachers are reflective and professional.

## **HISTORY**

183. During the period of the inspection the head of history was absent and a further member of the department absent for half of the time. Judgements are based on evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, assessments including examination results and a review of documentation.
184. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are average in relation to national standards. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory as are teaching and learning. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
185. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection although GCSE results were lower in 2000. Teaching is less strong and not enough action has taken place to tackle the issues raised by the 1996 inspection.
186. In Year 7 pupils are introduced to their study of history through a 'What is History?' topic in which they learn the conventions of chronology in history and that the study of the past is based on sources. They know about the settlers that have come to Britain since 1066 and understand that Britain is made up of people from different cultures. Year 8 pupils can recall some of the principal causes of the English Civil War and the average and higher attaining pupils can arrange these in order of importance and explain how they are inter-related. Higher and average attaining pupils understand that historical sources can be biased and can identify particular features in documents that indicate a particular viewpoint, for example, in a painter's portrayal of the execution of Charles I. They can infer from historical evidence prevailing attitudes and beliefs, for example, in the metal-protected hat of Charles' judge and hence the unpopularity of the trial and execution. In Year 9, higher and average attaining pupils can recall knowledge from topics covered at the beginning of the school year, for example, in work on the Industrial Revolution. They can explain the significance of this major historical event and how it impacted upon

the economy and society of Britain. Lower attaining pupils' knowledge about the past is limited and does not discriminate between the important and the insignificant. Their appreciation that events have happened in a particular sequence is poor and they have little understanding of how to prioritise causes and to interpret sources. Teaching methods are least effective with lower attaining pupils as they do not engage or sustain their interest well enough.

187. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C GCSE grades in 2000 was just below the national average (51.1 per cent school compared to 57.5 per cent nationally). This performance, however, represents a decline in standards from recent years when results were in line with or exceeded national averages. In particular, pupils did less well in attaining A\* or A grades. All pupils who were entered for GCSE attained a pass grade but the performance of the same pupils in other subjects was significantly better. The average point score for pupils in history was 4.3 compared with the same pupils' average of 5.6 in other subjects. Boys did marginally better than girls. The department does not choose to take the coursework option at GCSE and combined with some weaknesses in teaching, this accounts for the deterioration in performance.
188. By the age of 16, pupils have a good knowledge of the topics they have studied but have difficulty in coping with the quantity of material to be covered. They can discriminate between important factors and the less important. They provide reasoned explanations of why events happened and can ask focused historical questions about the areas of history they are studying, for example, in relation to the effects of the consumer boom during the 1920s in America. The standard of essay work is good and demonstrates the ability of pupils to put together extended and well-structured written responses. Nevertheless, Year 10 pupils have some difficulty in constructing essays and explained that they had had little experience of writing discursive essays in history before Year 10.
189. The behaviour of most pupils is good. Higher and average attaining pupils are polite and attentive and respond well to the demands of the teachers. Lower attaining pupils, however, often indulge in low-level distracting chatter when they become bored with over-long teacher explanations, lack of variety, and tasks which take a long time to complete. Presentation in most pupils' books is good. Pupils display detailed knowledge of topics in their written work and there is a good balance between recording information and the development of pupils' skills in the analysis of source material. Little use is made of computers to enhance pupils' learning, for example, in the analysis of data. The use of some literacy strategies such as writing frames enhances the development of pupils' literacy skills.
190. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils' written work is scrupulously marked and written commentary by teachers provides good feedback for pupils on their performance. The department uses a graded system for marking work, which is understood by the pupils, but learning objectives are not clearly conveyed to pupils. They are also compiling an assessment folder of individual Year 7 pupils' work, which will track progress through the school. However, while this information gives pupils a general indication of performance, it does not indicate their individual strengths, nor the specific areas to target for improvement. Moreover, the department does not

record levels of performance in relation to the National Curriculum. This generalised nature of assessment is reflected in reporting to parents. Assessment, therefore, has improved only partially since the last inspection.

191. Teachers introduce a limited variety of alternative methods of learning such as role play and video material. However, most lessons comprise teacher explanation followed by a task, a method which pupils do not find interesting. In lessons, which are 70 minutes long, pupils start to lose concentration. Some average attaining pupils slip into passivity, whilst lower attaining pupils look for distractions. Questions are usually aimed at asking pupils to recall information rather than at extending their understanding. Furthermore, pupils are not given enough encouragement to find out things for themselves or develop their understanding through discussion. The department does not organise outside visits to enrich the history curriculum and this represents no improvement since the last inspection.
192. Pupils with special educational needs are known to the teachers; they receive a simplified version of the mainstream teaching. In the main, activities are matched to their capacities but the overall organisation of such lessons does not take into account pupils' low levels of concentration.
193. There is a good, detailed scheme of work, which provides sound guidance for teachers of the subject and the handbook also provides sound advice on assessment, record keeping and producing work for differing abilities of pupils. Self-evaluation of the department, however, is limited and there is little rigour in the analysis of standards by different groups of pupils. The development plan does not itemise the issues, which confront it nor an action plan to address them. This represents no improvement since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

194. During the inspection only limited opportunities were available to observe pupils using information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Lesson observations took place in Years 7 and 9 and a range of work covering Years 7 to 9 was examined. Similarly pupils were observed following a GCSE course in information technology in Year 10 and examples of coursework carried out by Year 11 were also examined. Account is also taken of departmental documentation, discussions with staff and pupils, and the findings of the inspectors responsible for subject areas and the scrutiny of pupils' work from across the whole curriculum.
195. Standards are average compared with national standards by the end of Years 9 and 11. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory as are teaching and learning. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because the development of pupils' ICT skills is not co-ordinated effectively throughout the school. The school complies with statutory requirements in ensuring that all pupils in Years 7 to 11 have access to the ICT curriculum.
196. Since the last inspection standards have remained similar, as has the quality of teaching. The delays and failures in the use of "older" equipment have been greatly reduced since the introduction of new equipment. The issue of multiple stand-alone machines, which prevent pupils and teachers from being able to

work together through the equipment, has been partially solved and will be fully solved next year. The last inspection report indicated that there was limited use of ICT in science. This is still the case and is also true of mathematics and art. The application of ICT across the curriculum is still not uniform and its use is uneven

197. Although pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have a planned lesson of information technology each week, work does not always challenge or match their capabilities; for example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils were following prepared worksheets which provided information on simple word processing at a level well below the expected attainment of Year 9 pupils. When work was presented at an appropriate and challenging level, good learning took place. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils were learning about databases and, as a result of good teaching, they quickly understood how cells and fields work. They understood the value of a key field and the importance of planning the layout of data depending upon the information required.
198. A high proportion of pupils have the opportunity to follow either a full or short GCSE course of study, and all pupils have a planned ICT lesson each week in Years 10 and 11. Examination results were low in 1998 and 1999 and, while still below for those pupils following a full course in 2000, there was an improvement over the previous two years. The proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades in the short course in 2000 was in line with the national average.
199. Girls achieved far higher GCSE results than boys in 2000, with 58 per cent gaining an A\* to C grade against a national average of 60 per cent. Boys' results were very low, with only 32 per cent achieving A\* to C grades against a national average of 51 per cent. A similar proportion of girls and boys achieved pass grades. The work of current Year 11 pupils suggests that standards are now in line with national standards.
200. In discussion, pupils in Year 10 considered they were good at using ICT and that the school was "big on IT", but there was little evidence of this in classrooms or in the booking of ICT rooms. The school uses ICT to support pupils' decision-making regarding their future careers with programs available on the school network system.
201. Year 10 lessons provided evidence of good learning as a result of good teaching. The focus provided by a teacher ensured that the whole group concentrated throughout the lesson. Good planning identified the needs of individual pupils and ensured the provision of clear guidance and support. Through Years 7 to 11 teaching overall is satisfactory. In a minority of lessons, planning is unsatisfactory, pupils losing interest when they are not given appropriately challenging tasks.
202. Specialist computer rooms are underused. A survey shows that since September 2000, while the English department made good use of the facilities, the science and mathematics departments did not. The additional availability of computer rooms due to Year 11 having left the school was not taken up.
203. There is good use of ICT in music through in Years 7 to 11. Most pupils are composing music and recording onto mini-disc. The computer is used extensively for composition work in Years 10 and 11 through MIDI links and to

present scores of multi-tracked compositions. A Year 10 group in English used ICT to research background information on their topic. They demonstrated independent use of ICT in selecting and presenting information.

204. The training of teachers under the New Opportunities Fund has been problematic because the initial training provider was unable to fulfil the contract and a subsequent provider was unsatisfactory. The school has now entered into a new contract, but the start of this has been deferred until September 2001. All staff will take up this training apart from those on the initial training course and newly qualified teachers who received ICT training as a part of their course. This delay in training has had an adverse impact on the development of learning through the use of ICT across the curriculum.
205. Pupils clearly enjoy using information and communication technology and, when teachers provide rigour and challenge in the tasks that they set, the pupils respond well. During lessons the attitude and behaviour of pupils are in the main very good and it is clear that they bring to their lessons, individual skills and knowledge about ICT learned out of school. Pupils with special educational needs receive positive support through a program called "Successmaker". This has a positive effect upon furthering their achievement and progress.
206. The school has improved the provision of resources and has plans to further increase the number of computers. However, the current management of ICT is unsatisfactory. No systems are in place for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' capabilities in order to inform the planning of lessons and the future learning needs of pupils. The structures for the co-ordination and use of ICT across the curriculum are also a weakness. If the planned training is to be effective, it will be important to have in place systematic arrangements to ensure that the whole school uses ICT effectively to develop pupils' learning.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

207. All pupils study French in Years 7 to 9. The highest attaining 25 per cent have the opportunity to learn German from Year 8. All pupils must study at least one language in Years 10 and 11, chosen from French, German and Urdu.
208. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average in French and German compared with national standards. At the end of Year 11, standards are below average in French and above average in German. The quality of teaching, learning, leadership and management is satisfactory. The over-use of English is the principal factor that prevents pupils from reaching higher levels of achievement.
209. Standards in French at the end of Year 9 are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are slightly above average; work seen and lessons observed indicate average standards. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is good in German, as they reach the average standard in only two years and with an inadequate allocation of teaching time. Standards observed in both languages are inconsistent in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Pupils show good understanding of written and spoken French and German but few

use the spoken language instinctively for real communication and much writing consists of lists and grammatical drills. This is consistent with the observation made at the last inspection that teaching was conducted in short phrases, inhibiting the development of pupils' extended writing and speaking skills.

210. Since the last inspection and the implementation of 'languages for all', the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE in French has fallen slightly. The high proportion of pupils gaining A\*-G grades has been maintained. Pupils' achievement in French between the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 is satisfactory and is slightly above their average in other subjects. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in German improved over time until a fall-back in 2000. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-G grades has been consistently above average. However, those studying German are a small group of higher attaining pupils, whose results in German are slightly below their performance in other subjects.
211. Standards in Years 10 and 11 in both languages continue to lack consistency in the four skills. Higher attaining pupils in both languages produce good extended writing but many others write using English constructions and make grammatical mistakes, despite the teachers' concentration on drills to ensure accuracy. Speaking standards are low: pupils rely heavily on written preparation, which leads to poor accent and fluency. Because of the focus of much of the teaching, pupils are often unsure of how to respond when asked a question in the foreign language. The last inspection report also referred to pupils being unable to respond to simple questions.
212. Teaching is satisfactory in French and good in German in Years 7 to 9. Generic teaching skills are good in terms of relationships with the pupils, classroom management and use of group and pair work to enhance learning and planning. There is too much reliance on the organisation of the teaching groups by pupils' attainment levels to provide appropriately challenging work for each pupil. Methodology specific to the teaching of modern foreign languages is less good. Although all teachers are good linguists, who make good use of French or German in their teaching, there is too much use of English in the classroom, particularly in French lessons, by both teachers and pupils. There is also too much discussion about the language before it has been used for real communication and this results in pupils' progressively unsatisfactory speaking standards.
213. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection. As in the earlier years, there is strength in generic teaching skills but the failure to put communication in the target language at the heart of learning continues to cause shortcomings in pupils' speaking and writing. Teachers' expectations of pupils are no longer unsatisfactory, as reported at the last inspection. Although expectations are now high, they are based on a formal learning style which does not suit many pupils.
214. Pupils' learning is satisfactory in all years. They consolidate prior learning and make gains in knowledge and skills in all lessons. Boys and girls make equal progress and pupils of Asian heritage often make good progress. Too little insistence on the use of French or German and the consequent lack of the use of language for genuine communication reduce the effect of the learning. The lack of planning to provide materials matched to pupils' individual attainment

levels and few classroom support assistants mean that pupils with special educational needs make insufficient progress. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve well enough: the numbers of pupils attaining the highest grades at GCSE is well below national averages.

215. Pupils' attitudes are good; their behaviour is very good. Pupils concentrate well and learn with commitment. They take part in individual, group or paired work and respect those who are working with them, or making presentations. Pupils work readily in groups of mixed culture and gender. They do not always sustain sufficient use of French or German in some of these situations because their teaching has not made enough demands of them in this respect.
216. Assessment procedures are a strength of the department. A particularly strong feature is that pupils are involved in the process and understand how well they are doing in relation to National Curriculum levels. This motivates them to improve the quality of their work.
217. The drawbacks of accommodation, reported at the last inspection, are still evident. Rooms on two separate floors and the lack of a department office hinder team development but, more important, the rooms are a poor environment for language teaching, having no carpeting for sound deadening and being equipped with only one electric socket in each room. This causes teachers to use trailing cables to overhead projectors and cassette recorders. The lack of door retarders makes doors slam very hard in windy conditions, when windows are open. The lack of sound insulation against the noise of the regularly passing trams is a serious hindrance to language teaching.
218. An appreciation the cultures of the languages being taught is insufficiently developed and is contributing to pupils' lack of appreciation of the use of languages for communication. Only in German are authentic materials seen in use; the school's programme of visits and exchanges is no longer taking place and the pupils lack the influence of native speaker role models, particularly foreign language assistants.
219. The modern foreign languages curriculum lacks breadth and balance. Despite criticism at the last inspection, the proportion of pupils able to learn German has further reduced. The opportunity to access two languages in Years 10 and 11 is restricted by the options system, and the combination of French and Urdu is not available. The time allocation for the teaching of two languages in Years 8 and 9 is inadequate.
220. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is a good team ethos and effective co-operative working. Tasks are delegated and members represent the department on interest groups. There is need for a review of teaching methodology and a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning if standards are to improve.

## **URDU**

221. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above average compared with national standards. The achievement of the pupils is very good as a result of very good teaching and learning. The subject is managed very well.

222. Progress since the last report is good and examination results have remained high. Assessment procedures are thorough and their use is effective in informing pupils how to improve and in raising standards. The use of information technology is undeveloped. The quality of written resources has improved though there is still a shortage of appropriate textbooks and reference materials, and the library stock is modest.
223. The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 11 is well above the national average. In Urdu, the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C and A\*-G grades at GCSE is well above national averages. In 1999, 88 per cent and in 2000, 93 per cent of pupils attained higher A\*-C grades. In both years the pass rate was well above the national average.
224. The pupils understand a wide range of spoken and written language with ease. They communicate their ideas effectively in spoken language and express themselves with confidence and fluency. They exhibit good understanding of the grammatical structures of language. In Year 10, higher attaining pupils respond spontaneously to questions, react and interject articulately in discussions and role play, for example, while talking about their recent work experience. Pupils' reading and writing skills are of a high standard; they produce logical, coherent and extended pieces of writing on a wide range of themes. They write business letters seeking information from establishments and write detailed, fairly accurate narrative accounts describing events in the past, present and future, using a good range of vocabulary and structures. Higher attainers can give reasons for their views and write at some length and in detail. Pupils in Year 11 have attempted coursework assignments involving factual and imaginative narratives on the world of work, tourism and advertising and publicity. Many understand and show confidence in expressing opinions whilst reviewing a book or a film or writing about health issues, for example, smoking. They often write at length and express their views cogently and clearly. Lower attaining pupils write short texts and complete tasks using set phrases in writing informal letters introducing themselves or family to a new pen-friend. Most pupils identify the main points from speech with some guidance and repetition; higher attaining pupils can interpret some unfamiliar language for others.
225. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and contributes positively to the standards achieved. The teacher has a good command of the language and puts his subject knowledge to good effect, using the language to conduct lessons and reinforce learning. Language used is well matched to the experience and capabilities of pupils and is effective in reinforcing learning and developing listening skills. The teacher uses resources such as the overhead projector, posters and other resources to present new language. In a Year 10 lesson, well sequenced activities enabled pupils to build successfully on previous learning and increase their range of vocabulary and language structures. Sufficient attention is paid to the effective development of skills for pupils to be able to put this gain in knowledge into practice in communicating independently. Planning is focused sufficiently on outcomes for pupils of different attainment within teaching groups to progress at their own pace; as a result, resources are well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Varied and stimulating approaches such as paired work and highly interactive lessons stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and interest and provide them with appropriate challenge. Support for learning is good and pupils' learning is enhanced by the

teacher's high expectations of behaviour and faster rates of work. Clear instructions and strict time limits for completing tasks ensure good progress. Activities are sufficiently challenging and well matched to pupils' prior attainment, their self-esteem is raised and opportunities for pupils to participate are provided. Activities are adapted sufficiently to support lower attaining pupils or sufficiently challenge high attaining pupils. Homework is set regularly and evaluated with helpful and constructive suggestions for improvement.

226. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. They listen attentively to the teacher and are concerned to do well. Many demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject. They respond intelligently to the teacher's questions and seek clarification when in doubt. Rates of progress are good overall. Pupils make very good progress in consolidating new vocabulary and structures and developing all four skills. Pupils show initiative and accept responsibility. Progress is best where pupils are given the opportunity to practise informally and are encouraged to put the language they have learned to the test in real situations, using more than one skill to complete a task. When they are given the opportunity to work in small groups they do so sensibly and concentrate on tasks set.
227. The subject is well managed. Curricular provision is good in Years 10 and 11 but at present the subject is not taught in Years 7-9. Schemes of work provide detailed content and information about expected outcomes for groups of differing attainment within teaching groups. Monitoring of pupils' learning is sufficiently rigorous and systematic and there is good support for learning. The introduction of Urdu as a subject in Years 7-9 and improvement in the quality and quantity of resources, including subject-specific resources for information technology, would help to raise standards further.

## **MUSIC**

228. Music is one of the strengths of the school. The department fosters the development of pupils' social skills and cultural awareness very well through its development of pupils' musical skills. The achievement of the pupils is good, which leads to standards which are average compared with national standards at the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils enjoy the subject, particularly the significant numbers who participate in the range of extra-curricular activities available. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leadership and management are very good. The school supports musically talented pupils well. About 70 pupils have extra instrumental lessons each week provided by the local music service and substantially subsidised by the school.
229. Since the last inspection, standards and the good educational provision have been maintained. The problems of having a second music room far removed from the main one have been overcome in part by equipping it with specialist resources but its lack of suitable practice facilities adversely affects standards of music making, particularly for classes in Years 7 to 9.
230. By the end of Year 9, standards of performing and composing are average compared with national standards. The achievement of both girls and boys is good. Although it is rare for many of the significant minority of Asian heritage pupils in the school to choose to do GCSE music, they achieve well in all class

activities. During the inspection many examples were heard of pupils performing well-structured music they had composed in two or more parts. Most pupils use musical notation well to support and extend their improvising activities. They play keyboards and other instruments with confidence to develop and express their musical ideas. For example, one Year 9 class added layers of melodies to chord sequences to create variations on a ground bass. Many pupils understand how to use basic keyboard technology to enhance their improvising. They select speeds and rhythms to give style and texture to their improvisations. This was heard in recordings pupils had made of their blues style compositions and instrumental arrangements of tunes like *Frere Jacques*. Much of their work in musical notation is given a professional appearance by being computer-printed. Those with special educational needs achieve well, participating fully with others in group work.

231. Although the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C GCSE grades in 2000 was below average, work seen and heard during the inspection confirms that standards are in line with national subject averages for A\*-C grades. All pupils taking the course have passed GCSE since the last inspection. Standards of instrumental and vocal performing are generally above average for the majority of those involved. A significant number of pupils each year also gain passes in the higher grades of Associated Board examinations. The playing of brass instruments and singing are particularly strong features. A brass ensemble was heard playing an arrangement of part of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* with an expressive control that caught the spirit of the music well. Most pupils' compositions are substantial in length and well structured musically. They are attractively presented in computer-produced musical notation. Pupils have a good understanding of the technical features that they use, and are able to evaluate their creative work in appropriate musical terms. They apply their knowledge of other musical styles effectively in their own composing. A few create stylish works that develop musical ideas in an individual and original way, sometimes making full use of computer and keyboard technology.
232. Standards in extra-curricular activities are high, particularly for groups like the bands and choirs that take part in an ongoing programme of concerts, musicals and other events each year. The school's significant numbers of talented musicians are well catered for in this respect and they make very good progress individually and collectively. At the time of the inspection, enthusiastic rehearsals were under way for an imminent school concert. A mixed voice choir was singing expressively in parts and two brass groups were heard preparing selections of popular music.
233. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching was at least good in every lesson observed and very good in half of them. Routines for behaviour and practising are well established, and a good range of musical instruments is in constant use. While the quality of learning was good in all the lessons observed, pupils' achievements in some lessons, however, are constrained by the lack of practice rooms. Moreover, the acoustics of one of the music rooms are so poor that pupils cannot adequately hear what they are trying to play. Lessons are rigorously taught by two talented and well-qualified musicians, both of whom are experienced teachers. Lessons are carefully planned to cumulatively increase pupils' technical understanding of their performing and composing skills, so that by the end of Year 9, the foundations for GCSE work are in place. The teaching is particularly effective because music is taught as a living

language. Examples that appeal to people of this age are drawn from styles and cultures from all over the world and are used as a stimulus for activities in lessons. For example, pupils in a GCSE class listened to musical examples from European and Asian traditions – as well as a didgeridu – to deepen their understanding of drones. Pupils respond well to the brisk pace demanded of them, and they are keen to work productively towards performing and recording the music they create. Those with special educational needs are supported well with materials that match their requirements. Discipline is firm and friendly, and a strong sociable bond exists between pupils and with teachers that enables them to share musical ideas and enjoy performing to each other collaboratively.

234. The department is well led and efficiently managed with dynamic enthusiasm for sustaining the high achievement and musical enjoyment that were apparent at the time of the last inspection. The introduction and use of computers have been successful in music, and it is now hoped to increase these facilities particularly to encourage those for whom traditional notation is less appropriate. The department is aware of the current need to assess pupils' work in terms of the new National Curriculum levels of attainment.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

235. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are above average in relation to national standards and the achievement of the pupils is good. Teaching, learning and leadership and management are also good.
236. The physical education department has maintained many of the positive features outlined in the last inspection report. Pupils' work is characterised by well-developed independent learning skills, as they confidently and collaboratively become involved in planning, performing and evaluating theirs and others' performances. There is a positive learning ethos in all classes.
237. By the age of 14 pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of physical exercise and sustain high levels of aerobic fitness. In cricket and rounders they have good bowling and fielding skills and, when given the opportunity, can incorporate these into games. Many pupils in Year 9 are able to apply individual and team tactics in their work, which represents a high level of achievement. Teachers' planning and expectations do not always challenge pupils enough to reach these higher levels. With the absence of 16-year-old pupils at the time of the inspection it was not possible to judge the standards of their work.
238. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades at GCSE has risen to the national average and beyond. The present Year 10 GCSE class has an above average understanding of the effects of exercise on the body's respiratory system, and in fielding games they show good levels of ball control and accuracy of throwing. The department organises a range of extra-curricular clubs and competitions, and the local successes achieved in football, basketball and netball are important contributory factors in improving pupil performances and motivation.

239. Between the ages of 11 and 14 the achievement of pupils is good. The sustaining of the good levels of progress since the last inspection is commendable because many pupils, especially girls, are now entering the school with a more limited experience in physical education. In a Year 7 lesson, girls co-operated well in their groups to work out the most efficient way of exchanging the relay baton. In a Year 9 lesson, boys progressed well in response to the increasing challenges given by the teacher to improve the quality of their discus throwing. The achievement of the present Year 10 GCSE groups is good. They build on their good understanding of key scientific vocabulary and offer extended writing and very good oral responses on the role of the respiratory system during exercise. The continuing improvement of GCSE results is represented across pupils of all attainment levels, with the majority of pupils achieving their maximum grades. The exception to this is the most able and gifted pupils. Teachers are not consistently using strategies to maximise the performance of these pupils, whatever their age. Present planning does not link requirements for the achievement of higher National Curriculum levels with relevant programme of study tasks. For example, in a Year 9 cricket lesson a significant number of Asian boys showed very refined and creative bowling skills but the teaching did not plan to extend them appropriately. Although the achievement of the youngest pupils is good, closer liaison with feeder schools about previous learning and experiences would improve teaching and learning across the whole ability range.
240. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good practice. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their communication of technical information is a major factor in improving pupil performance. The department has made very good progress in employing varied teaching strategies and relevant lesson organisation to involve pupils in planning and evaluating to refine their performances further. This is a good motivating factor for pupils who enjoy the purposeful partner and group activities; it also significantly improves pupils' oral explanations of performance. Planning consistently uses a variety of interesting tasks to keep pupils aerobically involved. However, a significant weakness of planning is the lack of variety in task setting, with arrangements failing to pinpoint the principal progressions in learning for all ability groups. Teachers included very good self-assessment procedures in a Year 10 GCSE practical lesson. They shared with their pupils descriptors of performance in rounders that were cross-referenced to National Curriculum levels. In this lesson pupils immediately related to targets for improvement with an associated increase in rigour and challenge absent in many other lessons.
241. Good management and leadership have enabled the department to maintain the high standards identified at the time of the last inspection. Teachers embrace change positively and this is reflected in the extensive staff development programme and high levels of subject expertise. The present development plans for the department show clear educational direction for the subject. However, items need to be prioritised and to reflect more accurately the resource requirements and agreed criteria for monitoring and reviewing the outcomes. Procedures are in place for relevant professional development targets as part of the performance management cycle, however, teaching quality is not yet monitored systematically. The department attempts to give its pupils a good range of learning opportunities. They achieve this in Years 10 and 11 by using the local leisure centre. However, the unsatisfactory nature of

indoor accommodation continues to restrict progress in the other years. Wet weather consistently disrupts progress when staff have to modify programmes to teach large groups. Progress in racket and fielding games is severely hampered because of restricted teaching space. The present department action plan recognises the limitations of the monitoring of achievement. The day-to-day assessments are not consistently used to influence future planning or to make pupils aware of relevant targets in the next stage of their learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

242. Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. At the end of Year 11 the standards of those taking GCSE are average in relation to national standards and their achievement is good. Standards of work shown by pupils at the end of Year 11 who do not take the GCSE course are very low in relation to those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement is unsatisfactory. The reason for the unsatisfactory achievement of these pupils is that the curriculum does not enable the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus to be covered. Teaching and learning are good, while the management of the subject is satisfactory.
243. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE results has fallen, but the results of higher attaining pupils have been maintained. The quality of teaching is now good as opposed to very good.
244. At the end of Year 9, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and they can talk meaningfully about a good number of the religious beliefs and concepts surrounding it. The pupils also have a sound understanding of Islam and they are familiar with many of the customs and traditions involved in its practice. The pupils are less familiar with the religions of the Indian tradition. Their knowledge of Judaism is more than adequate. The pupils have an understanding of specialist religious language and they can use it meaningfully. They are able to express viewpoints verbally and in writing. Their knowledge and understanding of the religions they study is stronger than their ability to talk about the connections between what they are studying and their own lives and experiences.
245. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in 1999 was in line with the national average. In 2000 it was below the national average. In both years, the proportions of pupils gaining A\* or A grades were well above the national averages. During the time of the inspection, standards in lessons and in exercise books of the GCSE option group, were broadly in line with the standards indicated in the course syllabus. The pupils have a good basic grasp of the beliefs and practices of Judaism and Islam and they can give some evidence to support points of view arising from the study of the central concepts of the two religions. In general the pupils can express themselves well both verbally and in written work; many, though not all, can express opinions on a variety of subjects. Their ability to express opinions from more than one point of view needs further development. Of the large number of pupils who do not take the GCSE option course, no lessons were observed during the week of the inspection. Exercise books show that a minimal amount of written work has been done over the two-year period.

246. In Years 7 to 9, achievement in relation to prior attainment is broadly satisfactory. In terms of the GCSE option group it is good. The achievement of pupils who do not take the GCSE option in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. There is no marked difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are achieving well as there are adequate systems and support to aid their progress. The same can be said for pupils who have English as an additional language.
247. At both key stages the behaviour and attitude of the pupils are mostly good or very good. The pupils are well behaved and apply themselves to their work in a studious way. They concentrate well and in the main they are able to maintain this concentration. They are respectful of each other and of the teachers, and they respect the beliefs and viewpoints of others. Only in one instance was the behaviour even mildly unsatisfactory. Here a number of pupils failed to apply themselves properly to the work in hand and this created some tension in the classroom. Overall, however, the pupils show interest in their work and are willing to respond enthusiastically both verbally and in writing. The pupils are willing to share their own religious beliefs and insights, though they could be encouraged to do this more.
248. The quality of teaching and learning is good through Years 7 to 9. Lessons are well prepared and the teachers set clear objectives though these objectives could be made clearer to the pupils themselves so that their learning is more focused. A good range of teaching methods is used in the lessons and the teachers maintain good order and discipline so that learning is purposeful and has momentum. Expectations are adequate but at times the pace could be quicker in order to increase the coverage of work over time. In the lessons where the teaching is very good, there is a good balance of learning from religions as well as learning about them; the pupils are encouraged to see the relevance of what they are learning to their own lives and experiences. In these lessons too, the pupils are challenged to give personal responses to specifically religious issues. The pace is also brisk in these lessons so that full use is made of the time available. Correspondingly, the satisfactory lessons, though sound, have more of an emphasis on studying about the externals of religions at the expense of looking at the reasons and forces that drive them. Homework is set appropriately. In all lessons the religious content is clear and the teachers are knowledgeable in the subject matter. The organisation of classes by pupils' levels of attainment and work that is matched to individual pupils' learning needs enable both the higher and lower attaining pupils to learn well.
249. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching and learning is good. Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection week as the Year 11 pupils were not in the school and no lessons were timetabled for the non-GCSE religious education lessons. Lessons are well prepared with clear objectives. The learning of the pupils would be helped if these objectives are clearly and unambiguously communicated to the pupils themselves, both verbally and on the board at the beginning of each lesson. The teachers use a good range of techniques to put across the subject matter and this maintains the interest of the pupils and makes for positive learning. The teachers encourage the participation of the pupils in verbal and collaborative work and this helps their social learning. Pupils could be encouraged to respond more to the issues they study from a wider perspective, religious and non-religious.

The level of expectation in the classes is about right but pace could be tighter so that more work is done in the time available. This would increase the amount of learning over time.

250. The department is now managed by a very recently appointed acting head of department following a significant period of ill health by the head of department. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting head of department shares about an equal amount of the teaching time with a non-specialist supply teacher. Statutory requirements are being met in Years 7 to 9. The scheme of work at this key stage reflects the agreed syllabus but coverage of the 'learning from religions' aspect is not explicit enough. Similarly, the scheme of work would benefit if the skills, processes and attitudes in the agreed syllabus were clearly included. Statutory requirements are not being met in Years 10 and 11. The amount of time allocated for teaching the subject is well below recommendations; consequently, there is no teaching of religious education in Year 11, and in Year 10, apart from the GCSE option group, the number of hours is 10 maximum. The amount of written work from this teaching is minimal. There is no marking, assessment, recording and reporting for this group. Of the four staff teaching religious education to this group, three are non-specialists. The inadequate delivery of the agreed syllabus at this key stage means that the GCSE option group syllabus does not meet statutory requirements as it does not contain a component of Christianity. Information and communication technology is used by the department, mostly for word processing and Internet use. The department contributes to standards of literacy with the introduction and explanation of new words and phrases. The department also contributes to spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school in its study of world religions. The accommodation and resources are good.

## **BUSINESS EDUCATION**

251. GCSE results in business studies were well below national averages in 1999 and 2000. GNVQ results were stronger: in 2000, six out of seven pupils gained three units, while seven out of eleven, gained three units in 1999. Up until 1999, the department also offered pupils the opportunity of taking the Young Enterprise Certificate. In 1999, three pupils took the certificate, two of whom gained merits. Standards seen in the current Year 10 class were below average overall.
252. Only one lesson was observed, in which teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils were given an appropriate range of classroom and practical activities and their learning was supported by the use of information and communication technology. Senior management took the decision to run only GNVQ business studies for the current Year 11 group and for subsequent years. The GNVQ course offers the pupils a good vocational option in Years 10 and 11. Departmental documentation is limited; for example, no information was supplied about why courses had been changed.