

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GOLBORNE HIGH SCHOOL**

Golborne, Warrington

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106525

Headteacher: Mr S J Turner

Reporting inspector: Alan Haigh  
2630

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> April – 4<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 194478

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 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lowton Road Golborne Warrington
Postcode:	WA3 3EL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N B Holt
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2630	Alan Haigh	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? Results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
78143	Peredur Wyn Francis	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
11190	Winifred Burke	Team inspector	Art	
3758	Tony Barringer	Team inspector	English	
2628	Jim Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
8873	Charlotte Evers	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	
12470	Brian Greasley	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
20172	Arthur Harvey	Team inspector	Religious education	
7084	Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology	
27082	Geoffrey Henshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music	
3937	John Seed	Team inspector	Science	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a smaller than average sized Community comprehensive school educating 783 boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years. It serves the former mining communities of Golborne and Lowton in the main, but pupils are drawn from 24 primary schools. It is situated on the southern edge of the Wigan LEA. The school has been oversubscribed in recent years. More than 18 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is close to the national average. More than 99 per cent of pupils are from white ethnic families. None speak English as an additional language. Almost 28 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register; this is above average. About four per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs and this figure is also above the national average. The attainment of pupils entering the school is generally below average and has remained so in recent years. The socio-economic circumstances of the area from which the majority of pupils are drawn are below average.

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

This is a very much improved, good and effective school. Standards are in line with the national average in most subjects and pupils achieve well. The teaching is good but recruitment problems hold back pupils' progress in modern foreign languages and religious education. Leadership and management are good, providing the energy, vision and capacity for sustained improvement. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards are rising because of much consistently good teaching throughout the age groups and across all subjects; pupils are learning and progressing well in most subjects.
- The GCSE results are improving at a faster rate than results nationally.
- The standards attained by 16-year-olds in art and music are above average and last year's GCSE results in music were better than the national average.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are better than those found in most schools, reflecting the school's successful strategies for teaching literacy.
- The vast majority of pupils have very good attitudes to school and learn with much enthusiasm.
- Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good, reflecting a secure and caring learning environment and a school with a positive ethos for learning.
- The pastoral system is especially strong resulting in a very high standard of pupils' welfare.

#### **What could be improved**

- Staffing problems continue to have an adverse effect on pupils' progress in modern foreign languages and religious education and largely account for the very small amount of unsatisfactory behaviour.
- Standards of 14-year-olds in history, physical education and religious education and of 14- and 16-year-olds in geography are not high enough.
- The standards of information and communication technology across the curriculum are generally too low.
- The middle ability 14-year-old pupils are not pushed hard enough in mathematics.
- Leadership and management in history, physical education and religious education are unsatisfactory
- There is too little time for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and pupils do not attend a daily act of collective worship.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has developed very well since the last inspection, which took place in May 1997. The GCSE results have improved at a faster rate than results nationally. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and the children progress well. The teaching of literacy is much better and a sound start has been made on developing strategies for teaching numeracy. There are more staff to help pupils with

special educational needs although still more help is needed. The standards in design and technology have clearly improved and the teaching of design is much better. All pupils have equal access to the same, good curriculum. Target setting has come on well and teaching is monitored systematically. Statutory requirements for physical education are fully met but those for religious education are not yet met in Years 10 and 11. The use and management of the library are much better.

## 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 average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	D	E	D	D	

The results in the national tests taken in 2000 by 14-year-olds were in line with the national average in English but below it in mathematics and in science. Girls did better than boys in all three subjects. When compared with results in similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals) in 2000, the English results were above the national average and the mathematics and science results were below it. Results of the three subjects together, for 14-year-olds, have been below average in recent years, but there is a small upward trend, which is not as great as the national trend. The English results, however, have been close to the national average for several years. Standards in all subjects except history, geography and physical education (which are below average) are now in line with those of 14-year-olds nationally and most pupils achieve well.

The GCSE results for boys and for girls, measured by their average point scores, were below the national average in 2000 and not as good as the results in similar schools; this has been the case in all recent years. Results are, however, improving more quickly than the national results. The proportions of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A\* to C and five or more grades A\* to G are in line with the national average and also with those in similar schools. The girls do better than boys at GCSE and the gap is larger than that found nationally. The GCSE results in English, mathematics, business education and geography were significantly below average in 2000 for pupils gaining A\* to C grades. No subject's results were above average but value-added data shows pupils did better in music and poorer in French than would have been expected. Girls did well in art, design and technology, English literature and German. Boys did well in art, science and design and technology. The 41 per cent obtaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C was one per cent ahead of the school's 2000 target but the average point score fell well short of the school's target. Standards now are in line with those in most schools in all subjects except geography and business studies (which are below average) and the majority of 16-year-olds achieve well in most subjects. Standards in the use of information and communication technology in more than half the subjects are below average in all year groups.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils are proud of their school and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is good overall, and often very good, both in lessons and around school. A small minority of boys and girls in all years misbehaves, often when their teaching has been disrupted by uncertainties about staffing and they are being taught by new or temporary staff.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in school are very good. Staff and pupils get on particularly well together. The pupils' personal development is catered for very successfully.
Attendance	This is above average and unauthorised absence is much lower than in most schools.

## 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.*

The overall quality of teaching is consistently good across all year groups and all subjects. In more than 97 per cent of lessons, teaching was at least satisfactory. It was good or better in two thirds and very good or excellent in one fifth. It was less than satisfactory in only three per cent; temporary staff working outside their specialist areas mostly taught these. Literacy is taught well and numeracy is taught satisfactorily. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils effectively; the vast majority achieve well. The brightest are challenged appropriately in most subjects; they are not sufficiently challenged in history and geography. There is, however, no overall policy for identifying gifted and talented pupils. Middle-ability pupils are insufficiently stretched in mathematics. The pupils with special educational needs are taught with care and sensitivity. Teachers manage pupils of all abilities with skill ensuring good learning at all stages. The gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in the main. Teachers have a good grasp of their subjects and plan lessons well. Pupils concentrate well at all stages and produce good amounts of work in lessons. They put much effort into their work and show a keen interest in what they do. The teachers assess pupils thoroughly and provide them with individual targets. The quality of learning is good in all year groups and subjects except history where it is only satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	These are good. The full National Curriculum is offered. The time for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is inadequate. Literacy is taught well. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school ensures that the community contributes well to pupils' learning and that relationships with partner institutions are constructive. Form and tutor time is often not used well enough.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is sound. The pupils' individual education plans are of good quality. The leadership, management and organisation of the department are good. More support is still needed for some pupils with learning problems.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall with the provision for pupils' moral development being especially strong. Moral issues are addressed in many subjects. Pupils' spiritual development is only satisfactory, with missed opportunities in several subjects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. The pastoral system is comprehensive and very effective. Academic progress is monitored thoroughly.

The school works well with parents and has particularly strong links with those whose children have special educational needs. The information provided for parents is mostly of good quality but school reports are not informative enough, many giving too little information about what pupils can do and how they can improve.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	These are good, reflecting the energy and commitment of senior staff. The headteacher has a thorough knowledge of the school and leads it very well. The leadership of English is excellent. Leadership and management of history, physical education and religious education are unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good grasp of what is going on and give good support to the school. They have not, however, ensured that there is enough time for religious education in Years 10 and 11 or that all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good; teaching is monitored systematically and the review of planning and achievements is thorough. The aims are largely achieved.
The strategic use of resources	This is good. Funding is directed well at sensible priorities and is used prudently. The principles of best value are applied consistently. There are sufficient teachers overall but the current staffing problems in modern foreign languages and religious education are adversely affecting pupils' progress. Accommodation is adequate and is improving. Resources are plentiful and are used well. Risk assessments are not carried out fully.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and do their best.</li><li>• The children make good progress.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• The school is approachable if they have questions or problems.</li><li>• The school helps pupils become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework is not right.</li><li>• The range of activities outside lessons is not interesting enough.</li></ul>

The inspection team fully endorses the parents' positive comments. The amounts of homework are, overall, about right. The range of activities offered outside lessons is good and similar to that in many schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The standards of attainment of pupils arriving at the school are mostly below the national average. The results in the national tests taken in 2000 by 14-year-olds were in line with the national average in English but below it in mathematics and in science. Girls did better than boys in all three subjects. When compared with results in similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals) in 2000, the English results were above the national average and the mathematics and science results were below it. The standards in all three of these subjects were in line with the national average in 1999.
2. Results of the three subjects together, for 14-year-olds, have been below average in recent years, but there is a small upward trend, which is not, however, as great as the national trend. The English results, though, have been close to the national average for several years whereas those in mathematics and science have fluctuated between below average and in line with the average.
3. The teachers assess standards attained by 14-year-olds. Their assessments in summer 2000 indicated standards in English as close to average but those in mathematics and science as below average. Additionally, their assessments showed standards as below average in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages. Girls' standards were assessed as higher than boys in all subjects.
4. Pupils are achieving well and progress soundly in their first three years in the school. The standards of 14-year-olds observed in lessons and in the work scrutinised were in line with national averages in the vast majority of subjects. Their oral work is above average overall and listening is good throughout. In writing, the average-attaining pupils' grammar and spelling are not good enough. Most pupils are competent in algebra to an appropriate level, many doing better than would be expected. Numeracy skills are average. Middle-attaining 14-year-olds could do better in mathematics; many could take more challenging papers in the national tests. Science practical skills are good and continue to improve beyond the age of 14.
5. Standards are below average in geography; pupils have a poor grasp of where places are. They are also below average for 14-year-olds in history with pupils' skills at evaluating sources of evidence being below what would be expected. Standards in physical education are below average at this stage with pupils' games skills being deficient. Pupils' skills in the use of information and communication technology are below average in most subjects.
6. In modern foreign languages, many 14-year-olds speak the language confidently. Oral work is also strong in religious education. The finished products made in design and technology textiles lessons are of a good standard, reflecting care and attention to detail.
7. Pupils continue to make clear progress and achieve well up to the age of 16. The proportions of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A\* to C and five or more grades A\* to G are in line with the national average and also with those in similar schools. The GCSE results for boys and for girls, measured by their average point scores, were below the national average in 2000 and not as good as the results in similar schools; this has been the case in all recent years. They are, however, improving more quickly than the national results. The girls do better than boys at GCSE and the gap is larger than that found nationally.
8. The strongest GCSE subjects in the last two years have been art, science, design and technology and English literature, as pupils have generally done better in these than in their other subjects. The GCSE results in English language, mathematics, business studies and geography were significantly below average in 2000 for the proportions of pupils achieving A\* to C grades. No subject's results were above average but value-added data shows pupils did better in music and poorer in French than

would have been expected. Girls did well in art, design and technology, English literature and German. Boys did well in art, science and design and technology. The school sets realistic GCSE targets for its pupils. The 41 per cent obtaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C was one per cent ahead of the school's 2000 target but the average point score fell well short of the school's target.

9. The standards of work of the 16-year-olds observed are in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science and the vast majority of other subjects. They are above average in art and music but below average in geography and business studies. In art lessons, many produce above average work in sculpture, weaving and batik. Many musicians perform to a high level but composition standards are below average. The standards in dance are high. There was no work to inspect in history and religious education at this stage. Pupils' word-processing and desktop publishing skills are above average, but there is too little use of control technology and standards are below average in this.
10. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress overall; their progress in English, mathematics and science is good by the age of 14. They also progress well in information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music. Their progress is satisfactory in all other subjects. Their progress continues to be good in English and science up to the time they leave school and is also good at this stage in art, information and communication technology and music. It is satisfactory in mathematics and all other subjects.
11. The gifted and talented pupils are not specifically identified although the setting arrangements in most subjects mean that their needs are met in the main and they are usually extended and achieve appropriately. They make good progress in English, science, art, information and communication technology and music at all stages and also in mathematics during the GCSE course. They are not stretched in Years 7 to 9 in history and progress insufficiently in that subject but otherwise make satisfactory progress in all other subjects.
12. The basic skills of reading and writing, in the vast majority of subjects, are average. The cross-curricular skills of speaking and listening are above average. There is a clear indication here of the school's success in teaching literacy and the emphasis on these aspects. Numeracy standards are average but the cross-curricular use of information and communication technology is below average in most subjects.

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

13. Most pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is consistently good. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils are eager to take advantage of the many opportunities they have to develop personal and social skills. Attendance and punctuality are good.
14. The majority of pupils work hard, are enthusiastic and well motivated and anxious to do well. In lessons, they demonstrate this commitment by listening carefully and concentrating on their work. They are keen to answer questions and take part in activities and are nearly always well behaved. Pupils' enthusiasm was clearly seen in a history lesson, when they asked questions of the teacher because they wanted to know more about the post-war depression, and in the attitude of a group of pupils waiting to enter a science room, who were eagerly anticipating the coming lesson.
15. Behaviour in lessons is almost always good and sometimes very good or excellent. Pupils often show a high level of independence, working with minimal supervision at their tasks. For example, on one occasion, half a Year 7 mathematics group worked sensibly on their own using computers, while the other half of the group were working with the teacher.
16. Pupils and parents agree that relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils care for one another and are quick to celebrate someone else's achievement. A group of boys, for example, in a Year 7 science lesson burst into a spontaneous round of applause when a piece of work that one of them had written was read out. There is very little bullying and no evidence of sexism or racism.

Pupils get on very well with their teachers, showing respect for them and having sufficient confidence to approach them with academic or personal problems.

17. When they are asked to work in pairs or groups, pupils respond well. They share equipment, discuss ideas and co-operate well with each other. In class discussions, pupils show tolerance for the views of others - for example, in a lesson about Islam, pupils listened respectfully to conflicting opinions expressed by members of the class and pupils who were given the opportunity to ask questions of a Japanese visitor about life in his country were fascinated by his replies.
18. There are some isolated examples of poor behaviour in lessons which manifest themselves in restlessness and inattention. Pupils can become easily distracted, lose their powers of concentration and show limited enthusiasm or even indifference to learning. When pupils do behave in an unacceptable manner this is often related to a lack of continuity in teaching provision that has been caused by prolonged staffing difficulties.
19. Behaviour around the school is usually orderly and controlled. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate of the needs of others and are polite, friendly and helpful to visitors. Sometimes, if pupils show serious aggression to others or are very rude to staff, the school feels it necessary to exclude them for a fixed period. The numbers of such exclusions are slightly below average for a school of this size because the school works very hard to promote good behaviour and, if necessary, to follow its own escalating set of sanctions before taking the ultimate decision to exclude. If a pupil is excluded, proper procedures are followed and parents are involved in the process of re-entry to school.
20. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities that exist for their personal development. They show their growing maturity in their response to sensitive issues. For example, a Year 8 class reacted very sensibly to a lesson on solvent abuse and a Year 11 group engaged in a rational discussion about choosing a flat mate. Pupils are proud to be chosen as prefects or form captains and take their duties seriously. Those who volunteer to train for the Peer Support Group scheme or to operate the Luncheon Club for senior citizens gain practical and social skills as well as learning tolerance and respect for others, while elected members of the School Council are learning how decisions are made in a democracy and enjoy playing their part in the process.
21. Attendance figures are slightly better than those found in similar schools and have been improving gradually over the last three years. Unauthorised absence is much less than that normally found and punctuality is generally good. Pupils are proud of their school and have few criticisms; indeed, some older pupils say they are reluctant to move on when they reach the end of Year 11. They react well to the incentives the school offers for good attendance, but they also come to school because they find the activities interesting and enjoyable.

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

22. The quality of teaching is consistently good across all year groups and all subjects. This uniformity results in good learning by the vast majority of pupils. More than 97 per cent of lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Two thirds were good or better and one fifth were very good or excellent. Fewer than three per cent were less than satisfactory (only 4 lessons out of 156); temporary staff working outside their specialist areas taught half of these. Literacy is taught well and numeracy is taught satisfactorily.
23. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils effectively; the vast majority achieve well. A particularly effective mathematics lesson was organised so that half of the Year 7 pupils worked on computers and the other half worked as a group directed by the teacher on a numeracy activity. Those using computers needed very little help and practised and improved their number skills quickly with enthusiasm and concentration. The remainder responded in an excellent way to the teacher's calm, purposeful and interesting presentation.
24. The most able pupils are challenged appropriately in most subjects; they are not sufficiently challenged in history and geography. There is, however, no overall policy for identifying gifted and talented pupils but most staff present work that the vast majority of pupils find challenging. A Year

10 English lesson on Dickens' *The Signalman* had been prepared very carefully with high quality word-processed and demanding materials; the skilful organisation enabled successful group work, much quality learning and high attainment to take place. A Year 9 design and technology lesson on textile design included challenging questions and the use of a mature and demanding vocabulary to extend the pupils successfully.

25. The pupils with special educational needs are taught with care and sensitivity. Teachers make good use of the pupils' individual education plans and match the work closely to their needs. The quality of this teaching is good. In a Year 10 mathematics group, where most of the pupils were on the special educational needs register, the teacher's humour, understanding and high expectations resulted in very good learning about enlargement. The positive relations resulting from mutual respect between teacher and pupils created a very purposeful learning environment. A very similar group in a Year 9 art lesson was very excited by the work of the artist in residence; the teacher successfully empathised with the pupils and helped them to express their ideas verbally. Despite the distractions of builders in the adjacent room the pupils were riveted by the sculptor's answers to their questions. The learning support assistants from the special educational needs department work closely with teachers in classes and provide good quality support for pupils.
26. Teachers manage pupils of all abilities with skill, ensuring good learning at all stages. This results in most pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, making good progress in the main. Behaviour problems are few and are mostly in classes taught by temporary teachers, some of whom met the pupils for the first time during the week of the inspection. A Year 8 science class settled to their work on the energy content of foods very quickly and responded keenly to the well-organised and orderly range of activities. The teachers' management of pupils in history lessons is very good.
27. Teachers have a good grasp of their subjects and plan lessons well. The teachers' knowledge in art lessons is especially strong. The planning of geography lessons is very good. Pupils concentrate well at all stages and produce good amounts of work in lessons. They put much effort into their work and show a keen interest in what they do.
28. Personal and social education is taught well. In a lesson on rights and responsibilities, pupils in Year 11 appreciated the issues that result from leaving home and living independently. They enthusiastically learned about the implications of sharing accommodation and the need to be aware of sharing expenditure. Pupils in Year 7 learned well about the need for safety when travelling to school by road. In all lessons, relationships between teacher and pupils were very good.
29. The teachers assess pupils thoroughly and provide them with individual targets. Assessment is a particularly strong feature of English lessons. It is good in most other subjects but is unsatisfactory in physical education. Teachers make good use of homework in the main, mark work carefully and ensure that pupils know how they are getting on.
30. The quality of learning is good in all year groups and subjects except history, where it is satisfactory. Pupils make genuine efforts to do well in all subjects but a minority talked about their frustration with the inconsistencies in teaching, caused by the staffing recruitment difficulties in modern foreign languages and religious education especially, and also in mathematics until recently. This frustration showed itself in indifferent attitudes to work and some small pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour in a small minority of classes, more so in modern foreign languages than in other subjects.

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

31. The school offers a curriculum that is suitably broad and balanced for all year groups. All the National Curriculum requirements are met. The needs of all pupils are addressed well. The setting, banding and other arrangements are organised appropriately. The issues highlighted in the last report have been addressed although the statutory requirements regarding religious education are

still not being met in Years 10 and 11 as the inadequate time allocation makes it impossible to cover the agreed syllabus.

32. The quality and range of learning opportunities for the pupils are good in all years; teachers' thorough planning results in a good quality curriculum. The teaching of literacy is particularly effective with key words prominently displayed in most rooms and teachers of all subjects paying attention to pupils' language needs in many lessons. The strategies for teaching numeracy are not as advanced as those for teaching literacy, but are satisfactory.
33. The school ensures that all subjects, except religious education in Years 10 and 11, get appropriate time allocation and that the coverage of the various disciplines is adequate. The time allocated to the tutor period is not well used, however, and the school needs to review this aspect of the curriculum. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in the majority of subjects.
34. A broad programme of extra curricular activities substantially enhances the curriculum. It includes musical activities, productions, team games and outdoor activities. These involve a majority of pupils and do much to broaden pupils' learning experiences. There are sports trips abroad, covering skiing and water activities. Visits to theatres and museums and cultural and historical venues are also features of the good extra-curricular programme.
35. Personal and social education is taught for one period in the week on a carousel system. It includes a good range of cross-curricular themes in all years. There are suitable policies for sex education and drugs education. The curriculum for personal and social education is good and the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, the majority of lessons being good or very good.
36. The present carousel arrangement, for the teaching of the cross-curricular themes of citizenship, careers and health education, as well as religious education, consists of six-week modules. This presents some problems as it does not allow sufficient time for religious education in Years 10 and 11.
37. Careers education and guidance begin in Year 7 and both pupils and their parents value the support for option choices in Year 9. The quality of careers education is very good. Work experience takes place in Year 11 for two weeks and pupils report that they are pleased with the opportunities given. Pupils have access to a well-organised careers library that includes a range of computer software to support pupils in choosing their career pathways. The local careers adviser gives very good support to the school. There are good links with the local colleges of further education. The colleges provide practical courses for some pupils aged 15 and 16, and play a good part in the careers education programme.
38. The school organises visits to Lancaster University for selected pupils who may be considering a university education. There are, however, too few links with local business and industry.
39. The school makes some efforts to promote links with the local community; these have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Sponsorship from a major bank, supplemented by grants from local firms and business organisations, has resulted in the establishment of a weekly Luncheon Club for senior citizens, with food and entertainment provided by teams of volunteers from all year groups. As well as gaining training in catering skills, the pupils involved are developing their social and communication skills and learning to understand and respect the very different needs and views of others. The design and technology department has a very useful practical link with a major international company that allows pupils to experiment with packaging design and to display their work in public. The adult education centre that is based at the school is a useful source of revenue and an effective form of publicity for the school's facilities. There are good links with local churches.
40. There are close, purposeful links with the other schools in the local cluster group. Joint ventures have included effective exercises to ease the transition from primary to secondary education, work on raising boys' achievement and projects to increase curriculum continuity. Curricular liaison is

particularly strong in the English and mathematics departments, where teachers have worked with the corresponding subject co-ordinators in the six main feeder primary schools.

41. Teachers from Golborne have observed the introduction in the feeder schools of the literacy and numeracy strategies, as well as giving lessons to the primary school pupils. Drama productions prepared by the secondary school pupils for presentation to an audience of primary children and specially written stories and poems are some examples of co-operative work which strengthens links between the schools and helps to make the younger pupils familiar with the secondary school environment and confident to enter it.
42. Generally all pupils with special educational needs follow the standard school curriculum. The system of setting based on ability is effective. Individual education plans fully reflect the requirements of the statement of special educational need and they are used well by teachers. Support assistants working in the classroom help pupils, but there are not enough to provide sufficient support for all groups. There is no coherent programme of additional support and very few pupils benefit from specialist withdrawal lessons to address their specific needs. Good and effective support is provided in literacy and numeracy using a computer based learning programme on three lunchtimes each week and in some mathematics lessons; this is proving worthwhile. In Years 10 and 11 appropriate arrangements are made for groups of pupils for whom formal courses have proved inappropriate to follow a vocational course which includes additional experience of work related learning.
43. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Some subjects, notably English, history and religious education, make an effective contribution to pupils' awareness of the varieties of beliefs and values held by individuals and societies. Pupils are given opportunities to explore emotions, reflect on their own values and are alerted to the non-material dimension of human beings and how beliefs and values interrelate with behaviour and social customs.
44. The school offers all pupils three acts of collective worship each week. Assemblies, during the period of inspection, were interesting and worthwhile experiences. However, the school is not meeting its statutory obligations in full and some subjects miss opportunities to contribute to pupils' spiritual development.
45. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's aims, code of conduct, anti-bullying policy and system of rewards and sanctions offer pupils clear guidelines for positive behaviour. Many pupils know what constitutes acceptable behaviour. In many subjects pupils have opportunities to explore such themes as prejudice and discrimination, slavery and child labour in the nineteenth century, bullying, drug abuse, genetic engineering and the disposal of radioactive waste.
46. The provision for pupils' social development is good. All subjects offer pupils opportunities to develop and practise basic social skills. The school's pastoral arrangements contribute well towards pupils' social development. The majority of pupils co-operate well in class, on visits and in musical, dramatic and sporting activities. Pupils have varied opportunities for taking responsibility such as becoming prefects or library helpers, participating in the school council, serving at the Luncheon Club for senior citizens, acting as form and team captains and as head boy or girl. Many pupils engage in activities to raise money for charities such as the NSPCC. In religious education and personal and social education pupils learn about the rights and responsibilities of family life and citizenship. The school's positive behaviour strategies are supported by its effective pastoral provision.
47. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. In several subjects and in a varied range of extra-curricular activities, especially in drama, music and sport, pupils have many opportunities to learn about British culture past and present. A few pupils gain first-hand experience of European cultures by visits to France and Italy. Pupils have recently benefited from visits by a sculptor and the Samba and Ludos dance groups who performed and worked with pupils.
48. Pupils' learning about other cultures is currently enhanced by the presence of a Japanese teacher. In some subjects, pupils learn about non-European cultures such as African and Chinese textiles and fashion, Roman architecture and art, features of North American Indian, Japanese and Brazilian

life, poetry by black authors and the inter-relationship between beliefs and culture in five world religions. Visits to ethnic minority centres and visitors from such centres are beginning to feature more prominently in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

49. The quality of the pastoral care of pupils throughout the school is good. A well-organised tutor system is supported by heads of year and pupils speak highly of the support they receive from both their form tutors and heads of year. A deputy headteacher successfully monitors the pastoral work throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well and parents report that they are pleased with this support. Pupils meet their tutors for fifteen minutes on two occasions in the week. In addition, a tutor period takes place for one period each week when tutors monitor pupils' progress and check logbooks. This time is not used effectively enough by many tutors; much of the intended work is covered in well under the time allocated. The use made of the morning and lesson tutor time does not link to the school's personal and social education programme.
50. The pupils' logbooks are used well to record homework and as a means of communication between school and home; both pupils and parents value them. Opportunities are available for parents to make comments in them on their child's progress. Subject teachers set learning targets, recorded in logbooks, and the pupils' self-assessments, which are also recorded in logbooks, contribute eventually to the pupil's Record of Achievement.
51. Pupils are aware of the progress they are making but reports to parents are variable in quality and do not always indicate what pupils have covered in subjects or how they can improve. The mentoring of pupils in Year 11 by tutors and members of the senior management team identifies areas of weakness and is used to raise standards in the GCSE examinations. Pupil successes are recorded and valued and good behaviour is recognised through merit awards. Pupils have a very clear grasp of the school's code of conduct. This results in the very positive ethos in the school.
52. There are few incidents of bullying and pupils state that all reported incidents are dealt with successfully by the school. Incidents of sexism and racial harassment are virtually non-existent.
53. The school monitors attendance effectively and there is good support from the education welfare officer. Tutors and heads of year involve parents at an early stage of non-attendance and parents report that they are pleased with the school's response.
54. Procedures for child protection are very good and support from the social services is also very good. There is a whole-school policy for health and safety but risk assessment has not yet been co-ordinated throughout the school. This is an aspect that has not improved since the last inspection. Arrangements for first aid are good and a number of key staff have been trained. Some minor concerns on health and safety were reported to the headteacher.
55. The initial identification and assessments of pupils with special educational needs are good due to the close relationships that are enjoyed with the contributory primary schools. A full assessment of all pupils shortly after their arrival at the school provides a thorough diagnosis of pupils' needs. This is followed by a regular and well thought-out programme of assessment to chart pupils' progress and their on-going requirements. Records are well maintained and up-to-date; information is used effectively to review the progress of individual pupils.
56. There are clear and effective arrangements for supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties. The special educational needs co-ordinator works in co-operation with the pastoral staff to monitor their needs. There are clear strategies for support and the school has appointed learning support assistants to work with the pupils in the classroom.
57. The school's general procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and have improved considerably since the last inspection. More comprehensive and effective procedures are now in place. Under-performance is now identified and pupils are set appropriate targets.

58. There is a central record-keeping system and comprehensive and accurate records are kept on all pupils. This supports the pupils' progress by providing them with a clear picture of how well they are attaining and where they should focus their efforts in order to reach higher standards of attainment. This has a marked impact on the pupils' progress. Some departments have effective assessment policies that are followed consistently by teachers. In the majority of departments assessment is accurate and related to National Curriculum or GCSE requirements, although in history, art and physical education this relationship was not always clear.
59. There is good practice in target setting, based on a range of assessments, including grade predictions. These are used to raise the expectations of pupils and teachers. Pupils are involved in their own assessments. This has enabled departments to set targets which are realistic. Subjects generally make good use of assessment information to inform their planning of the curriculum.
60. The school is part of the Lancashire Value Added project. Good use is made of the data provided by the project to make predictions of levels of attainment of individuals at 14 and 16 years of age. A recent report and recommendations from Manchester Metropolitan University on the management of target setting has helped the school to improve its policy on assessment and target setting.

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

61. Although only a small number of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and a small proportion returned the questionnaire, responses and comments show that most fully support the school's efforts and are satisfied with its achievements. The fact that the school is oversubscribed and that a number of past and present pupils are the children of members of staff is testimony to its standing in the local community.
62. Most parents agree that pupils make good progress and are learning to become mature and responsible. They believe that teaching is good and that teachers have high expectations, setting work that is demanding in order to stretch all pupils appropriately. Parents are pleased with the way the school responds to queries and concerns. They find staff helpful and approachable and think there is a caring atmosphere in which good relationships promote mutual respect. The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made by parents.
63. A small number of those who completed the survey were unhappy with the amounts of homework set and the range of activities provided outside lessons. The inspection team finds the criticisms largely unjustified. Homework is set in accordance with an agreed timetable. Pupils themselves, and most parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, agree that the amounts of homework set are about right. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that cater for many of the pupils.
64. The quality and range of information for parents about the school and about pupils' progress are good. The prospectus and termly newsletters are written in a simple, friendly style and are supplemented by letters home whenever necessary. For example, when pupils are chosen to be prefects, the school writes to parents emphasising how prestigious it is to be selected for this important post.
65. Parents' evenings, when parents are able to discuss pupils' progress with teachers individually, are held once a year for each year group. There are additional meetings for parents of Year 7 to check how new entrants to the school have settled down, for parents of Year 9, to assist with option choices for GCSE, and for parents of prospective pupils to see what the school has to offer to their children.
66. In addition, parents are able to keep track of pupils' progress through the very effective student logbook, which contains termly assessments as well as providing a weekly checklist of academic and personal achievements. Most parents value the logbook highly and some use it as a means of communicating with teachers. The annual school reports contain summaries of what has been taught, but the comments on pupils' attainment do not relate to these summaries in most cases. The majority of reports are very general and do not give sufficient information about what pupils know,

understand and can do. When targets for improvement are set and included in reports, they are rarely specific.

67. Attendance at parents' meetings averages 70 per cent, showing that most parents are seriously interested in the progress that their sons and daughters are making. When the personal targets of Year 10 pupils were reviewed, over 80 per cent of parents were present. Parents are keen to become school governors and often continue to give their support as co-opted members when their initial term of office is complete. There is a thriving parent/teacher association, which organises social and fund-raising events. As a result, the school is able to purchase expensive additional resources for the pupils, such as music and physical education equipment.
68. The pastoral system ensures close liaison with parents when it is necessary to discuss concerns. Most parents are keen to co-operate with staff to solve problems related to behaviour or attitudes to work, while those whose children have special educational needs work closely with staff to see that pupils gain maximum benefit from the school's provision. Almost all parents attend the special needs review meetings. When events involving pupils take place, for example, music and drama productions, they are always very well supported.

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

69. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher works with commitment and energy and has a thorough knowledge of the school; he leads the school very well. The deputy heads are able and similarly hardworking and committed to improvement. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection because the senior management team, supported by a capable and conscientious governing body, has a clear sense of purpose. Standards are rising in the majority of subjects and appropriate action is being taken in areas where standards are not good enough. Staffing difficulties, notably in modern foreign languages and religious education, are being addressed but, at the moment, largely remain unresolved.
70. The school's aims are clear and amplify well the mission statement. The aims are largely met, more for girls than boys in some ways, as girls generally work harder and achieve higher standards than boys. A significant minority of boys lack ambition but the school is actively taking steps to address this. The school is trialling single sex groups in several subjects but it is too early to comment on the effectiveness of this work yet. The intention of establishing good relationships amongst all involved in school is achieved well.
71. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are organised well. The senior staff have observed all staff teaching and provided full feedback for them. Heads of departments are also involved in monitoring the work of their colleagues. Much informal monitoring of teaching also takes place. Most heads of departments are capable managers, leading their teams effectively. The management and leadership of English and design and technology are particularly effective. Some senior staff undertake too wide a range of tasks and are not able to complete all jobs satisfactorily. Consequently the management of the history department, for example, is unsatisfactory. Additionally, the management of physical education and religious education is not satisfactory. Senior staff are clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. Weaker teachers are supported and many staff benefit from the good training that is offered. The arrangements for 'performance management' are effective.
72. The school's development planning process is good although governors are not yet sufficiently involved in this. The school's plans are fully evaluated. The priorities identified are appropriate. The action being taken to fulfil the plans is largely effective. Planning does not, however, focus specifically enough on areas of weakness, although these are well understood and are being tackled. The departmental development planning is of mixed quality; much is good and that in art, English and modern foreign languages is particularly good. Some (history for example) is of lesser quality and does not identify clearly enough what needs to be done to raise standards.
73. There is a shared commitment to improvement among all staff and governors. The morale of staff is high and all work together with a common goal. The governors are well informed of what is going on

in school. There is much evidence of improving standards, and the governing body monitors the school's progress satisfactorily. Governors have not, however, ensured that the statutory requirement that each pupil attend a daily act of collective worship is implemented or that the pupils in Years 10 and 11 have sufficient time for religious education. The ethos for learning is positive.

74. The arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs are good and meet all statutory requirements. All statements of educational need and reviews of these are up-to-date and appropriate arrangements are made for all key members of staff to contribute to the comprehensive information provided for the annual review statements. Leadership of the department is good. There is a clear sense of direction, the department is well organised and planning is thorough.
75. There is effective liaison between the department for special educational needs and the subject departments. The quality of the information provided for subject teachers is good. Additional learning support assistants have been appointed since the last inspection. They are well deployed and good opportunities are provided for their training. There are still not enough assistants to provide sufficient support for all classes with pupils with special educational needs, although there are firm plans to make further appointments. There is no regular systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of the work of the special educational needs department across the school to support subject departments and strengthen the provision. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is spent wisely.
76. The school has many strengths in terms of equality of opportunity. It responded quickly to the criticism of the curriculum raised in the last inspection report, and all now have equal access to GCSE courses. Very positive efforts are being made to raise boys' attainment, achievement and aspirations. As part of this, the school is working with feeder primary schools and another secondary school to formulate common strategies to improve boys' academic performance. The school is also successfully involving parents in the work. There are still some inequalities in the provision of activities, as dance is not offered to boys in Year 9. Information and communication technology, as a GCSE subject in Years 10 and 11, is only offered to pupils in the top two sets. Pupils who wish to take music at GCSE in the current Year 11 take it after school as an additional subject.
77. The finance committee of the school's governing body has a clear understanding of the school's budget and the constraints that limit spending. Each department is responsible for producing its own plan for future development and departmental bids for funding are considered in the light of the overall priorities identified by the senior management team and governors. Funding is carefully allocated according to defined priorities, all of which are targeted at improving the quality of education offered to the school's pupils.
78. Expenditure is closely monitored by school staff and governors to ensure that spending is on target and that expected limits are not exceeded. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher and key departmental staff, which, in conjunction with their own visits to school, enable them to determine whether good value for money is being achieved.
79. Routine financial control and school administration are very efficient and effective. The recent audit report was largely complimentary about the school's systems and its few minor recommendations are now being implemented.
80. The school makes good use of new technology to support administrative systems, to track pupils' progress and to analyse educational data so that funding can be appropriately allocated each year. The clerical and administrative staff provide effective and much-appreciated support for the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
81. The principles of best value are clearly understood and adhered to. For example, the school compares its performance and costs with those of similar schools, consults with pupils, parents and staff on new developments, carefully explores the rationale behind management decisions and seeks best value for money in the purchase of supplies and services. Taking into account the standards

achieved by pupils, the overall effectiveness of the school's provision and its efficient use of resources, the school provides good value for money.

82. There are enough appropriately qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum in almost all subjects. However there are significant staffing problems in modern foreign languages and religious education resulting from long term absences and recruitment difficulties. These are having an adverse effect on the quality of learning and standards in these subjects. The progress of Year 10 pupils in physical education is being disrupted because several teachers on temporary contracts are teaching them for short periods of time.
83. The small amount of teaching of English, design and technology and information and communication technology by non-specialists is not adversely affecting standards. The turnover of staff has been unusually high in recent years and there has been an influx of young teachers. There is now a good balance of gender and experience. The pupil to teacher ratio is more favourable than in most secondary schools of this size. The proportion of time which teachers spend teaching is lower than that in similar schools. These favourable ratios have been achieved so that the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs receive good support.
84. The competent teacher-librarian and the capable library resource technician undertake their duties effectively. There is enough technical support; this is particularly good in art. The amount of support for pupils with special educational needs has increased significantly since the last inspection. However, more of this is still needed in English and design and technology.
85. The professional development needs of staff are identified and largely met. Much effective training takes place on closure days. A recent one considered strategies for raising the achievement of boys. There is a comprehensive programme of induction for both newly-qualified teachers and other teachers taking up appointments. This is very much appreciated by the beneficiaries. The trainee teachers from the local institutions of higher education are well supported. They introduce new ideas and approaches to teaching as well as providing additional income.
86. The provision of accommodation is satisfactory overall. All departments have sufficient, and almost all have good quality, accommodation. There has been much improvement since the time of the last inspection. The performing arts centre, which was being built at the time, now provides good accommodation. A new music suite has been added to the school and a very good quality new dining room built. Toilets have been refurbished. The security fencing has been extended. Parts of the site are very attractive, notably a very attractive garden courtyard used by pupils as a social area in fine weather. All these improvements have enhanced the learning environment. A building programme currently in progress and due to be completed by September 2001 will provide additional accommodation for textiles, food technology and science as well as an extra general classroom.
87. There are, however, some unsatisfactory aspects. The accommodation for design and technology, although sufficient, is in poor condition. Some of the corridors are narrow and some rooms too small for the size of groups taught in them. The playing fields are poorly drained. Parts of the site are untidy and poorly maintained and although litter is not a major problem, there are some areas where litter has been allowed to accumulate, or example, in a pond and courtyard area near the art room. There are no social areas indoors for pupils' use.
88. The funding of resources for learning is above that in similar schools. There was a marked increase in 2000 over the previous year. All the shortages noted in the last report have been made good and allocations to all departments are adequate. There has been significant improvement and upgrading of facilities in the much-improved library. Much poor and outdated stock has been discarded and a more attractive selection of suitable stock is being built up. An adjacent room has been developed into an additional computer room. These computers, however, are outdated and await replacement. An imaginative development plan is in place and the whole library area is very well managed. The overall provision of computers is a little below the national average. Most machines are of good quality but many departments make too little use of them.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. In order to improve the quality of education further, the governing body and senior staff should now:

- (a) Resolve the staffing recruitment problems, especially those in modern foreign languages and religious education. (See paragraphs 18, 30, 176, 202 and 208)
- (b) Raise standards of 14 year olds in history, physical education and religious education by improving the management of these subjects and improving assessment and schemes of work in history and physical education. (See paragraphs 5, 71, 153, 159, 160, 192, 193, 200 and 208)
- (c) Improve standards in geography at all stages by improving questioning techniques, using a wider range of resources and continuing to implement recent changes. (See paragraphs 5 and 144)
- (d) Improve the standards of information and communication technology across the curriculum by ensuring that all staff are confident and competent to use computers in their lessons. (See paragraphs 12, 87, 109, 115, 125, 133, 160 and 172)
- (e) Increase expectations of what the middle ability 14-year-olds can do in mathematics and enter more pupils for a higher tier SATs paper in mathematics. (See paragraphs 4 and 106)
- (f) Increase the time allocated to religious education for 15 and 16 year olds and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to attend a daily act of collective worship. (See paragraphs 36, 44, 72 and 203)

In addition to the above issues, the governors and senior staff may wish to tackle the following less important issues:

- Ensure that there is enough support for all pupils with special educational needs. (See paragraphs 42, 74 and 83)
- Improve the use of form time. The one-hour allocation per week plus two brief morning sessions is more than generous for monitoring pupils' progress and could be used also for personal and social education work. (See paragraph 49)
- Improve the quality of school reports: they do not indicate clearly enough what pupils can do or how they can improve their work. (See paragraphs 51 and 65)
- Carry out any remaining Risk Assessments. (See paragraph 143)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	156
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	75

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.5	15.5	45.2	32.3	2.6	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	783
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	144

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	216
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	8.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	81	70	151

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	40	46	41
	Girls	52	41	36
	Total	92	87	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (61)	58 (57)	51 (49)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (29)	36 (31)	24 (17)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	39	31
	Girls	48	42	38
	Total	80	81	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	53 (57)	54 (60)	53 (46)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (27)	30 (28)	24 (19)
	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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	78	69	147

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	27	67	73
	Girls	34	66	68
	Total	61	133	141
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	41 (32)	90 (86)	96 (96)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	31.8 ( 28.9 )

per pupil	National	38.4 (38.0)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	778
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	84	3
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)	49.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	277

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.6
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	22.4
Key Stage 4	21.1

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,828,755
Total expenditure	1,792,883
Expenditure per pupil	2323
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,595
Balance carried forward to next year	62,467

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	750
Number of questionnaires returned	100

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	57	10	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	57	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	66	8	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	55	18	2	2
The teaching is good.	27	69	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	51	10	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	43	1	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	20	69	8	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	31	61	4	3	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	65	1	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	52	11	3	2

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

### **ENGLISH**

90. Pupils' overall standard of attainment at the age of 14 is in line with that found nationally. In national tests in 2000 the percentage of pupils reaching at least level 5 was close to the national average and the percentage reaching at least level 6 was above average. Girls did better than boys. Test results in English are better than those in the other core subjects. The school's performance in these tests was above average in comparison with similar schools. There has been a consistent upward trend in results over recent years with standards rising more quickly than they have nationally. Most pupils achieve well.
91. In the GCSE examinations for both English language and English literature in 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* to C was well below the national average but the percentage reaching grades A\* to G in language was in line with it. Girls performed better than boys. Although results were less good than those of the previous year, there is an overall upward trend. All pupils are now entered for both the language and the literature papers and that is a step forward since the last inspection. Pupils do less well in language than in some of their other subjects but better in literature than in most.
92. In work seen during the inspection, 14-year-old pupils are attaining standards in line with the level expected nationally. Taking their prior attainment into account, pupils are making good progress, often achieving higher than would be expected. At the age of 16, pupils' work is close to levels found nationally and reflects the steady progress and good achievement over recent years. The identification and close monitoring of the progress of a group of pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are on the borderline between grades C and D has assisted improvement.
93. Almost all pupils throughout the school listen attentively and work well in pairs and small groups. The quality of speaking is higher than that commonly found. All but the lowest attaining pupils answer questions audibly and fluently. By the age of 14 a significant majority of pupils use the spoken form of standard English. High-attaining pupils in Year 9, for example, responded eagerly and accurately to rigorous questioning about plot and character in *Twelfth Night*. They showed detailed knowledge of the play and developed articulate, extended answers when challenged. Pupils of average attainment in Year 10 read aloud the final stage of *A View from the Bridge* with confidence and some sense of characterisation. A few low-attaining pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 do not speak audibly when answering and fail to link ideas coherently. Pupils are confident and courteous in informal talk with adults.
94. Overall attainment in reading in all year groups is close to that expected nationally. The great majority of pupils read well enough to understand and enjoy the wide range of literature that they encounter. A small minority of pupils in Year 7 and 8, with reading ages below their actual ages, find difficulty reading aloud and are not fluent or audible, failing to make good sense of a text. Such pupils receive skilled professional support and make good progress by the time they are 14. All pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are encouraged to read widely and keep a record of their reading that is regularly checked. Good use is made of the improved stock of fiction in the library. By the age of 14 pupils are reading a wider range of good quality fiction than was the case during the last inspection. Pupils in Year 9 understand the importance of plot, character and themes in great literary works such as *Twelfth Night*. By the age of 16 the majority of average and high-attaining pupils develop a mature, critical understanding of poetry, plays and novels and identify accurately such key elements as imagery, structure and the use of language. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 11 grasp the main features of plot in novels and plays but fail to understand more complex aspects of character and themes.
95. The overall standard of the written work of 14-year-old pupils is in line with that found nationally. They write with enthusiasm and interest about a wide range of subjects and for different audiences and purposes. The written work of high-attaining pupils in Year 9 is generally well planned, carefully

presented, skilfully crafted and accurately written. Accurate punctuation of direct speech is a particular strength. Lower-attaining pupils also enjoy writing but make frequent errors with technical details, especially sentence structure and the expression of ideas. They do not think clearly what they want to write before putting pen to paper. The written work of some high-attaining 16-year-old pupils is of outstanding quality and matches the requirements for grades of A\* or A in the GCSE examination. Much of the best writing in Year 11 springs from the study of literature. Such work is characterised by detailed understanding of the text, careful preparation, skilful structuring as well as accurate use of paragraphing, sentence structure and vocabulary. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 11 produce writing that is generally brief and inaccurate in spelling and punctuation.

96. Pupils throughout the school are, in the main, well motivated and eager to learn. They generally sustain concentration well and many clearly enjoy their work. Relationships within the classroom are almost always positive and purposeful. Pupils work well together and respect the views of others. A few, however, by the age of 14, have very short concentration spans and become disaffected. A small minority of pupils in Year 10, both boys and girls, appear to be disengaged from learning and their behaviour adversely affects the quality of learning of others. The great majority of pupils, however, are pleasant, caring young people who want to succeed.
97. The quality of teaching is good overall. All seen was at least satisfactory and three quarters was good. It was very good or better in one third of lessons. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. Lessons are carefully planned and thoroughly prepared. Pupils know just what is expected of them and respond well to effective teaching. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are very skilled at preparing them for national tests and examinations. Content of lessons is carefully matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are taught with great sensitivity and purpose. Relationships within the classroom are generally positive. Teacher use a wide range of appropriate methods.
98. In the best lessons, recent learning is quickly revised, pupils are clear about their tasks, targets are set, pace is good, a wide range of language activities is covered and finally, learning in the lesson is consolidated. In less successful lessons, teachers talk for too long, targets are not clear and pace and focus are lost with the result that pupils lose concentration and motivation. Pupils' work is conscientiously and constructively marked with much helpful comment. The assessment and recording of pupils' achievement and progress are very good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.
99. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There are close links with feeder primary schools and parents are kept well informed about pupils' progress. The department has contributed significantly to the school's language policy. The management of the department is highly efficient and leadership is excellent.
100. In most other subjects across the curriculum the quality of speaking and listening is good. Only in art and history are pupils not encouraged to use talk as an essential way of learning. Pupils listen attentively in almost all subjects. The good quality of oral work in most subjects points to the effectiveness of this aspect of the whole school literacy policy.
101. The reading comprehension of the great majority of pupils in virtually all subjects is adequate for them to understand textbooks and other printed materials. Only in geography is the standard of reading unsatisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud in some subjects and do so fluently and articulately.
102. The standard of written work in most subjects matches that found nationally. In art and geography writing is weak with spelling being particularly poor. In the GCSE course in physical education, pupils' writing is careless in detail and presentation. Overall, the standard of written presentation is satisfactory. In design and technology and history pupils produce good extended writing.

## **DRAMA**

103. Drama is taught as a separate subject throughout the school. By the age of 14 pupils achieve standards close to those found nationally. They work effectively together in groups, listening patiently and arriving at agreed conclusions. The standard of speech is above average and pupils improvise lively dialogue. Some other aspects are weaker, particularly movement and spatial awareness. High-attaining pupils in Year 8 remained in role for some time and developed characters further through dialogue. A low-attaining group in the same year, however, did not remain in role for long and did not sustain concentration well.
104. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 who have opted for the subject follow the GCSE course. The overall standard of work is close to that found nationally. In the GCSE in 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* to C was marginally below the national average. In their final preparation for examination pupils collaborated well in polishing their presentation. There is a wide range of levels of attainment with one or two pupils well above average in many aspects, especially confidence in speech, movement and the use of body language.
105. The great majority of pupils behave well and know the special demands of studio discipline. A handful of low-attaining pupils in Year 8 did not always remain quiet during their classmates' presentations. The subject is a popular option and numbers choosing it are rising rapidly. It makes a valuable contribution to the cultural life of the school with a club, theatre visits and regular productions. Senior pupils take their productions to local primary schools. The quality of teaching is almost always good or very good; none was less than satisfactory. The department is managed with great energy and enthusiasm.

## **MATHEMATICS**

106. On entry to the school, standards of achievement in mathematics are below average. The standards achieved in the national tests taken by 14-year-olds in 2000 were below the national average. When compared with similar schools the results were still below the national average. Girls achieve better than boys do at this stage. In 1999 the national test results at 14 were average compared with national figures. At GCSE the mathematics results for both boys and girls are significantly below the national average for grades A\* to C. For grades A\* to G the results are closer to the national average but are still below. Pupils do significantly poorer in this subject than in their other subjects. At GCSE boys do significantly better than girls for the higher grades, A\* to C, but much poorer for all grades, A\* to G.
107. Standards of work seen are average for 14- and 16-year-olds. In Years 7 to 9 good use is made of a computer package to improve the competence of pupils in basic numerical skills although pupils have too little time using the computers to make the work fully effective. However, the numeracy work being undertaken is succeeding in improving the basic numerical skills in Year 7. Pupils cover the National Curriculum well in Years 7 to 9. Their facility with all aspects was amply demonstrated. Many use and understand probability, solve equations and deal effectively with all aspects of shapes including naming them and finding areas and volumes. Pupils of all abilities use mathematical instruments to construct shapes to varying, but mostly acceptable, degrees of accuracy. Upper-ability pupils tackle more demanding work successfully, with strengths in algebra at this stage and the pupils with special educational needs also achieve appropriately. Middle-ability pupils often achieve less than they should as they are insufficiently challenged; many produce incomplete work and lack sufficient effort.
108. By the age of 16 the most able pupils deal with relatively complex arithmetical and algebraic questions accurately and can suggest innovative methods to solve problems. Some show an insecure grasp of accuracy and rounding, however. This was seen on work with square root values and quadratic equations. Quadratic graph work lacks sufficient accuracy, since some curves drawn are not sufficiently smooth. The pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately. The middle-ability pupils often do not achieve as well as they should; a number have incomplete work in their exercise books and their pace of working is often too slow. Older pupils understand and use Pythagoras' Theorem well and many demonstrate a facility with trigonometry at a level appropriate to their age. Overall and at all stages the work seen in algebra is of a good standard. Pupils' recall of earlier work is, however, often insecure.

109. Pupils have a satisfactory attitude to the subject and generally are making sound progress. The behaviour of the majority in lessons is good with most showing a desire to learn and progress in the subject. However, a small minority is disruptive and their learning, as well as that of others, suffers in consequence. This was especially the case with some Year 7 pupils, where an unacceptable level of silly behaviour was seen. Since the last inspection the standards of education have improved, but there has been little improvement in standards of attainment. Many of the issues raised in the last inspection have, however, been successfully resolved.
110. The teaching is good overall, and a little better than in the last inspection. It was a little better in Years 9 and 10 (where more than a half was very good) than in Years 7 and 8. The quality varied from excellent to satisfactory although one lesson was unsatisfactory. The teachers have very secure subject knowledge and lessons are generally planned well. The methods used are good and time is well managed. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is generally unsatisfactory. Homework is used to good effect overall to develop understanding. In some lessons there is insufficient challenge, particularly for middle attainers, and the pace is too slow on occasions. In a small number of lessons, time is wasted because pupils are waiting for others to finish work before they are set further work to do. Not all teachers have extension work available for pupils who complete the set tasks quickly. Much marking is good but some is irregular and occasionally pupils do not know if what they are doing is correct. The teachers' genuine care for the pupils and their wish to help them succeed is a clear strength of the department.
111. Pupils' learning is good in the main in all years. Their knowledge and understanding is satisfactory overall and many try hard to do well. A substantial number could, however, work at a brisker pace. The vast majority show a clear interest in the subject. Most concentrate well and all except pupils of middle ability learn without too much dependence on their teacher. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress generally.
112. The management of the department is satisfactory. The documentation is good with relevant policies in place. There is also a clear scheme of work that the teachers follow. Teachers are deployed well but currently half of the staff are on temporary posts. The head of department, who carries out his duties satisfactorily, monitors the work, especially the marking, of the department insufficiently.
113. The school has a good numeracy policy in place. However, as yet individual departments do not have their own numeracy policies to support this. This is a weakness that the school recognises and proposes to address soon. However, the numeracy standards across the school are satisfactory and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. In science and design and technology pupils measure accurately and draw appropriate graphs. In geography they analyse basic graphs and in information technology spreadsheets are completed to a reasonable degree of accuracy.

## **SCIENCE**

114. The results obtained in the national tests for 14-year-olds in 2000 were below both the national averages and below those of similar schools for pupils gaining Level 5 and above. They were in line with national averages and those of similar schools for pupils gaining Level 6 and above. The results were not as high as those of 1999. Over the past three years the results have been below average with girls performing better than boys. The GCSE results in 2000 in dual award science were above the national average for boys and below average for girls. Although the boys did not gain A\* or A grades they obtained a very much higher proportion of C grades than the girls. The results in single science were average. The girls did not do as well in science as in their other subjects whereas the boys did better. The results in dual award science were not as good as those of 1999 but the proportion of pupils entered was much higher.
115. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment and the vast majority make good progress. Pupils attain standards that are average by the end of each of Years 9 and 11. By the end of Year 9 they have a sound knowledge and secure understanding of the subject matter. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 describe the digestive process using correct terminology. Most pupils plan

- investigations ensuring fair tests are carried out and make sensible predictions. Lower attainers correctly name and identify the positions of organs in the human body and with prompting describe the functions of some of them. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to make good progress. In one lesson higher-attaining Year 11 pupils had asked the teacher to revise topics with them and they showed good knowledge and understanding of the nervous system and control systems in the human body. Most pupils describe the action of diodes and calculate electrical quantities in circuits. Lower attainers in a lesson calculated numbers of sub-atomic particles from data. Many lower-attaining pupils require much prompting, however, to apply their knowledge and understanding.
116. Skills required in practical investigations are well developed. Year 7 pupils soon learn how to work safely and how to measure and observe accurately. In one lesson, Year 7 pupils carefully and skilfully manipulated microscopes when observing cells. Pupils have the numeracy skills to enable them to process their experimental results. They increasingly use correct terminology and units as they get older. Pupils take much care in the presentation of their work. Some examples of word-processed and work including graphics on display were of a high standard. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to gain 'hands on' experience in the development of their skills in information technology.
117. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to succeed. They settle quickly in lessons and respond well to the teachers' high expectations of behaviour and effort. They enjoy good relationships with teachers, listening carefully, confidently responding and willingly putting forward ideas. When in groups they discuss sensibly and work safely and productively. They carefully handle equipment. Their attitudes to homework are good.
118. Very clear improvements have been made since the last inspection. Standards have improved, as has the quality of teaching. The department has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last inspection report. Most pupils now make good progress. Pupils' behaviour is much better as is the quality of the presentation of their work. There is much more rapport within lessons and teachers' questioning is more focused. Lessons now are interesting and challenging. There are now more textbooks available.
119. The quality of teaching is good overall. All was at least satisfactory and it was good or better in over three quarters of lessons. It is very good or excellent in over one quarter of lessons. Teachers know their subject well and make it comprehensible to pupils of all levels of ability, often by using examples to which pupils readily relate. Pupils benefit greatly from the good knowledge that teachers have of examination board requirements. With public examinations imminent many lessons in Years 9 and 11 involved active revision and pupils developed sound techniques for answering questions in examinations. Effective use is made of previous examination questions in homework tasks. Teachers ensure pupils' literacy skills develop well. Key words are emphasised and are displayed prominently. In one lesson, pupils' learning skills benefited with the teacher reading a passage aloud after which the pupils were given a short comprehension test. Pupils willingly volunteer to read to the whole class and do so confidently and clearly.
120. Teachers know pupils very well and make full use of this knowledge to skilfully question them, to draw out information and to check understanding. Occasionally questioning is not sufficiently targeted to focus individuals and maintain their interest. Lessons are well planned usually with a good range of activities. Almost all are conducted at an appropriate pace. In one lesson, however, the teacher was moving pupils on too quickly and a few of them became restless towards the end of the lesson because there was too little variety. Relationships are usually good and much use of praise and encouragement successfully promotes motivation. Teachers are enthusiastic and exposition is informative.
121. Class management is good and pupils are kept busy. Group working is well organised. In an excellent Year 8 lesson the group was quickly settled and the objectives made clear. The teacher skilfully questioned pupils to recall work done previously. Exposition was lively with many everyday examples included. Practical procedures were carefully explained aided by the use of a computer projector. A very well managed group practical session followed. All pupils knew what they were doing and what they were trying to find out. They co-operated extremely well, working safely and

productively throughout. They discussed their findings sensibly with each other and interpreted the results. In a final summary the teacher checked that the objectives had been met.

122. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as others. These pupils are taught well in smaller groups and given suitable tasks. Teachers are well aware of the difficulties of individuals and give them extra help whenever possible. In some lessons there is extra effective support. Gifted and talented pupils also make good progress. They are taught well in separate groups. Some pupils in Year 7 are taught in single sex groups. The vast majority of boys and of girls preferred this arrangement. It is too early to assess the effects on attainment.
123. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. The many detailed comments help pupils move forward. Assessment procedures are comprehensive. Much use is made of the information obtained in setting targets for individuals. However some pupils, particularly the younger ones, are not fully aware of their targets.
124. All of the teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. They are all young and appropriately qualified and there is a good gender balance. The recently appointed head of department is most enthusiastic and competent. She manages the department well and is providing clear direction. She has already identified areas for development. All in the department work hard as a team with a united commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. One of the laboratories is in need of refurbishment. At present a few lessons are taught in rooms lacking laboratory facilities. A new laboratory is being built to address this problem.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

125. Over the period 1998-2000 the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the range A\* to C and A\* to G in GCSE examinations was broadly in line with national averages; however, the proportion gaining the highest grades was below average. Girls generally performed better than boys. Pupils' performance in this subject in 1999 and 2000 was significantly better than that in their other subjects.
126. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment is average overall. Pupils achieve well in the traditional art areas such as drawing, painting and three-dimensional studies although their written work and information and communication technology skills are not as good as they should be. Sketchbooks generally show good achievement in drawing skills with the gifted and talented pupils moving beyond technical competence towards a sensitive understanding of the media used as well as the subject studied. The best attainment stems from observational studies of natural or man-made objects. Pupils read with understanding the worksheets prepared for them by their teachers. They listen well but few pupils talk in whole-class situations. In less formal situations, such as when talking to the artist-in residence, they demonstrate very good verbal skills.
127. By the age of 16, pupils' attainment is above average. The majority of pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs particularly benefit from opportunities to weave or work with clay. The highest attainment is evident in decorative batik panels of flowers, silk-screen printing, large sculptural forms and abstract acrylic relief panels based on Cubist art. Girls indicate a preference for decorative work on fabric whilst boys respond well to drawing or three-dimensional work. The single period constrains progression by limiting time for reflection and self-evaluation. Literacy development is adversely affected by these arrangements, with too little time available for extended discussion or experimental studies. The gifted and talented are limited, by present time constraints, in fulfilling their potential.
128. Pupils enter the school with low skill development in drawing and painting and with limited knowledge of art or artists. They make good progress as they experience different techniques and have opportunities to visit places such as the local art centre or experience at first hand the work of visiting artists. During the inspection, pupils' expectations were raised as they interviewed the current sculptor and enjoyed his innovative sculptures of animals or insects made from found materials. Good worksheets and well-chosen laminated illustrations support pupils' learning by focusing attention or providing a visual stimulus to aid thinking. Excellent displays of ethnic masks,

experimental weaving and felt making, all produced by the pupils, indicate the quality of experience provided and the benefits that the majority of pupils have gained.

129. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is always at least good and in just under half of lessons seen very good. As a result, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are often very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, work well together and form a good team. Teachers are well supported by an efficient technician who was on one occasion observed supporting a girl with special educational needs by helping her stay on task and thus regain her self-esteem. One teacher has developed excellent resources, which clearly demonstrate the links between art and design and technology, regarding textiles. Teachers are very generous with their time, offering lunchtime and after-school access for pupils. Assessment systems are thorough and realistic although reports to parents are not always clear as to what the child can do and what could be better. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good although the department has no formal policy in place. Teachers are aware of the school literacy policy but current practice reveals missed opportunities for reinforcing key words and for encouraging pupils' verbal and written responses. Whilst teachers are undergoing training in information and communication technology and resources are much improved, at the time of the inspection there was little evidence of the impact on pupils' learning.
130. The leadership and management of this subject are good. There is a vision and commitment that supports teachers and pupils and provides good training for student teachers. Since the last inspection literacy development within art has been considered but although some progress has been made, staff awareness and strategies for improvement have yet to be developed. Good schemes of work are in place and plans are being considered for the awarding of National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9. Art makes a very good contribution to the life of this school as evident in the quality displays as well as the response of pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

131. The assessments by the teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2000 showed that pupils were achieving standards below the national average. The GCSE results for grades A\* to C in 2000 were in line with the national average. All pupils obtained at least a grade G. Girls performed better than boys and better than national averages at both key stages. The results at both key stages continue to improve.
132. The evidence from the work seen during the inspection showed that by the time they are 14, pupils' attainment is in line with the standard expected nationally. The department's concentration on developing skills in designing and making has ensured good standards, particularly in textiles and food technology. Pupils have a secure understanding of designing and ways of presenting their work to communicate their ideas for designs. Standards of technical skills are good. Pupils understand the working characteristics of a range of materials and how to use tools safely and accurately. The quality of finished products demonstrates an attention to detail, accuracy and precision.
133. In a Year 7 lesson on designing a logo to advertise a product, pupils were familiar with graphic and illustration techniques. When designing table lamps, pupils in Year 8 fitted their design to very specific criteria and used design processes confidently. In food technology lessons, pupils wrote a specification for sweet and savoury foods and produced products of a very high standard. Pupils made decisions about suitable ingredients and understood what constituted a healthy balanced diet. In a Year 9 textiles lesson, pupils prepared a detailed design brief for an item of clothing giving proper consideration to style, function and different fabrics.
134. From the evidence of pupils' design work and practical projects, attainment by the end of Year 11 is average. Current work with resistant materials was below what might be expected, work in textiles and food technology was above the expected standard and pupils paid particular attention to accuracy, quality of finish and the selection of fabrics, materials and ingredients. In design work, pupils had an understanding of construction techniques; presentation of work was of a high quality. Pupils have too little experience of control technology and computer aided design.

135. Pupils entered in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are below average overall. All pupils make good progress by the end of Year 9. Their knowledge increases steadily because they solve problems and work independently or in groups to develop their practical and design skills and their skills of investigation and research. Pupils make good progress in learning practical skills. The department emphasises good standards of graphical skills and presentation of work. By the end of Year 9, all pupils have experienced a suitable range of activities in resistant materials, electronics, graphics, textiles and food technology.
136. In a Year 9 lesson about analysing commercially produced products and then manufacturing their own cakes, pupils made good progress because they were briefed about what they had to do in detail, listened to instructions carefully and worked in teams to specific time limits. They increased their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils in Year 9 use their practical skills and knowledge to develop packaging for a food product in collaboration with a local fast food outlet.
137. Pupils make good progress by the age of 16 particularly in food technology and textiles. Their knowledge of designing and making improves steadily because they consolidate their learning satisfactorily and build on their skills of designing and their practical competence to solve more complex problems of textile design and their knowledge of food preparation.
138. By the end of Year 11 pupils carry out design research confidently to prepare a design specification. They use materials and processes to make items of furniture, clothing and food products. In textiles lessons they produce high quality designs to demonstrate their ideas and use their imagination to produce creative designs for a range of artefacts. They evaluate commercially produced snack foods as part of a project to prepare their own snack meals using a variety of basic ingredients. Pupils developed design briefs for their projects and could communicate their ideas verbally, graphically and in writing. At all stages, pupils with special education needs make good progress, especially when extra support is provided in class.
139. The behaviour of pupils and their attitude to learning are always good. Pupils show an interest in their work and maintain good levels of concentration. They listen attentively and watch carefully to understand what they must do and show pride in their achievements. They respond well to teachers and work without close supervision.
140. Teaching throughout the department is good overall. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and plan well to ensure that lessons have suitable pace. Practical activities are well organised and the supervision of lessons is effective, with appropriate interventions to support and sustain individuals pupils' learning. Work is linked well to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers' expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour are high. Learning objectives are clearly stated and work is flexibly planned to provide for pupils' different levels of attainment and interests. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and teachers give helpful oral and written comments. Homework is set to reinforce the content of lessons.
141. A lack of resources restricts teaching in computer-aided design and control. The department helps to develop pupils' literacy skills through discussion, writing design briefs and critical evaluation of their project work. Their vocabulary is extended through the use of key words and technical terminology. Pupils consolidate their numeracy skills through the use of calculation of length, weight, angles and time. There is no provision for gifted and talented pupils.
142. The leadership and management of the department are good, with a clear vision and direction. The department has specific aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships, and equality of opportunity for all is reflected in the work. There is an informal programme of monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching including peer observation of lessons. There is no scheme of work to assist teachers' planning or department handbook to outline clearly the policies, aims and objectives of the department. A development plan has been produced identifying key areas for improvement but at present this does not include costings, staff responsibilities and dates for completion.

143. The department had made good progress since the last inspection. There have been significant improvements in the GCSE results for food technology and textiles and some improvement in the use of design and graphics, particularly in textiles. The joint planning covering all aspects of design technology ensures that the work is challenging. There are systems in place to monitor the progress and attainment of pupils.
144. Accommodation is good, the size and number of rooms are appropriate. Several rooms are in a poor condition and do not present a good working environment. There are sufficient tools but the overall level of resources and equipment is poor. The lack of resources for newer technologies and information technology limits coverage of the programmes of study and the standards that pupils could attain. The amount of technician time available is inadequate to meet the specialist needs of the department. The department has not carried out a safety audit to ensure the safe organisation of resources and accommodation. The staff are aware of health and safety requirements. Risk assessments are not, however, in place.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

145. Pupils' overall level of attainment by the age of 14 is below that expected nationally. When teachers assessed pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2000, results indicated that their attainment was below the national average with girls achieving more highly than boys. The attainment overall of pupils taking the GCSE course is below the national standard. The GCSE results in 2000 were well below the national average, with pupils' performance in this subject below what they achieved in most other subjects. Standards are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. The department has analysed the results carefully. Clear and appropriate strategies have been implemented to raise standards. These include developing work in more depth, raising the attainment of boys and, particularly, improving the quality of coursework.
146. Pupils generally have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject but have difficulty in explaining how features in the landscape are formed and how places change. Pupils in Year 9, for example, know the main features of the weather and climate but have a limited understanding of the reasons for the patterns they describe. Higher-attaining pupils have a sound knowledge of the subject, and understand the relationship between people and the environment, and how fragile environments need protection. In Year 8 for instance, they produced well-researched extended accounts of the pressures to exploit the Antarctic continent and explained the need to give the area World Park status. Pupils have a weak knowledge of where places are and what they are like. By the end of Year 11 pupils can use basic geographical models to describe what places are like. One group of pupils in Year 10 used a model of the pattern of land use and shops in a typical city to describe the pattern of shops found in the centre of a local city.
147. Pupils can extract information from written sources and computers to answer questions and complete maps and diagrams. They complete written work accurately, but with the exception of the higher-attaining pupils, extended written work is weak and contains spelling errors. The majority of pupils define geographical terms correctly, but rarely make use of them when speaking or in written work. They construct graphs and analyse them correctly. All pupils listen carefully and follow instructions accurately.
148. The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers are always well prepared and organised so lessons start promptly and proceed smoothly. They have a good knowledge of the subject and give clear explanations, but questions are often brief and not pursued in enough depth. Lessons are very well planned with clear objectives and a variety of activities. The best lessons encourage pupils to use the knowledge gained to deepen their understanding. In one lesson, for instance, pupils in Year 9 used their geographical knowledge of the aims of a National Park to successfully plan the location of tourist activities around Lake Windermere with the least disturbance to the environment. A feature of all lessons is the focus on key geographical words to be used during the lesson. These are

displayed at the start and referred to as the lesson proceeds and, as a result, pupils make good gains in increasing their knowledge of geographical terms.

149. Expectations of behaviour and pace of working are sound, and consequently pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. The resources used are of good quality, but there is an over reliance on textbooks and worksheets. Visual stimuli are not used sufficiently to engage pupils' interest, deepen their understanding, and enable them to relate what they have learnt to features in real life. Marking is of good quality. Books are marked up to date with clear comments on what pupils have done well, what mistakes they have made and what they need to do to improve. Appropriate homework is set regularly.
150. Pupils generally learn well and make good progress. They arrive at lessons punctually, are well motivated, settle to work quickly and are keen to produce their best work. The majority are willing to be involved in the lesson, work at a good pace and maintain concentration throughout. They co-operate effectively with each other in paired and group tasks. Work in books is generally presented carefully and books are kept in good order.
151. Pupils with special educational needs generally make sound progress because they complete work accurately and the materials, explanations and activities are well matched to their needs. In one lesson, pupils in Year 7 were studying the location of settlements; they used the white board effectively to bring together their joint knowledge of the topic from previous lessons. They then worked in small groups, skilfully supported by the teacher and support assistant, to use this knowledge to choose the best location for a settlement on a map that was effectively adapted to their needs. Assessment at the end of the lesson showed that pupils could give clear reasons for their choice and that they had made good progress. The progress of the most able pupils is satisfactory, but they are not challenged sufficiently to reach the highest standards.
152. The scheme of work is well constructed and fully meets the national requirements. Fieldwork and the use of information and communication technology have been integrated into the scheme; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The procedures for assessment are good, with regular assessment of pupils' progress using a well-constructed range of tasks. The results are used effectively to support the pupils' progress. Reports provide parents with a useful outline of the work covered, but comments focus on attitude and effort and do not clearly indicate what pupils know and can do, and the progress they are making.
153. Leadership of the department is good. There is a clear sense of direction and the department is well organised. The head of department, who has only been in post for two terms, has effectively implemented an ambitious and worthwhile programme of development. Resources are sufficient and are of good quality, but the school library has a limited number of books and few other resources for the subject. The department has a shared commitment to succeed, a hard working staff and has the capacity to raise standards in the future.

## **HISTORY**

154. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment overall is below that expected nationally. Teachers assessed their pupils as being well below the national average at the end of Year 9 in 2000. Because the scheme of assessment lacks rigour and consistency, however, that assessment is unreliable. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was below that seen nationally and only a small proportion reached the highest standards. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
155. No pupils have followed a history course in Years 10 and 11 for the past two years, but as a result of successful planning and re-organisation by the department, almost thirty pupils will start a GCSE course in September 2001.
156. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 see the causes of past events and explain adequately the reasons for actions taken by people in the past. They explain and describe the past and most see that there are similarities and differences between the past and the present. The highest attaining pupils write well

at length. The written work of a significant number of pupils is, however, immature in style and presentation and often contains many spelling errors. Most pupils do not use sources effectively, except for information. They find making deductions difficult and, except for the highest attainers, are unable to evaluate the reliability and usefulness of evidence beyond identifying simple bias.

157. The attitudes of almost all pupils towards their work in lessons are good. Most show interest in their work and many ask questions of their teachers in order to find out more about a topic. Pupils in the main are co-operative and helpful. With a very small number of exceptions, pupils behave well, and in many lessons they behave very well. In a lesson with Year 8 pupils, where problems with computers meant the teacher had to try several different ways to access a web site, the pupils responded with admirable patience and very good behaviour.
158. As at the time of the last inspection, the teaching in the department is good overall and has many strengths. Teachers know their subject well and plan lessons effectively, taking account of the ability of their pupils and using appropriate resources. Pictures and diagrams were used well to help lower attaining pupils in Year 8 understand hand-production of cloth in the early nineteenth century and an appropriate web site was used to enable other pupils in Year 8 to begin to research the Black Death. Teachers manage pupils very well in almost all lessons, dealing judiciously with the small number of pupils who cause problems through poor behaviour. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are expected to work hard and behave well. Relationships are good and the majority of pupils respond to their teachers by paying attention, working hard and so making at least satisfactory progress in their learning.
159. In some lessons, effective use is made of links with other subjects such as English; in a lesson with higher-attaining pupils in Year 9, for example, the teacher referred pupils to such books as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *1984*. Most lessons for the lower attainers are broken into short activities followed by immediate feedback, allowing both teachers and pupils to check what has been learned, as, for example, in a lesson with Year 7 pupils on the Crusades. This type of lesson helps to maintain the motivation of the many pupils who have short concentration spans. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud in many lessons and teachers help the lower attainers with pronunciation. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriate standards and make satisfactory progress. For many lower attaining pupils, however, progress is hampered by their low literacy levels, which slow the pace of reading, oral work and the completion of written work.
160. There are, however, some weaknesses in some lessons which restrict the progress of some pupils. The higher-attaining pupils especially do not achieve high enough standards because they do not have sufficient opportunities in lessons to work independently, to talk and discuss at length and thus to form and express their own views. In some lessons the teachers dominate the oral work and although the quality of the teachers' performance is good, nevertheless, the pupils are not challenged to examine evidence, evaluate it and build up their own opinions. In a lesson about poverty in the late 1930s the teacher effectively used his own childhood experiences, but the pupils were not asked to talk about what they understood by poverty.
161. The subject meets the statutory teaching requirements for Years 7 to 9. The leadership of the department is unsatisfactory. The head of department has several other onerous roles within the school and within senior management, and does not have sufficient time to lead and manage the department effectively. As a result the scheme of assessment for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, as there is no co-ordinated system, no samples of tasks set for the current Year 9 and no standardisation of assessment among the teachers in the department. The arrangements for assessment being planned at the time of the last inspection have not been put into place. The schemes of work have not been updated to take account of recent changes in the curriculum. Members of the history department do not meet on a regular basis to discuss matters of importance for the improvement of the department. As at the time of the last inspection, there is insufficient support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs. The department does not make sufficient use of the local environment, nor of information and communication technology as a means of enhancing pupils' learning. There are no computers in the department and access to centrally-provided computers is not always easy at times to suit the department.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

162. No pupils were entered for the 2000 external examinations. Teacher assessment for 14-year-old pupils show that attainment was below the level expected in summer 2000.
163. Pupils enter the school with varied previous experience but with the benefit of regular information and communication technology lessons they make good progress and by the time they reach 14 years of age they are achieving the expected level. Pupils are confident users of the word processing application. They can access the program, enter the text in a variety of styles and know how to edit their work using the cut and paste facility. Pupils are beginning to use the desktop publishing facility with confidence. This was noticeable in a Year 9 *Small Theatre* topic. Here pupils produced well-balanced leaflets.
164. Pupils are establishing sound database skills. They enter the text and understand how to select information using the 'query' facility but their understanding of its use in a wider sense is too narrow, few pupils being able to give examples of where it might be used. Pupils have a sound understanding of a spreadsheet and use the formulae for calculations and then display their findings in graph form. Higher attaining pupils have a clear understanding of how to use the appropriate formulae to calculate percentages, noticeable in an advanced spreadsheet topic in Year 9.
165. Although pupils are developing a basic understanding of control technology using the *Logo* program (a simple control program), there are too few opportunities to experience more sophisticated programs. Consequently their overall knowledge of this element is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and benefit from extra support from learning assistants and from being linked with more confident pupils.
166. The overall attainment of pupils aged 16 is average. However, the knowledge and skills of pupils in the GCSE groups are above average. Pupils are using a range of applications with confidence. In Year 10, pupils have sound knowledge of the communication element; they have a clear understanding of the use of the *mail merge* facility. Pupils are beginning to develop a clear understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using information technology. This was evident when producing a register using different applications combined with a clear conclusion about the benefits. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of the use of a database and a clear understanding that it can contain sensitive information and the need for a data protection act.
167. The majority of older pupils have a satisfactory understanding of a multi-media presentation using the *Power Point* program to present a series of slides, incorporating art graphics and moving text. Although pupils have used control technology for measurement in science and design and technology, their understanding is too narrow and overall unsatisfactory.
168. Pupils at both key stages use the facilities of the Internet with confidence. They understand the benefits when researching information for topics and projects. The use of e-mail is underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and achieve appropriate targets. The overall standard of pupils' attainment has been maintained since the previous inspection. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
169. Attitudes to learning are good in general. Pupils behave well in lessons and respect the equipment. They co-operate sensibly and on occasions where the use of small screens makes observing demonstrations difficult, they show remarkable patience and perseverance.
170. The overall quality of teaching is good. One lesson observed was unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is used to effectively to demonstrate procedures. Teachers provide good support in lessons, helping and motivating pupils, leading to good learning. Lessons are generally well planned but there is an over emphasis on the learning of skills in Years 7 to 9 at the expense of understanding. The outcome of this is that pupils' knowledge of the use of information and communication technology in its wider sense is narrow.

171. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on full attention when explaining a new procedure, resulting in pupils starting their tasks promptly and making clear progress. However, learning is occasionally slowed due to lack of an interactive whiteboard or an overhead projector when teachers are demonstrating new procedures.
172. Good lessons are underpinned with well-focused questioning to make sure that pupils have a clear understanding of the task. Pupils responded well to this approach and were eager to contribute, showing a good level of interest and leading to a good level of learning. On the occasion when teaching was less effective, the planning and the organisation of the lesson were inappropriate to meet the individual needs of the pupils. A lack of practical activities resulted in pupils becoming restless and losing interest, leading to a slow pace of learning. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.
173. The management of the subject is satisfactory and the head of department provides good support for colleagues. The teaching is not monitored to ensure a consistent approach. The co-ordination of information and communication technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although hardware has been increased and updated since the previous inspection, the ratio of pupils to computers is higher than that nationally. This means that there are occasions when computers have to be shared resulting in slower learning. The good procedures for assessing pupils' progress ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of their progress and achievement and are aware of the areas that need to be improved.
174. Although some subjects are successfully using information and communication technology to support learning, the situation overall is unsatisfactory. However, satisfactory use was seen in four subjects. In English the word processor is used for best copies, data logging is used well in science, images are scanned in art, and in geography the Internet is used for research purposes. Modern foreign languages are in the early stages of development with the use of word processing and desktop publishing. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is generally unsatisfactory but good use was observed with a learning program for lower attaining pupils. The use in design and technology is very inadequate with no evidence of computer aided machinery or design. Little use was observed in history, music, physical education and religious education. The teachers' lack of confidence and competence is the main reason for insufficient use of information and communication technology. Training of teachers is in its early stages but where teachers do have confidence - in English lessons for example - the use of information and communication technology is contributing positively to pupils' skills and learning.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

175. Teachers' assessments in 2000 showed that, at the end of Year 9, pupils' overall level of attainment was below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving highly was well above the national average, however, suggesting that higher-attaining pupils studying French and German or French and Spanish were achieving this standard in both. In Years 10 and 11 attainment at grades A\* to C was close to national averages in German but below average in French and Spanish; this represents an improvement over 1999. All three languages were below average for A\* to G results. Good results were obtained in the Certificate of Achievement for German - 26 Distinctions and one Merit were awarded. Girls have consistently achieved better standards than boys. Standards have not, however, improved since the last inspection.
176. By the age of 14, standards of attainment are in line with the national average; most pupils achieve appropriately. Year 7 pupils progress well in their first year of a foreign language and are confident in their speaking skills. Many lower-attaining pupils throughout the Years 7 to 9 have difficulty interpreting taped speech in listening exercises. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in small sets and achieve success through short, simple tasks with immediate results. Such a Year 9 French set was revising vocabulary to do with items of clothing. Their final task was to colour in what four outlined figures were wearing. From complex paragraphs they needed to extract information as to the identity of the person, the clothes they were wearing and the colour the clothes were. This stretched them to the limit of their capabilities.

177. In Years 10 and 11 higher-attaining pupils manipulate the languages with confidence and produce written work of a high standard of fluency and accuracy. Middle-attaining and lower-attaining pupils have problems with more complex grammar and syntax, especially past tenses. The departmental target of 40 per cent A\* to C grades for 2001 follows that of the school and is similar to the previous year. The long-term absence of three members of the department, including both Spanish teachers and the main German teacher, is having an adverse effect on standards. The school is experiencing serious problems in recruiting specialist linguists. The continuity of teaching has been seriously disrupted for some groups, despite strenuous efforts such as specialists covering classes for some lessons and non-specialists supervising work and the provision of extra tuition after school for examination classes.
178. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, but misbehaviour by a minority of girls and boys has occurred during the present period of staffing uncertainties when pupils are taught by new or temporary staff. Pupils are eager to contribute to classroom dialogue, collaborate well in pair- and group-work, and show positive attitudes towards challenging work. Relationships between pupils are good. They listen carefully to what others contribute to the lesson and most accept the discipline of raising their hand before speaking.
179. Since the last inspection, many issues affecting standards have been addressed. New assessment procedures are in place for all pupils, the department is focusing on individual attainment and progress and developing the curriculum more in accordance with pupils' needs. A very detailed scheme of work supports this development. The acquisition of extra materials has provided opportunities for pupils to experience longer texts. In Years 10 and 11 adoption of the GCSE coursework option has enabled pupils to develop and extend their writing skills. Increased spending has allowed the department to invest in more resources and to provide sufficient texts for each teacher to use in class.
180. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Only one lesson, a victim of the present disruption, was teaching considered less than satisfactory. Teaching in two-thirds of lessons was good or better and the use of the foreign language in lessons has increased, both improvements since the last inspection. Most teaching observed was in French lessons, the main subject taught by the permanent specialist staff. One German and two Spanish lessons covered were taught by temporary specialist staff, one of whom had been in the school for only a week. The proportion of the foreign language used is sensibly adjusted to the needs and level of understanding of the group, but some opportunities for extending its use with higher-attaining groups were missed. All the teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject; they explain clearly and have a high standard of fluency.
181. Marking of work, where the teaching has not been disrupted, is consistent and frequent with appropriate and constructive feedback. The grading scheme reflects National Curriculum attainment levels or GCSE grades in key assessments, such as examinations or unit tests. Teaching is strongest when teachers know the needs of their pupils well and have high expectations of their performance. A Year 10 lower-attaining group was faced with a board-set reading test in the Certificate of Achievement in French. The teacher handled their nervousness and lack of confidence very sensitively, with appropriate timing and lots of patient explanations, praise and encouragement. The good lessons are well planned, paced and timed, and include a variety of activities, covering all four basic skills and effectively using different media. Appropriate homework is set. Insistence on accuracy in spelling and a greater awareness of grammar enable pupils to consolidate basic literacy skills.
182. Pupils show good recall of previous knowledge at all levels of attainment. They extend and consolidate that knowledge through increasingly varied and challenging activities. When combined with a pace appropriate to the nature of the group, good learning is achieved. For example, a mixed-ability Year 10 French group was practising the perfect tense by revising weather, food and drink. The sequence of short, sharp activities became gradually more complex. The homework was a challenging piece of writing which required retention, research and dictionary skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in Years 7 to 9.

183. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements despite the present circumstances. The department is currently reviewing provision of the second language to encourage more pupils to study two languages to GCSE. The new courses will allow information and communication technology to be formally integrated into the curriculum. The department has been very well managed in the present crisis and the acting head has received firm support from team and senior management. There has been clear educational direction in tackling the issues raised in the last report, with a departmental development plan closely following that of the school and clear policy statements on each issue.

## MUSIC

184. Teacher assessments of 14-year-old pupils showed that pupils achieved the level expected. In the results of the 2000 GCSE examination eight of the eleven pupils entered achieved an A\* to C grade with all pupils achieving a pass grade. These results are above the national average. There was no significant difference in the attainment between boys and girls.

185. By the time pupils reach 14 years of age their attainment is at the level expected. Pupils make good progress with performance skills. They identify the notes on the keyboard and play simple melodies that are rhythmically correct. Singing is of a good standard. Pupils sing with a pleasing tone, good extended phrases and with good pitch. This was most noticeable during a Year 9 singing lesson. Here pupils learned a new song that was performed with confidence and enjoyment, in particular by the boys. Pupils' composition skills are not as well developed as their performance skills. Their use of information technology programs to support composition is unsatisfactory. Many start with a low level of understanding of composition in Year 7. However, they do make progress and by the time they reach 14 they are producing tunes with an appreciation of a smooth melody line but pupils do not use their knowledge of primary chords to support their work. Pupils' understanding of different styles of music is not as good as it should be. Their knowledge and use of musical vocabulary is too narrow, mainly due to the limited opportunities to appraise music.

186. Higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils make good progress. They are encouraged to use their performance skills during lessons contributing to and enhancing group and class performances. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; they are fully integrated into lessons and achieve appropriate targets.

187. The attainment of 16-year-old pupils is above average. The three pupils in the Year 11 GCSE group are committed and competent musicians. Their individual performance skills are of a good standard and they are confident when performing and discussing their previous musical experiences. They have good knowledge of the main historical developments, naming the different periods of music with understanding. They recognise the changes of instruments and the main contributions made by composers. Pupils have produced compositions of varying styles that are harmonically correct to include compositions for voice, solo instruments and ensembles. All these compositions are of a good standard that have structure and creative development. Pupils in Year 10 are using their performance skills well to produce group compositions that show promising creative development. However, their knowledge of musical terminology and different styles of music are not so well developed. Insufficient use is made of information technology. Pupils with special educational needs progress well. They are often linked with more confident pupils and contribute to group performances. The standard of attainment has been maintained since the previous inspection.

188. The overall quality of teaching is good. No lessons were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this knowledge is used well to demonstrate styles of music and to accompany class performances. Pupils respond well to these demonstrations resulting in them making good progress with their performances. Good lessons are underpinned by a clear explanation of the task at the beginning of the lesson. As a result, pupils are quickly on task and learning is good.

189. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on quiet when explaining the skill. The result of this is that pupils have a clear understanding of what is to be achieved leading to good learning. This was most noticeable in a Year 8 lesson. Before starting the practical session pupils understood that a good

melody line needed to be smooth with only occasional leaps. Pupils responded well to this and the outcome was that pupils practised and produced melodies with a satisfactory melodic line. The planning of lessons is generally good, in particular for singing. There is however a need to develop planning to include a greater emphasis on listening to a range of different styles to develop appraising skills and pupils' self-assessment.

190. Teaching is less effective when insufficient time is spent on plenary sessions to highlight good work, give targets for future lessons and establish expected levels of behaviour. Very occasionally, pupils' attitudes and behaviour departed from the normal good standard, thus preventing the lesson proceeding with pace. A consequence of this was that learning was slowed.
191. The standard of extra-curricular music is high. The wide variety of styles of music available contributes well to pupils' musical development, their social development and the school's ethos. These activities are well supported by pupils, in particular the choir, where pupils are fully involved, producing good quality singing by soloists and examples of two part singing. Good examples of music making were seen with the steel band. Pupils enjoy these sessions and are proud to be included.
192. The management of the department is satisfactory. The head of department works hard and the open access of the department at dinner times and after school is having a positive effect on pupils' musical opportunities and development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

193. The standards achieved by pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2000 were below the national average. All pupils achieved a pass, however, with boys doing better than girls. The overall results have not improved since the last inspection although a higher number of pupils chose to study the course for 2001. Teachers' assessments in Year 9 in 2000 indicated that pupils' attainment was below the national average. This matches the standards observed in lessons.
194. Pupils arrive at the school with a low level of skill in games, particularly hitting, throwing and catching skills. By the age of 14 standards are below those expected in some aspects of the subject, but most pupils achieve well, nonetheless. Pupils understand the need for a warm up before activity, but most do not know the effect of exercise on the body. In Year 8, pupils are unable to play a game of rounders with adequate knowledge of the rules. Their batting skills are below average and throwing lacks accuracy. In Year 7, pupils lack the basic technique of running, most lacking stamina to complete a 100-metre sprint. Pupils in Year 9 demonstrated good fielding skills in cricket. They were accurate in throwing after retrieving a rolling ball and transferred the skill into a small-sided game with success.
195. By the end of Year 11 standards are in line with those expected. In the practical aspects of the dance course, pupils in Year 11 demonstrate standards above those expected. They plan and perform individual and group dances with understanding and co-operation. Their knowledge and understanding of rhythm and timing are good. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the structure of the heart and understand the circulation of blood in the body. Written work is below average and presentation is below that expected. Little use is made of word processing to enhance presentation.
196. Pupils in Year 10 play a game of rounders with knowledge and understanding but lack the techniques of bowling, throwing and catching. Two teachers teach this large class on alternate weeks and this is unsatisfactory as the discontinuity hampers progress. In Year 10, pupils have been recently introduced to trampolining and although standards are below those expected, they are making good progress. Most pupils can control their bounce routines; some link three movements together. In Year 11, pupils demonstrate good knowledge of basketball but they do not understand tactics and strategies of the game.
197. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally good, being better in Years 10 and 11 than in earlier years. Pupils studying the GCSE course demonstrate a mature and responsible attitude to their work. They are enthusiastic in their lessons, and most work hard. They listen carefully to

instructions and work co-operatively with a partner and in groups. Apart from some unsatisfactory behaviour in Year 7, behaviour overall is very good. Pupils with a special educational need are integrated into all lessons and they make satisfactory progress. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress.

198. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good and has improved since the last inspection. One lesson was unsatisfactory; pupils in Year 11 made no progress in a basketball lesson as learning objectives were not identified. In the best lessons, planning identifies learning objectives but teachers do not always consider specific activities or support for pupils with special educational needs. Pace in lessons is usually brisk and teachers manage classes effectively. In the GCSE dance lessons, teachers' expectations are high. Teachers possess good subject knowledge but that relating to the National Curriculum is less secure. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are very good and a range of extra-curricular activities is offered to all pupils. Learning is good at all stages; pupils are interested in their work.
199. School teams are successful, particularly in rugby, netball and badminton, and individual pupils have gained success at regional and county level in athletics and rugby. Team colours are awarded to pupils but there are few opportunities for pupils to receive any other awards or certificates apart from the GCSE.
200. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9 and is an improvement since the last inspection. Dance is taught to girls in Year 9 and not to boys. The amount of time allocated to the subject in Years 10 and 11 is barely adequate to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Some units are taught at both key stages for six weeks only and this is insufficient to allow progression and consolidation of learning to take place effectively. The school has been successful in obtaining the prestigious Sportsmark award.
201. An enthusiastic teacher committed to raising standards leads the department. The department has suffered from some instability in terms of staffing and this has affected standards. There were three supply teachers in the department during the inspection and although they are specialist teachers, there is a lack of curriculum continuity for some pupils. Management of the department is not satisfactory. Schemes of work are in need of updating. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 now meets requirements but there has been insufficient progress in assessment since the last inspection, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Reports to parents do not indicate what pupils have covered or ways in which they may improve. There is a clear safety policy but risk assessment has yet to be formally completed.
202. Accommodation is good but the outdoor hard area is in need of resurfacing. The all-weather pitch is poorly drained and lacks maintenance. Resources are good but information and communication technology is not taught or used in the subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

203. By the end of Year 9 the standard of pupils' work is in line with expectations. Most pupils are achieving more highly than would be expected in view of the staffing and recruitment difficulties in the department, which the school is making efforts to resolve successfully. Many pupils listen carefully, work co-operatively and contribute well in class discussion. In a Year 7 lesson on the resurrection, many pupils offered alternative explanations to the gospel narratives, sensibly challenged ideas, gave reasons and tried to make sense of the historical data. Pupils have a basic knowledge of beliefs and practices in five world religions. They know about such topics as the founders of faiths, holy books, festivals, symbolism and worship. They have difficulty in talking about their own beliefs and values and sometimes they confuse the beliefs and practices of different religions. In a Year 7 class on Hinduism, some found it difficult to distinguish between re-incarnation and resurrection. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress but have difficulty in expressing their ideas both orally and in writing. Such pupils benefited from additional in-class support, especially in making written responses to tasks. The written work of higher-attaining pupils is of a very good standard and is well presented.

204. There was insufficient evidence available to make a judgement about standards of 16-year-olds; no lessons were available for observation in Years 10 or 11. The content of the programme of study leading to a newly introduced short course GCSE is very relevant and follows smoothly from the programme in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are studying some contemporary moral and religious issues. Non-GCSE pupils learn about moral issues in such topics as war and peace, capital punishment, abortion, marriage and the family and euthanasia. In Years 10 and 11 a slender programme of religious education is part of the personal and social education programme. The school does not meet statutory requirements for the subject in Years 10 and 11, as set out in the Wigan Agreed Syllabus, 1999. The progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is diminished by insufficient time, a criticism made in the last inspection report, and by lessons being taught within a carousel system, which fragments the work.
205. The attitude of most pupils to learning is good. Pupils generally listen to teachers and to each other. Differing viewpoints are respected. Many show their interest by working co-operatively and by concentrating on tasks. Learning takes place in an orderly atmosphere, which is conducive to work and many pupils are keen to do well. The small minority who engaged in silly behaviour were quickly rebuked.
206. The teaching is good. Though only one of the religious education teachers is a specialist, the majority has a sound knowledge of the subject. Most lessons are effectively planned and teachers expect pupils to behave well and work hard. The aims of lessons are usually clear and shared with pupils. A range of teaching methods was observed which stimulated pupils' interest and facilitated understanding. These included penetrating questioning, discussing difficult concepts, offering lucid explanations, encouraging pupils to persevere with challenging tasks and engaging pupils in simple research exercises. In a Year 8 lesson on Muhammad, pupils made a time line and extracted significant facts from good quality learning resources and the teacher's exposition.
207. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and contain appropriately challenging tasks. In a Year 7 class of lower-attaining pupils a simplified worksheet required them to search for answers in a book in order to complete some sentences. Pupils worked with interest, persevered with the task and experienced a sense of achievement. Time was used effectively, except in one lesson where there were some minor interruptions and the allocation of time to some tasks was too generous. Most teachers have a good relationship with pupils; they create a positive learning environment and try to raise pupils' self-esteem.
208. Encouraging comments are sometimes written in pupils' books, but they need also to be helpfully critical, indicating clearly in what way(s) pupils could improve the quality of their work. Assessment data is used in the planning of work, in reporting to parents on pupils' progress and in contributing to a pupil's Record of Achievement. Although there were a few examples of word processing, teachers need to encourage greater use of information technology.
209. The head of religious studies was absent during the inspection; in consequence, leadership and management were unsatisfactory. Though many staff are committed to the subject and work well, a permanent, full time member of the department, with specialist qualifications, is needed to give greater stability to the department and enhance pupils' attainment. The departmental handbook needs to be revised to include statements about such issues as the formal monitoring of teaching in religious studies, a clear strategy for raising standards and an action plan which focuses on those aspects that most closely impinge on standards and which is realistically manageable within the stated time scale.
210. Classroom displays of pictures, writing and artefacts contribute to a stimulating learning environment. A programme of visits and visitors needs to be implemented to enhance pupils' understanding of minority religions and cultures in British society. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in Years 7 to 9.

