

INSPECTION REPORT

Broughton County High School
Woodplumpton Lane
BROUGHTON
Preston PR3 5JJ

LEA Area : Lancashire

School Register Number : 119759

Headteacher : Mr R Davies

Reporting inspector : Mr W S Deller

Date of inspection : 20 - 24 January 1997

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

Information about the school

Type of school : Comprehensive all-through

Type of control : County

Age range of pupils : 11-16

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address :
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Appropriate authority : Lancashire Education Authority

Name of chair of governors : Mr D Ridout

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Main Findings of the Inspection

1. Broughton High school is a very successful school which achieves high standards for its pupils; it has a talented, enthusiastic staff who consistently demonstrate professional commitment and initiative.

2. By the end of both key stages, the attainment of the vast majority of pupils is at least in line with national standards and many do much better than this.

3. Each year at the end of Key Stage 3 (aged 14), pupils take National Curriculum tests and are assessed by their teachers in English, mathematics and science. In 1996 average levels of attainment were well above national figures in all three subjects. The number of pupils achieving higher levels (level 6 or above) was about the same as the national average in English and was well above that in mathematics and science. This pattern of attainment was similar to the 1995 results.

4. At the end of Key Stage 4 (aged 16) all pupils who attend school regularly are entered for at least five GCSEs. In 1996, 61% of pupils gained five or more A*-C grades at GCSE, which was well above the national average of 42.6%. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-G grades at GCSE (95%) was similarly above the national average of 88.1%. All subjects except music got at least average results and most did much better. In line with national trends the girls achieved higher levels at GCSE than the boys. Results were even better in 1995 when 66% of pupils gained five or more A*-C grades. GCSE results have remained steady over the last three years compared with a slightly rising national trend.

5. In recent years the school has participated in a project organised by the LEA to compare pupils' GCSE results with scores gained in tests which they took at 11. Compared with many other schools Broughton pupils did well. They showed positive gains in English, mathematics and science, the latter achieving particularly high value-added figures.

6. These good standards at the end of both key stages were confirmed by evidence from the inspection: most pupils achieve above average standards for their age in all subjects of the curriculum and the majority of pupils made good and often very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs also do well. A small minority of pupils make insufficient progress.

7. In over nine out of ten lessons observed, at both key stages, teaching was sound. In nearly seven out of ten it was good, very good or excellent. Teachers are extremely hard-working and their high quality teaching is a strength of the school; most teaching is knowledgeable, well informed and challenging, and usually results in pupils attaining well and in their making good progress. Support staff also make a valuable contribution to this. A small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching fails to challenge or interest pupils sufficiently and results in unsatisfactory progress. It is often associated with inexperienced, temporary or supply staff.

8. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to lessons and are keen to learn; they listen attentively and work productively. Outside lessons they are generally mature and well behaved. A very small minority find it more difficult to maintain interest in their work and on occasion these pupils are disruptive; behaviour on some of the school buses has been of concern recently and the school has taken steps to improve it.

9. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements with the exception of the failure to implement fully the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus in religious education. At Key Stage 3 there are some slight imbalances of time associated with the introduction of a second foreign language and the provision of drama in Years 8 and 9. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been considerably enhanced by the addition of vocational courses. The programme for pupils' personal and social development is well planned and well taught. Systems and arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are reasonably consistent and manageable in almost all departments. However, the school as a whole makes only limited use of assessment information to inform teaching and curriculum planning and to develop targets for individuals and groups.

10. The governing body is committed to the school and to its aims. It has an efficient committee structure and discusses matters brought before it thoroughly. Financial oversight is meticulous. Good working relationships are being established with the new headteacher who has a vision for the future of the school and is supported by a committed senior management team and staff at all levels. Several key staff have temporary or multiple responsibilities taken on as a result of the retirement of the previous headteacher and other senior staff. The review and clarification of management roles and responsibilities is now a priority. Leadership at subject level is generally good and pastoral staff are committed and effective. At the moment, however, structures for communication and decision-making are unclear. More systematic management attention should be paid to monitoring standards of achievement and the quality of teaching. Much good practice that currently exists should be identified and shared for the benefit of all. School development planning is firmly established and a plan is produced each year, but the documentation is too complicated; there are too many priorities and it does not in practice provide staff at all levels with a clear and agreed programme of action. Too little time is given to evaluating progress made or celebrating successes achieved. The school does not meet all its statutory responsibilities, in particular to provide a daily Act of Collective Worship for all pupils, to include all the required information in the prospectus, to report national standards of end of Key Stage 3 tests to parents and to deliver the LEA Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

11. The school makes generally good use of resources available to it, but there is limited funding for, and insufficient use of, the library. A new flexible learning centre is well used, but its provision has not been planned in conjunction with that of the library. Teachers and support staff are generally well deployed. There is very efficient financial control and administration. In the light of its low unit costs and high educational standards the school gives good value for money.

12. Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development and appropriate attention is paid to encouraging their cultural awareness. Pupils are invited to reflect on their own and others' behaviour. They receive clear guidance on matters of right and wrong. Much charitable work is undertaken. They take part in musical, dramatic and sporting activities as well as Young Enterprise, preparation for the Duke of Edinburgh awards, fieldwork, visits to other countries and clubs linked to subjects through a very extensive range of extra-curricular activities which supports the work in the classroom. Staff at all levels are very concerned with and committed to pupils' welfare. They take time to assist individual pupils both pastorally and academically. The school has a warm and supportive ethos where pupils can feel known, safe and happy. There is a more limited provision for pupils' spiritual growth since pupils do not experience a daily Act of Worship or the LEA agreed syllabus for religious education; several subjects have considered their contribution to spiritual development, but it is not planned for across the whole curriculum.

Key Issues for Action after the Inspection

13. In order to consolidate and improve already high standards the school should:

- define and make clear the roles and duties of the Senior Management Team and staff with responsibilities at all levels, establish management structures to involve staff, improve communication and secure consistent implementation of agreed policies;
- improve school development planning by simplifying the documentation, sharpening and costing priorities, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes;
- maximise the progress made by all pupils by sharing more systematically existing good practice and strengths in teaching;
- ensure that assessment information is used to set targets for pupils, inform teaching and enhance curriculum planning;
- develop a long-term plan for the library and flexible learning centre and their management to facilitate the habit of reading and the further encouragement of independent learning;

- implement fully the statutory LEA Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, provide further opportunities for pupils' spiritual development and ensure that the requirement to deliver a daily Act of Collective Worship for all pupils is met.

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1. Broughton High School is a mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school with 882 pupils on roll, serving an extensive rural and suburban area largely on the northern outskirts of the Lancashire town of Preston with some pupils travelling from considerable distances. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds with a greater proportion coming from families containing adults with higher educational qualifications than would be present in an average sample. The intake is broadly comprehensive with slightly fewer children of very high ability than would be expected in a normal distribution. About 7.6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below the national average of 14.4%. 2.6% of pupils have statements of special educational need compared with an LEA average of 3.5%. 5.3% come from homes where English is not the first language. In 1996 76% of pupils entered further education on leaving the school.

2. The school aims to provide all pupils with opportunities to translate their individual skills, interests and abilities into achievement at the highest possible level. It sets out to foster a sense of communal responsibility and mutual respect in a supportive environment where standards and expectations are high. The school also seeks to encourage the involvement of parents, governors, local residents and businesses, feeder primary schools and local colleges.

3. With the appointment of a new headteacher the school is entering a new phase in its development: while re-affirming and applying consistently its long-standing principles concerning achievement and behaviour, it intends to review and clarify management responsibilities, re-examine both the processes and priorities of the school development plan and improve the monitoring and evaluation of performance.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1995-6	85	94	179

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	53	62	65
	Girls	77	71	70
	Total	130	133	135
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	73 (66)	74 (71)	75 (75)
	National	57 (55)	57 (57)	57 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	28 (15)	51 (45)	47 (41)
	National	26 (20)	34 (33)	22 (25)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	55	63	63
	Girls	84	75	74
	Total	139	138	137
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	71 (72)	76 (76)	77 (78)
	National	61 (62)	62 (61)	60 (59)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	36 (43)	54 (45)	47 (41)
	National	31 (32)	35 (34)	28 (28)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1995-6	93	79	172

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	50	87	93
	Girls	56	79	79
	Total	106	166	172
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	61 (66)	95 (99)	98 (99)
	National	43 (41)	88 (87)	94 (94)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.2
	National comparative data	8.3
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.01
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	20
Permanent	2

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	21.1
Satisfactory or better	90.8
Less than satisfactory	9.2

²

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational Standards Achieved

Attainment and Progress

1. By the end of both key stages, most pupils attain levels at least in line with national expectations and many do very much better than this.

2. Each year pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 (aged 14) take tests and are assessed by their teachers in the National Curriculum core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In 1996 average levels of attainment were well above national figures in all three subjects. The proportion of pupils gaining higher levels (level 6 or above) was in line with national averages in English and was well above those averages in mathematics and science. In the teacher assessments for that year more pupils than average gained levels in line with national expectations. For level 6 or above the results in English were above national averages and those for mathematics and science were well above national figures. This pattern of attainment was similar to the 1995 results where the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or above considerably exceeded national averages in all three subjects. For the higher levels results in English were below national averages, but were well above them in mathematics and science.

3. Over the last four years GCSE results have also been well above average. In 1996 61% of pupils gained 5 or more GCSE passes at grade C or better compared with the national average of 42.6%. In 1995 66% of pupils did so compared with a national figure of 41.2%. The proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more passes at grades A*-G has also been very high compared to national averages: in 1996 95% achieved this while the corresponding national figure was 88.1%. The 1995 results were even better with 99.0% gaining 5 or more A*-G grades compared with a national average of 87.4%. Over recent years results have remained steady compared with a slightly rising national trend. Virtually all pupils are entered for 5 or more GCSE examinations and very few fail to achieve any passes. The girls tend to do better than the boys at GCSE and this is in line with national trends. They do particularly well in science and mathematics. The school does not systematically monitor the performance of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds; no evidence was seen during the inspection which would suggest that their attainment or progress was significantly different from that of other pupils.

4. In 1996 GCSE results in all subjects except art and music were better, and often much better, than national averages; in art results were broadly in line with national figures and in music they were significantly below them. The 1995 results show significantly high A*-C pass rates in English, English literature, mathematics, science, technology, French, geography and drama. History results were in line with national averages and German below them.

5. The school participates in a project managed by the LEA to compare pupils' GCSE results with the scores gained in tests which they took when they were 11. This allows the school to assess progress over time and to compare its performance with that of other schools. Recent results show that pupils of all abilities are often making better progress than might have been anticipated. All three core subjects show positive gains and results in science are particularly good. Although the school has not set any of its own targets for achievement, it is currently making a significant contribution to the first National Target for Education and Training that by the year 2000 85% of young people aged 19 and under should have achieved 5 grade C passes or better at GCSE, or the vocational equivalent.

6. These high standards were confirmed by the findings of the inspection. At the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, most pupils attain the national expectation and many reach much higher standards for their age. For example, in 80% of lessons observed the attainment of pupils was judged to be at least average; in 45% it was above or well above average. At Key Stage 4 (14 to 16 year olds) it was very slightly lower with attainment in 79% of lessons seen judged average or better; in 43% it was above or well above average. High attainment was seen in all subjects of the curriculum and was particularly evident in art, design and technology, geography at Key Stage 3, information technology at Key Stage 3, music at Key Stage 4 and science. Some subjects are beginning to use assessment and value-

added data to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils, but the school as a whole is not doing this consistently and systematically. In no subject was attainment consistently below the national expectation.

7. A similar picture emerges of the progress of pupils: at Key Stage 3 in 87% of lessons observed most pupils were making at least reasonable progress; the figure for Key Stage 4 was 86%. Overall in almost half the lessons seen the progress of pupils was good, very good, or excellent. This was confirmed by examination of pupils' work and other evidence from the inspection. Pupils make satisfactory or better progress in all subjects across the curriculum. In lessons particularly good progress was observed in science, design and technology, English, geography, history, information technology, mathematics at Key Stage 3, modern languages at Key Stage 3, music at Key Stage 4 and business studies. Unsatisfactory progress, which occurs relatively rarely, is associated with poor attitudes to learning from pupils or with teaching by inexperienced, temporary or supply teachers.

8. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, achieve and make progress over time at least as well as might be expected and often better.

Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development

9. Pupils have very positive attitudes to lessons and are keen to learn. They get to lessons on time and settle quickly to work. Most listen attentively and respond well to questioning and participate in discussions when given the opportunity. A small minority find it more difficult to concentrate and to maintain interest in the lessons. Pupils generally show interest and enjoyment in what they do and they respond well to challenge; they persevere when they find the task difficult and sustain effort through double periods. Pupils can work willingly and productively in pairs and, when given the opportunity, in small groups or in whole class discussions and role plays. Pupils improve their capacity to think for themselves as they progress through the school and demonstrate this through their use of the flexible learning centre and in producing coursework and fieldwork studies much of which is of high quality. A small minority of pupils are sometimes not interested and disruptive.

10. Pupils are usually well behaved and have a good understanding of what is expected of them. Good relationships amongst pupils and staff help pupils reach high standards and make good progress. Behaviour around school is also generally good, though some incidents of silly or rowdy behaviour were observed; prefects help to supervise points of congestion and lunchtime queues. There have been incidents of poor behaviour on school buses about which parent expressed concern at the Parents' Meeting but pupils are generally well mannered and give a good account of themselves in the community. Most respond well to a system of rewards which includes merits for effort, achievement and behaviour and respect sanctions when they are applied consistently. Pupils use resources sensibly and respect their own and others' property. There were three permanent exclusions and 20 fixed term exclusions in the last school year which is below average for a school of this size.

11. The majority of pupils are able and willing to share their feelings and ideas and to make contributions during lessons. They develop their ideas, most frequently with the partner at their desk, but also through small group and whole class discussion and role plays. All pupils are treated with equal respect and many are quick to challenge any suggestion of unfair discrimination in any form.

12. The majority of pupils are confident and mature in their manner; they contribute well to discussions; they respect the views of others and some provide detailed, well argued responses. Good examples were seen in personal and social education lessons which dealt with sex education where pupils demonstrated sense and maturity. They are able to discuss their work with understanding; they ask their own questions and are keen to volunteer answers. A small minority show less enthusiasm and make a more limited contribution. Most pupils show the ability to take responsibility both for themselves and their learning but also to the overall functioning of the school. Besides the prefect system, other pupils in Year 11 help with school duties; there are form representatives and pupils also take responsible roles in extra-curricular activities, helping to run the library and flexible learning centre and looking after school animals. They also participate in activities in the local community and contribute

to charities.

Attendance

13. Attendance at the school is very good. There are effective systems in place for following up absence and rates of unauthorised absence are very low. A member of the clerical staff works closely with form tutors to ensure that any absence is explained and areas of concern are drawn to the attention of heads of year. The school has good support from the Educational Welfare Officer.

14. Pupils are generally prompt to school and lessons begin on time. Late arrivals are noted and if a pupil is late three times in one week this leads to detention. Little time is lost between lessons.

15. Although attendance rates are reported in the governors' annual report to parents, the school does not at present publish them in the prospectus and therefore does not fully comply with legal requirements.

16. The high attendance rates at the school and the measures taken by staff to ensure good attendance have a very positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

Quality of Education Provided

Teaching

17. Teaching is a strength of the school and usually results in pupils attaining well and in making good progress. Teachers are extremely hard working with many having extensive additional responsibilities. The quality of teaching was slightly better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4, though overall it was good or very good in over two-thirds of lessons observed. Across the curriculum teaching was satisfactory or better in more than 9 out of 10 lessons. There was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching with slightly more at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3.

18. Teaching was good or very good in all lessons seen in art and was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen in geography, information technology, design and technology and drama. It was satisfactory or better in the vast majority of lessons in mathematics, English, science, history, music and physical education. Teaching in modern languages was generally sound and sometimes good; religious education was good in half lessons seen and sound in almost three quarters.

19. Much of the good teaching is attributable to good planning and preparation. Lessons are planned in detail with clear objectives and purpose. Teachers have good organisational skills and are generally able to match the pace and content of the lesson with the needs of pupils. Teaching is particularly successful because teachers choose progressively challenging tasks and pupils respond well to these demands. Frequent examples were seen in English, mathematics, science, art, physical education, history, information technology and design and technology of high expectations communicated to pupils. In the good lessons teachers incorporate a range of strategies and activities which effectively sustain pupils' interest and commitment. In English, for example, a balance of activities is provided with pupils organised in different groupings. In geography and science a wide range of teaching strategies is used with some high quality worksheets in geography. Progress was best in modern languages when there was a good balance between consolidation and development of language skills. Teachers intervene at appropriate points during the good lessons to give clear instructions and guidance and appropriate encouragement or criticism either to the whole class or to individuals. In history pupils are encouraged to offer opinions and know that they are expected to answer questions. Good techniques such as drawing on pupils' own ideas and experiences in geography and art were used to motivate and sustain their interest.

20. In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory there was a lack of challenge and an inappropriate balance between teaching content and pupil activity. In some lessons, too much time was spent checking some pupils' behaviour and lack of concentration so that progress of the whole

class was limited.

21. Teachers are appropriately qualified and have a secure command of their subject and a sound understanding of the way in which pupils learn. This makes a significant contribution to the overall standards achieved. The enthusiasm of teachers for their subject and for teaching is often a highly motivating factor for pupils. This was seen at its best in some modern language lessons, science, art and English.

22. Homework is set regularly and effectively to support the work in lessons; it often makes a significant contribution to development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Particularly good practice was seen in geography where pupils are provided with frequent opportunity to exercise independent learning skills. In the main, work is marked regularly and normally graded. Several subjects have the criteria for assessment pasted into their exercise books so that pupils understand on what basis their work will be marked. There are some examples of good practice in marking, though there is also some inconsistency within and between departments and in some cases marking is brief and unhelpful. In English all teachers recognise pupils' strengths and identify areas for improvement which contributes positively to pupils' progress. In science the quality of marking is in the main good and at its best informs future learning, though sometimes it is cursory. In mathematics the standard of marking is not uniform but there are some examples of supportive comment. Some subjects are beginning to provide direction to pupils with advice on strategies for improvement or by encouraging pupils' to look critically at their own work. The school should take steps to share good practice in marking to assist pupils' future learning and to set targets for improvement.

23. Relationships with pupils are almost always good and teachers in general create a positive learning environment. This combined with the high level of motivation of most pupils results in orderly learning in the vast majority of classes.

Curriculum and Assessment

24. The school is largely successful in providing a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in both key stages in line with its own aims as well as with curriculum and equal opportunities policies. Detailed information about the curriculum is provided for parents in the prospectus. The curriculum meets legal requirements with the exception of implementing the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Although there are some minor imbalances in time allocations to subjects, the curriculum is effectively planned overall: it provides continuity for pupils' learning, successfully underpins the good levels of attainment and progress in the school and pupils' preparation for post-16 education or employment.

25. At Key Stage 3, in addition to the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, the school provides religious education, drama in Years 8 and 9 as well as sex and health education as part of a well-planned and effectively taught personal and social education programme. Pupils develop good information technology skills in separate lessons each week as well as learning to apply them successfully in a good range of subjects. Pupils study French or German in Year 7 and about three-quarters of these year groups study both languages in Years 8 and 9. As a result, the amount of time allocated to modern languages exceeds that provided for each of the core subjects over the key stage and the time allocated to history and geography in Years 8 and 9 is less than the national average. The rationale for teaching both languages in each year and the arrangements for teaching both as second languages needs further evaluation.

26. The Key Stage 4 curriculum, although differently designed in each of Years 10 and 11, meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and largely sustains the school's intention to provide breadth and balance in pupils' individual programmes. Parents and pupils are provided with clear written information to guide their option choices for Year 10. A small number of able pupils spend just over a quarter of their time studying three separate sciences while the rest of the year group take a course in balanced science in a fifth of their curriculum time. Very small numbers of pupils study two languages. Health education, including attention to drug misuse, a sex education programme and good careers education and guidance are provided as part of the personal and social education programme. Although

the planning and teaching of this course are both good, it is difficult to cover all aspects thoroughly in a single 35 minute period per week. Similarly, the allocation of one period a week to a course in religious education which has no external accreditation is insufficient to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

27.The school has worked hard to incorporate the recommendations of the Dearing Report by providing both academic and vocational courses. Pupils of all abilities can choose to follow GNVQ courses in four areas at both foundation and intermediate levels. In the current Year 10, only a limited number of choices are available to GNVQ pupils as their third option choice. However, the school has already redesigned the option pools for next year and this should ensure a considerably greater choice of expressive and humanities subjects for all pupils.

28.GNVQ courses occupy 17.5% of curriculum time for those who choose them. They are well managed with clear guidance materials and work programmes. Course requirements with regard to methods of teaching and learning, assessment arrangements and action planning are all in place. Learning is enhanced by access to a flexible learning centre. Considerable progress has been achieved in a short time. Attention should now be paid to the management of the learning centre, the training needs of staff, particularly those teaching the art and design course, financial accountability and evaluation of each course's long term future.

29.Schemes of work which indicate the ways in which the curriculum is planned and develops over time are effective in all departments. Although the separate elements of the design and technology course in Key Stage 3 are well-planned, links in the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills between the various components need to be strengthened. Grouping arrangements of pupils are largely effective in supporting pupils' attainment and progress; although higher attainers are often taught in large groups, lower attainers benefit considerably from being taught in smaller groups.

30.Pupils and parents indicated that the induction of Year 7 pupils is well-planned and effectively introduces pupils to the life and curriculum of the secondary school. Much information on pupils is provided by the primary schools during secondary school staff visits; some curriculum links, including those related to information technology, are established. Pupils' learning and commitment to the school are extended by participation in a full range of musical, dramatic and sporting activities, including team games, as well as Young Enterprise, preparation for Duke of Edinburgh awards, fieldwork, visits to other countries and clubs linked to subjects.

31.Guidelines for the Code of Practice are securely in place and all statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs are met. The documentation and administrative procedures, including arrangements for reviewing for pupils with statements of special educational needs, are efficient and well managed. Statements and individual education plans are of good quality and many departments have successfully used these to modify their teaching programmes for individual pupils. The small number of mostly younger pupils who are withdrawn for short periods from a range of lessons for intensive help with basic skills benefit considerably from this support. They make good progress and develop both their social and learning skills.

Assessment

32.The school has clear, firm policies for both the marking of pupils' work and the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress. Most departments have successfully interpreted these statements into manageable methods to monitor pupils' progress and to provide evidence of attainment. A number of departments have started to make collections of assessed work for teachers to use when assessing pupils' attainment in relation to levels identified in the National Curriculum. This process is still at a relatively early stage and requires further development to support the consistency of teachers' judgements. A number of departments, for example, art, English, design technology, history, religious education and information technology, have developed good procedures whereby pupils evaluate their own work in order to recognise their strengths and to identify areas for improvement. Similarly, pupils on GNVQ courses regularly assess their own attainment and progress. Most pupils in Key Stage 4

value the opportunity to compile their national records of achievement and, helped by a range of staff including form tutors, pupils from a wide range of abilities write coherent and often perceptive personal statements. High quality materials have been developed to support the review of achievement by younger pupils in tutor periods as part of recent initiative to revitalise records of achievement in Key Stage 3.

33.The school has a considerable amount of information and data about the attainment of individual and cohorts of pupils in standardised tests, end of key stage assessment and external examinations; in addition, the school has extensive information supplied by the LEA which compares pupils' attainment on entry with their performance in GCSE examinations. Although the school monitors a group of underattaining pupils after the trial examinations in Year 11 and has begun to do so in Year 10, overall it makes little use of the wealth of assessment data to which it has access. Although attainment and progress is generally high, the school does not, for example, systematically analyse the differences in the attainment of boys and girls in external assessment at the ends of either key stage or the differences in attainment between subjects at these points. As a result, the school is not in a position to use this data to inform curriculum planning or to provide targets for individual pupils, departments or future examinations.

Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

34.The school's aims and practice do provide good opportunities for the moral development of pupils. There is a clear sense of right and wrong. The school's ethos is warm and supportive; the system of rewards and sanctions generally works well. Pupils demonstrate responsibility and reliability when given the opportunity. They are mostly sensitive to the needs of others and are supportive of good causes both in school and in the wider community. There are opportunities to reflect on ethical and moral issues in many subjects; this helps pupils consider issues and develop their own moral values.

35.The opportunities for spiritual development are less satisfactory. A number of subjects make a contribution, with perhaps English, science and geography doing most, but the school does not plan for pupils' spiritual development as a whole. Arrangements for worship and for religious education should be reviewed.

36.Pupils have good social skills; relationships with peers and staff are also good. They are able to discuss issues in a mature and sensible manner. They generally show respect for others and for the property of others and the school. The contribution of the personal and social education course is a positive factor in reinforcing the school's values as are form tutor periods. Pupils are prepared for citizenship and moving into the community. There are many productive links with local and national charities. The prefect system and other duties undertaken by pupils of all ages promote social responsibility. The school council has met several times recently and pupils are keen to see its role established.

37.While development of pupils' understanding of multi-cultural issues is mentioned in the equal opportunities policy there is little evidence of concerted planning to achieve it. However, many subjects do deal with aspects of world cultures and draw comparison with our own. Pupils have some opportunities to compare beliefs and the way they can affect how people live. Teachers are determined to avoid cultural, social and economic stereotypes. No racial incidents have been reported.

38.Cultural development is encouraged effectively through the arts with the performance and production of plays, concerts and exhibitions of pupils' work both in school and in the community. There are also visits to the theatre, museums and art galleries. Pupils are encouraged to observe, evaluate and form their own views on both their own and on the cultures of other ages and traditions.

Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

39.The school staff are highly committed and caring for individual pupils and their development. This is very much in line with the aims of the school. Teachers generally enjoy the respect of pupils and

parents. Pupils respond well to what the school has to offer and they develop mature attitudes and good relations with each other and with adults. Parents and most pupils are concerned that the thoughtless behaviour of a small minority of pupils should not affect the standards of others and there is a resolve that it should be dealt with consistently and effectively. The school has also addressed the problem of bullying; incidents have reduced and most pupils feel they are dealt with effectively.

40. The roles of form tutor and head of year are carried out very effectively. The majority of form tutors know their pupils and provide care and support which is appreciated by the pupils and by their parents. Tutors are diligent in their responsibilities concerning attendance, homework diaries, merits and sanctions, and elements of the guidance programme. Form periods are generally relaxed and businesslike: homework diaries are regularly seen and discussed; some tutors challenge pupils about the quality of their work; pupils feel confident to discuss problems related to work or behaviour.

41. Heads of year are diligent and effective in their oversight of their pupils, intervening where necessary and co-ordinating response to individual cases.

42. Other good features of the current arrangements are the linking of prefects to Year 7 pupils and the role of Learning Support staff as counsellors.

43. Overall, the system is seen as very effective by parents and pupils, who feel staff are caring and supportive. They recognise that staff listen, give time and help both as tutors and teachers, including the extra support sessions at lunchtime and after school, as well as the wide range of extra-curricular activities. However, the arrangements would benefit from greater clarification of the referral system, particularly with regard to disciplinary and other difficult cases. Greater consideration should also be given to the role of pastoral staff in the setting and achievement of improvement targets for pupils.

44. The personal and social education programme is good, with delivery through the pastoral staff being competent and effective. Appropriate use of external experts was observed during the inspection. The re-launch of the Record of Achievement has been well managed and is of very high quality. While there are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility not all Year 11 pupils carry out the duties assigned to them diligently. The school should review how well current responsibilities are undertaken and how such opportunities could be better planned.

45. The school's code of conduct is displayed in classrooms and around the school, but is not regarded by staff or pupils as a positive or forceful influence on behaviour. It should be reviewed. Such a review could usefully involve pupils, most of whom are sensible, mature and capable of helping to produce a code to reinforce that positive behaviour which is the dominant style of the school. Pupils have strong and constructive views on the operation of the merit system and welcome consistent reinforcement of good standards of behaviour.

46. Guidance systems are good. Arrangements for transfer from primary and induction into the school are very good with pupils being very positive about the effectiveness on the Year 7 link to named prefects. Preparation and information regarding the options choice in Year 9 is thorough, assisted by good provision in the personal and social education lessons and linked to work by the careers teacher, careers library and computer programmes as well as the Careers Link service. There is similar effective provision in relation to guidance for pupils as they leave school, with over 70% going into local further education or training and most of the remainder into employment. There are opportunities for parents to be involved in all these processes.

47. The school is currently redeveloping its Child Protection procedures and it is important that these are implemented as a matter of urgency. Not all staff are aware of the revised procedures.

48. While the school has a Health and Safety Committee and there has been a recent audit carried out by the LEA which found no major problems, there are some concerns about health and safety which mainly relate to day-to-day matters. The school should ensure there are adequate qualified first-aiders, medical boxes and a system for their replenishment. All staff and pupils should be aware of how to access first aid treatment. The school has recently designated one person to take overall responsibility

for the system. Action should continue to be taken to implement the recommendations of the LEA audit. Arrangements for monitoring the site and recording incidents should be clarified as a matter of urgency.

Partnership with Parents and the Community

49.The school sets out to welcome parents as part of a team involved in the education of the pupils. It provides useful information for parents of pupils entering Year 7 in a comprehensive handbook which gives practical guidance. The prospectus does not currently contain sufficient detail and the school is taking steps to include all information which is legally required.

50.General day-to-day information on school events and issues is good. Improvements are being made in the contact with parents on matters relating to the curriculum, particularly setting arrangements. Parents are invited to contact the school should they have any concerns or queries and the school involves parents if the need arises. Homework diaries provide good means of communication with parents. Information for parents of pupils with special educational needs is also good. The Friends of Broughton raise significant sums of money and support the school in many ways.

51.Annual written reports to parents are not always satisfactory in quality and do not comply with legal requirements. Many reports are too descriptive and focus only on pupils' attitudes. Some lack appropriate reference to pupils' progress in the National Curriculum and clear identification of strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement. The school is rightly taking steps to improve reporting to parents.

52.Effective links with local business and industry are in place, providing enhanced experiences for pupils in the upper part of the school and making significant contributions to their learning. These are particularly well established through the work experience, careers guidance and in GNVQ programmes where local industry is used as a resource. Along with the Education Business Partnership, several local firms also support pupils in the Young Enterprise Scheme, offering advice and providing sponsorship and premises for meetings. Contact with business and industry for younger pupils is less strong and should be further developed.

53.The school enjoys good relationships with local primary schools who value the time and effort of staff involved in transfer arrangements. Curricular liaison in information technology is particularly appreciated.

54.The school is involved in the Community Education Programme and along with the Youth Service organises training for those taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Pupils make a contribution to both the local and wider community through fund-raising activities, organised by the religious education department.

The Management and Efficiency of the School

Leadership and Management

55.The governing body takes its responsibilities seriously and has a well managed and efficient committee structure which enables it to scrutinise the work of the school and plan effectively for the future. It is aware of and largely fulfils its statutory obligations. All committees have recently agreed terms of reference, meet regularly, record decisions and receive detailed reports on progress. They conscientiously discuss matters referred to them and make recommendations to the full governing body. Some are seeking to become more actively involved in the areas of the school's work for which they have responsibility. Financial oversight is particularly effective. Members of the senior management team are attached to each committee and this facilitates the flow of information and decision making. The senior management team consists of the newly appointed headteacher and two deputies; already good working relationships have been established within the team and with governors.

56.Roles and responsibilities of staff in positions of leadership at every level, including the members

of the senior management team, are in a state of flux, owing to the recent departure of some key staff and the allocation of temporary responsibilities pending the arrival of the new headteacher. The school is rightly taking this opportunity to clarify and rationalise the duties of both the academic and pastoral structures. At present several staff have multiple or temporary roles which they fulfil only with considerable dedication and difficulty. Subject leadership is generally satisfactory and very often good; pastoral staff are caring and work very hard to support the ethos and values of the school; major curriculum innovation has been successfully accommodated into an already complex timetable. Overall, however, lines of communication and accountability are blurred in important areas: the roles of the senior management team sometimes overlap and are unclear to staff; the faculty management system is not providing a clear educational direction, particularly with regard to the monitoring of standards and the support of teaching and curriculum development; the pastoral arrangements, though supportive of individual pupils, are insufficiently involved in monitoring pupils' attainment. Systems for referral of disciplinary and other cases are unclear. New structures should seek to involve staff appropriately in decision-making, to ensure that agreed policies are implemented consistently and to share and extend good practice more systematically.

57.The school has a set of aims which were reviewed in 1993. They are supplemented by a strong understood ethos which guides teachers in ensuring pupils' welfare and attainment. Many staff at all levels show their practical adherence to this ethos by giving freely of their time and taking on extra duties. In a parents' questionnaire 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the school's values had a positive effect on their children. Apart from a small minority, pupils respond positively what the school has to offer, are happy to attend and take a pride in the institution. There is equality of access to the taught curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

58.The current school development plan identifies 9 broad priorities and 5 areas for development. It contains a review of progress on the previous year's priorities. Faculty plans are produced to a common format as are the plans of individual members of staff. The process of planning is embedded in the life of the school. Governors discuss and approve the plan. In practice, however, there are too many priorities and the process is too complex to secure the involvement of all staff and to provide a clear direction for action. The connection between whole school priorities and subject and individual planning, though required in the documentation, is tenuous in practice. One of the tasks of the new management structure will be to build on much good practice in planning, particularly at subject level, and to establish teams of staff to discuss and agree manageable targets within strategic, clearly understood, school priorities. Arrangements for monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes and celebrating success should all be sharpened.

59.Statutory requirements are met with the exceptions that a daily act of collective worship is not provided for all pupils; the LEA Agreed Syllabus for religious education is not in place and religious education is not reported on at Key Stage 3 and in Year 10; the school prospectus does not contain all the required information; national averages for SAT results at the end of Key Stage 3 are not reported to parents.

Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

60.The school employs an appropriate number of teaching staff to deliver the curriculum. In comparison with all maintained schools, the ratio of pupils to teachers is high and staff spend a greater proportion of their time teaching. With the recent appointment of a new headteacher a number of management responsibilities are of a temporary nature. All postholders have job descriptions though many of these are not related to temporary positions held at the moment. In all areas there are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers to teach the curriculum. However, the teaching in a small number of areas is affected by lack of expertise and experience often associated with temporary appointments. There are appropriate levels of non-teaching staff who are effectively deployed but only recent appointments have job descriptions. Administrative staff though low in number are efficient. The school benefits from good quality technician support. Overall, the enthusiasm, commitment and hard work of teaching and non-teaching staff make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

61.The school has a policy for staff development and a significant number of staff have attended in-service training in recent years. This is matched to individual, department and school needs, though staff development has been limited in religious education GNVQ art and science. There is a clear and effective induction process for new staff. Support for newly qualified teachers has recently been clarified and under the current arrangements provides good support, though earlier classroom observation and guidance would further enhance the process. Not all staff have been appraised and the school should ensure that they are.

62.Accommodation meets the needs of both curriculum and pupils but is heavily used and often crowded. Efficient use is made of specialist accommodation, though there are some classrooms which are small for the size of class and this constrains the range of teaching and learning approaches. This is most evident in art, music, modern foreign languages and information technology. Accommodation is good in some areas including physical education, geography and drama

63.The general condition and appearance of the building is beginning to look worn and there are areas which will require decoration and renovation during the coming years. Carpets, for example, are now reaching the end of their serviceable life. The building is largely free of graffiti and litter is kept to a minimum. Toilets are in a poor state; there is a shortage of soap and drying facilities. Display in classrooms and the school in general is good and enhances the learning environment.

64.Overall the school is appropriately resourced with materials and books for teaching and learning, though there are a number of areas where there is a shortage of books and this constrains pupils' learning. This shortage is most evident in science, history, religious education and design and technology. The school is adequately resourced with audio visual aids such as televisions and overhead projectors and these are effectively used to promote learning. There are modern computers, but overall numbers are below average when compared to LEA and national figures. The provision and use of information resources across the curriculum is variable and there are limited opportunities in some subjects for pupils to deploy the skills they have learned in information technology lessons.

65.The school has two central resources, a library and a recently developed flexible learning centre. The library is a pleasant space uplifted by displays which successfully promote reading for pleasure. Its book stock is numerically below what is recommended for a school of this size and is predominantly fiction; the library is well used by younger pupils in the lunch hour and to borrow books for private reading in English lessons. However, as it is used as a classroom throughout the day, it is very difficult for older pupils and departments to use its facilities. Within the constraints of the provision, the library is efficiently run by a well-informed teacher-librarian, assisted by loyal pupil-librarians who give generously of their time. It is staffed by teachers during the lunch hour; no clerical help is provided by the school.

66.The flexible learning centre is a well-appointed small space which houses a small number of up-to-date computers, CD-ROM facilities, a multi-media centre and audio-visual resources. In addition, the centre has small but up-to-date reference book stock. It is run on a day-to-day basis by a member of the non-teaching staff and its use is overseen by a senior member of staff. It was well-used by about a hundred pupils each day during the inspection, both during lessons and in the lunch hour.

67.Funding is low to maintain the library and flexible learning centre: the £3 per pupil running costs allocated for resources for both facilities are insufficient to provide replacement and renewal of the existing stock and will not support any expansion. As the non-fiction in the flexible learning centre is for reference only and the central library has a very small and inaccessible non-fiction section, pupils do not have enough access to information texts in order to develop their research skills. The school needs to consider how best to develop and manage both central resources so that they can more readily meet its intention, as expressed in the school aims, "to provide an environment in which enquiry will be fostered".

The Efficiency of the School

68. At a time of considerable financial constraint, when reserves have been depleted and staffing numbers cut, the Finance Committee of the governing body has exercised meticulous oversight of the budget, supported by detailed and regular information prepared very thoroughly by a deputy headteacher and the bursar. This has enabled the school to maintain a complex curriculum which offers breadth and balance to pupils. Governors have sought to maintain maximum staffing levels in order to preserve standards and quality of education. Even after recent reductions the school employs slightly more teachers than are indicated in the LEA's notional budget. A consequence of the high expenditure on teachers is the lower than average expenditure on learning resources, though in most areas these are adequate, with the most notable exception of the library where the book stock is insufficient in number and quality. The Finance Committee has recently reviewed its terms of reference and benefits from the close working relationship between the Chair of the Committee and the deputy headteacher with responsibility for finance. There is a clear cycle for budget planning but it is insufficiently linked to the school development plan cycle. That element of the budget which the school receives as a consequence of the number of pupils with special educational needs is used to reduce class sizes and to provide additional individual support. This support has been reduced over the last few years to a point where further reduction will damage the quality of provision. A bidding system for departmental capitation has achieved generally adequate resources for the curriculum as well as some targeted innovation. The school can also account for the allocation of specific grants such as the GEST grant and the GNVQ pilot budget, though expenditure is often authorised on an ad hoc basis rather than as a result of longer term planning.

69. Overall the school has in recent years successfully managed a very tight budget. It now faces the financial consequences of a review of staff roles and responsibilities, a declining surplus (projected this year at £24,217 or 1.4% of the total budget) and continuing budget restraint. It should tie in the budget cycle more closely to development planning, cost its targets carefully, agree longer term plans where possible (as in building maintenance and refurbishment, central resources like the library and flexible learning centre, or major curriculum innovation such as GNVQ) and continue to seek value for money. The school should build on its own good practice and be more systematic in evaluating the impact of spending decisions on standards of attainment and the quality of education.

70. The school employs sufficient staff to deliver its planned curriculum and they are deployed effectively to promote good standards. The contact ratio (the proportion of teachers' time spent teaching) is high and this means that some classes, particularly for pupils of lower ability and at Key Stage 4, are smaller than would otherwise be possible. In general, however, average group sizes are on the high side. Many staff make up for quite large classes by offering individual attention and help, both inside and outside the classroom.

71. The accommodation is heavily and efficiently used, despite some inherent difficulties, notably some small classrooms, thin partition walls and the lack of a school hall and social areas for pupils. It will require continuing maintenance and re-decoration if it is to continue to be an attractive learning environment. The library continues to be used as a classroom, thus restricting its access to pupils during school hours.

72. Day-to-day financial administration is good and the school is usually able to provide up-to-date information for budget holders and the governing body. The bursar works well with the deputy head responsible for finance but she has no recent job description. Opportunity should be taken with the arrival of new administrative staff to clarify and agree responsibilities of the finance and administration team. Their work and that of all the office staff is efficiently carried out and facilitates the smooth running of the school.

73. In view of the lower than average unit cost, the high educational standards achieved and the careful budget planning the school offers good value for money.

PART B : CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science

English

74. Attainment in English is above national norms as reflected in class and written work and in examinations. In GCSE examinations in 1995 and 1996, the percentages of pupils achieving A*-C grades in English and English literature were well above national averages. The proportions achieving A* or A were in line with national averages in 1995; this improved significantly in 1996 when they were well above the national figures in both subjects. All pupils were entered for English in both years and all achieved a pass grade; the great majority were entered for English literature and virtually all received a pass grade. Boys perform less well than girls. In the tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1995 and 1996, the percentages of pupils achieving level 5 and above were well above the national averages; in 1996, the proportion achieving level 6 and above was in line with the national figure. Most pupils make sound progress in developing their language skills in both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 3, a minority of pupils achieve high standards; a large proportion achieve in line with what might be expected nationally. More pupils make faster progress at Key Stage 4 and consequently their results are well above national norms.

75. When working in a variety of groupings, pupils are confident, fluent and often articulate speakers who can share ideas and express opinions, often supported with evidence. Able pupils in Year 7 discussed the effects of figurative language illustrated by examples from poems by Ted Hughes and the Caribbean poet, Dionne Brand. They listen well to their teachers and to one another and make thoughtful responses. Reading strategies are well developed, especially by older, abler pupils who demonstrate quick, flexible learning skills. Most pupils respond well, orally and in writing, to texts studied in class but, at Key Stage 3, need to read some more difficult and varied material. Independent reading for pleasure is actively encouraged in Years 7 and 8 and many younger pupils become keen readers, mainly of teenage fiction. Younger pupils with severe reading difficulties make good progress as a result of appropriate support, given both when they are withdrawn from some lessons and when engaged in paired reading activities with older pupils. All pupils write in a very wide range of forms, including, narrative, poetry, playscripts, biography, diaries, reports, pamphlets and a range of responses to literature. Pupils use writing well for learning purposes; they make useful notes and annotate texts. Most pupils write coherently, often imaginatively and with good understanding of a variety of forms. Year 9 pupils' folders contained well structured and interesting biographies, written after they had interviewed older people, and pupils in Year 11 had written magazine articles, with a particular bias, based on the trial in Harper Lee's novel, 'To Kill a Mocking Bird'. The higher attainers, particularly at Key Stage 4, produce extended, accurate, often lively and polished assignments. A minority of pupils require strong support to improve the development of ideas and the technical accuracy of their writing. All pupils plan their work and many older pupils make important changes in the redrafting process. Finished written work is carefully presented in a range of formats and some is successfully word processed. Spelling is appropriate to the ability of the pupils.

76. Pupils make steady progress across Key Stage 3 and generally good progress at Key Stage 4, particularly amongst able pupils who respond well to the study of demanding adult texts and to challenging teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall and at the end of Key Stage 4 achieve at least a G grade in the GCSE English examination. In the best lessons there is a very good rate of progress in using reading, writing and oral skills to refine and develop understanding and response to literary and non-literary texts. Able Year 9 pupils made rapid progress in developing their powers of analysis and close reading skills when their interest and attention was captured by a variety of challenging group tasks, which formed part of a well developed unit of work on the beginning of 'Wuthering Heights'. Pupils' folders of written work show a steady improvement over time in the structuring of assignments and in terms of accuracy. Most pupils are responsive, concentrate well and are interested. They organise themselves into groups and collaborate well over tasks. A small number, of mainly older boys, do not apply themselves to tasks sufficiently.

77. Teaching was satisfactory or better in virtually all lessons seen and was good or very good in two thirds. Teachers work hard, are enthusiastic and are well informed. The best teaching achieves a good balance of challenge and support. It is based on well organised units of work which build pupils' skills by integrating reading, writing and talk in logical sequences and which pay attention to the effects of language. A teacher was able to successfully convey her own enthusiasm for a poem by Seamus Heaney whilst increasing her Year 10 group's understanding of it through a variety of carefully planned and interesting individual and group tasks, which pupils completed in class and at home. Work is well marked and pupils receive detailed and evaluative feedback at both key stages. In the long term absence of the head of faculty through illness, the two key stage co-ordinators have successfully developed curriculum planning and consistency of assessment and have supported their colleagues well.

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening across the Curriculum

78. Younger pupils acquire good early habits of reading fiction and many could develop more rigorous and challenging tastes with sufficient and planned adult guidance. Standards of reading aloud are above average. Able pupils show impressive ability to use, research, summarise and re-form a range of texts for learning purposes. Progress in reading is hindered by inadequate, or inaccessible stocks of non-fiction material and fiction for older readers.

79. Standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are generally good. Pupils write successfully in a wide range of forms and styles: the skills of note taking, report writing, re-casting writing for different audiences, writing to assist learning, planning and reflection are well developed. Some outstanding examples of extended, independent writing from able pupils was observed. In some subjects and for some pupils there is too much copying.

80. Most pupils are open, confident and articulate speakers; they are generally good listeners. Many can operate successfully in pairs, small groups and at a whole class level. They have better than usual skills of using the technical language of subjects and, when given opportunities, rise successfully to the challenge of extended or complex oral work.

Drama

81. Results in the GCSE drama examinations are outstandingly good; in both 1995 and 1996, the proportions of pupils attained A*-C grades were over 90% and well above national averages. Both boys and girls achieve equally good results in drama. All pupils in Years 8 and 9 have lessons in drama and the subject is a popular option at Key Stage 4. The lessons seen during the inspection were taught by a temporary specialist teacher in the absence of the postholder for drama. The majority of pupils, at both key stages, reached sound standards of improvisation and movement. Most used a range of dramatic skills and conventions to express ideas and feelings effectively and showed a good understanding of dramatic concepts. Pupils used their imaginations well; a Year 8 group showed evidence of originality in their creative use of a range of objects to devise tableaux and improvisations. Pupils share and discuss ideas in pairs and groups and evaluate their work. Some are fluent and articulate speakers.

82. The majority of pupils clearly enjoy their lessons in drama and work with commitment. They organise themselves quickly into groups and collaborate well in preparing improvisations or presentations. Especially at Key Stage 4, they make good use of opportunities to repeat, practise, modify and consolidate their work. In all lessons seen, pupils moved forward to some extent through discussion, planning and rehearsal. Occasionally, a minority of pupils at Key Stage 3, particularly boys, lacked concentration and commitment; their immature behaviour affected the progress of others. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into drama lessons and make good progress. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 write evaluative reports of their work and work seen; others write more descriptive accounts. All would benefit from more guidance to improve their writing.

83. All teaching seen was at least satisfactory; lessons were well structured and activities were suitable to help pupils to develop their skills. A lesson in Year 11, which was part of an ambitious project based

on a case study of an urban area, began with good warm up activities, movement in role, improvisation and interviewing in role, leading to rehearsal and showing to others, followed by evaluation. Detailed schemes of work underpin the sound teaching. Groups are large which makes it difficult for the teacher to support all pupils who need help.

1. Drama lessons, the variety of playscripts used, lunchtime drama sessions, numerous theatre visits and school productions, such as the recent productions of 'Macbeth' and 'The Tempest' make significant contributions to pupils' social and cultural development.

Mathematics

2. In the last three years, almost all pupils gained GCSE grades A*-G in mathematics. The proportion gaining grades A*-C in 1995 was well above the national figure for all maintained schools, there being relatively little difference between the results for girls and boys. These results were slightly better overall than those for 1994, yet there was a considerable improvement in the proportion of the higher grades, A*-B, awarded in 1995. The results for 1996 fell slightly but the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was still above the national figure with roughly twice the proportion of girls and boys achieving grades A* or A than nationally. In the 1995 and 1996 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above was well above the national average, as was the proportion gaining level 6 and above. During their time in school, girls and boys of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment.

3. Lesson observation and examination of the pupils' work indicate that the children have a good knowledge of all areas of the subject and they are learning how to use this knowledge appropriately. The more able pupils display competence in providing explanations and attempts are made to justify their findings. Inequalities are handled well by these pupils at Key Stage 4. All of the pupils are developing their algebraic notions appropriately though they tend to rely on the particular approaches which have been shown to them. Some of the lower attaining pupils are reaching standards slightly higher than might be expected. The pupils are able to use what has been learned in mathematics in other subject areas. Though they mostly use the calculator sensibly, there are rare occasions when it is used unnecessarily.

4. Progress in lessons at both key stages is usually sound or good with the teaching building on knowledge which has been acquired previously. The confidence of pupils is enhanced over time so that they can tackle increasingly demanding problems. The progress made by the lower attaining children is sometimes good as when, for example, they acquired strategies for replacing fractions with equivalent fractions.

5. The teaching was sound or better in almost all of the lessons seen with the pupils being suitably challenged and working at a brisk pace when the teaching was good. The children are well supported. The range of teaching approaches is relatively narrow but effective use is made of the textbooks and the limited resources which are available. The subject knowledge of teachers is secure. Discipline in lessons was usually good. The atmosphere in classrooms enables learning to take place though there are few opportunities provided to allow pupils to share ideas with someone other than an immediate neighbour. Some use is made of the limited information technology resources and the provision of reference material in the library is minimal. Homework is often used to provide practice of what has been covered in class and there are some occasions when it is used to enable an extended piece of work to be carried out.

6. Assessment procedures are in place with records being kept by the teachers. Supportive comments are written on pupils' work but the intended practice is not consistently used. A limited amount of in-class support is provided for particular children. There is a need to make the review process in relation to specific target-setting for some pupils more effective.

7. The requirements of the National Curriculum are being met though the time available for mathematics teaching is less than in many schools.

Number across the curriculum

8.The capabilities of the pupils are evident in that, at both key stages, they carry out tasks involving number in science, geography and technology confidently and correctly. Their knowledge was seen being applied well to situations involving data handling, the use of spreadsheets, map references, measurement and graphical work. Good use of mathematics to enable analysis of a situation in geography was seen. The awareness of the reasonableness of an answer was evident, as was the appropriate use of calculators by the pupils.

Science

9.In 1995 all pupils were entered for co-ordinated science (double award) and the results were significantly better than national averages with over 70% of boys and girls achieving an A*-C grade. 20% of pupils attained an A* or A grade. All pupils achieved a pass and the performance of boys and girls was similar. The results were better than expected from their test scores when they entered the school. In 1996 some of the higher attaining pupils were entered for biology, chemistry and physics and all these pupils achieved an A*-C grade, which is significantly better than national averages for all secondary schools. In biology 60%, in chemistry 80% and in physics 76% achieved A* or A grades. There was very little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The rest of the pupils were entered for co-ordinated science (double award) and nearly 60% achieved an A*-C grade. Although these results were not as good as in 1995 they were still significantly better than national averages. Only one pupil failed to gain a pass and results generally were better than expected from their test scores on entry to the school. The performance of girls was significantly better than that of the boys and this needs to be monitored in future to redress the gap.

10.In both 1995 and 1996 the results obtained by pupils in the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests were significantly better than national averages for level 5 and above and also for level 6 and above. There was an increase in the number achieving level 6 and above in 1996.

11.Attainment at the end of both key stages is almost always at or above national expectations and pupils by the end of each key stage have developed good knowledge and understanding of living things and life processes, materials and their properties and physical processes. They are able to apply this to science in everyday situations, communicate clearly and confidently using scientific and technical terms and show responsible attitudes to health and safety to themselves and others.

12.At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in consolidating and increasing scientific knowledge and understanding which they have previously encountered in their primary schools. They learn to work safely and develop their practical and investigative skills using a wide range of equipment and materials. The skills of observation, measurement and recording are well developed by the end of the key stage and pupils are able to present their results and conclusions from experiments in clear and sophisticated ways including the use of tables, bar charts and graphs which pupils draw accurately and can interpret with understanding. At Key Stage 4 pupils continue to make good progress and to develop their understanding of scientific concepts in greater depth. They are able to discuss their work confidently using the correct scientific terminology and increasingly gain better understanding of the quantitative aspects of their science. They develop detailed knowledge and understanding of biological structures and their functions, interactions with the environment, chemical reactions and applications of physical phenomena. Pupils are often able to recall earlier work and use it to inform their understanding as well as applying it in new contexts. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages.

13.Attitudes to learning are almost always good and pupils have respect for each other which results in good relationships that help learning. The vast majority have good listening skills and are able to concentrate for long periods of time, although there are a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, at Key Stage 4 who are unable to maintain their concentration and are sometimes disruptive, affecting the progress and achievement of others. Pupils can work independently and also work well together when carrying out investigations, discussing their understanding and reinforcing their learning. They are able

to handle scientific equipment and chemicals safely and sensibly. They read well and are able to use textbooks and worksheets skilfully to increase their understanding of science. They are not able to extend this so effectively outside lessons because of a shortage of textbooks. Pupils develop their information technology skills as they progress through the school and many use these skills to produce very high quality reports on their investigations at Key Stage 4.

14. In nearly all lessons the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better and in nearly three quarters of the lessons inspected was good or very good and sometimes outstanding. The teachers are well-qualified and secure in their knowledge of their subject areas. Lessons are always well prepared and usually begin with a review of the last lesson and then an explanation of the work to done. Teachers explain things clearly but sometimes do not give the pupils enough opportunity to respond to questions. When given a chance to explain their work pupils are confident to do so. Lessons are planned effectively and in the best lessons a variety of strategies is used, often with well-managed practical work. Almost always teachers have clear objectives and high expectations and pupils respond well, remaining on task, learning and achieving effectively. Where teaching was unsatisfactory there was a lack of pace and variety and pupils were not sufficiently challenged leading to poor learning and achievement. Practical lessons are well supported by two technicians who provide equipment and chemicals ordered by the teachers; their work enhances teaching and learning. They also monitor resource levels and carry out safety checks. Homework which supports learning is set regularly. The quality of marking is in the main good and at its best is very supportive with helpful comments which inform future learning. Sometimes, however, it is too brief with tracts of work unmarked; practice should be reviewed in order to ensure that all the teachers comply with the policy. Assessment of the attainment targets is carried out mainly by reference to end of unit tests and examinations; grades are recorded on computer and moderated by the teachers to ensure comparability. They are used to inform the progress of pupils with special educational needs who receive good support from their teachers. The schemes of work are very informative at both key stages and are a strength of the department. The department should continue to review the professional development needs of teachers.

15. The laboratories are of varying age and are well maintained and attractive with very good displays of posters, wall charts and pupils' work. Although they are split between two buildings their use is well-managed. Resources are at the moment sufficient but there is a need to update some of the old equipment and to purchase more textbooks when funding becomes available. With an annual budget which is below average for schools nationally the head of department maintains good budgetary control and provides good value for money.

16. This is a good department which has been successful and is now in a period of change with some young teachers. There are good working relationships and it should be possible to consolidate and maintain high standards.

Other Subjects or Courses

Design and Technology

17. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress in design and technology. The majority attain above the national expectation by the end of each key stage. Over the last three years, GCSE results have been above the national average for A*-C grades.

18. In design and technology, at both key stages, there is a good balance of work covering the attainment targets. The majority of pupils show good levels of attainment in researching and planning their work and presenting ideas using well developed graphic skills. At Key Stage 4, many pupils show design and graphic skills of a very high standard and effectively use modelling techniques to develop design ideas. Pupils of all ages show mainly good skills in manufacturing, resulting in work that is well constructed, accurate and well finished; the standard of electronics construction work in Year 8 is particularly good. Samples of pupils' books indicate that the recording of information through writing is generally satisfactory and often well combined with a range of graphic presentation techniques, including the use of information technology at Key Stage 4, to record effectively and communicate ideas.

19. The progress of most pupils in individual lessons and over time is generally good and often very good, particularly in food technology lessons at both key stages, where pupils showed high levels of maturity in planning and sequencing work for completion in a double lesson. All groups at Key Stage 3 are of mixed ability and while the lower attaining and those with special educational needs are making good progress, there is some evidence that the higher attaining pupils could be further extended in the pace and complexity of work.

20. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. At both key stages, there is invariably on-task working and pupils show energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the work. In all groups, pupils worked well together with some appropriate co-operative working of an informal nature and in some lessons in food technology, they work effectively in teams, manufacturing, comparing and evaluating products. There is considerable evidence at Key Stage 4 of pupils spending a lot of time outside school researching, planning and working on design tasks; this commitment is contributing to the high standards achieved.

21. All teaching is at least satisfactory and is mostly good. Lessons are invariably well planned as part of a sequence, with mostly demanding tasks set for pupils, though there is further work needed in planning to extend the most able and for meeting the particular needs of pupils with special educational needs. In all lessons, targets are set for completion of work and pupils understand what is expected of them. All teachers have very good technical knowledge in a wide range of content. Relationships are invariably good with considerable class management skills shown by all teachers. Assessment is regularly carried out with good systems of recording and monitoring pupils' achievement.

22. The department members work well together and there is a clear willingness to continue to improve. The school should now review the management structure of the department in light of recent staff changes and plan to review the links between modules of work at Key Stage 3. Resources, particularly for pupil research and for application of information technology in design and manufacturing should be enhanced.

Information Technology

23. At Key Stage 3, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in acquiring, refining and applying their information technology skills in a number of subject areas as well as in information technology lessons. By the end of the key stage, most pupils attain levels of skill and understanding that are above the national average. At Key Stage 4, pupils following GCSE courses in information technology and in GNVQ Business Studies, make at least satisfactory progress and many attain good standards. This is reflected in the GCSE examination A*-C grades which have been above the national average over the last three years. In addition, there is some very high quality application of information technology to project work in a number of subjects at Key Stage 4.

24. There is good access to information technology at lunchtimes and after school and large numbers of pupils at both key stages make use of this to develop their information technology skills and to apply information technology to their work in other subject areas. This experience significantly enhances overall information technology capability of pupils in this school.

25. Pupils value information technology as an important part of their education and this is reflected in their good attitude to work. They are able to maintain concentration on the tasks set and are highly motivated. Much of the work at Key Stage 3 is demanding and pupils are able to respond to the high demands made. They often work together informally and also within small teams in a mature and effective way. They are well supported in their learning by good quality teaching which is well prepared, technically well informed and sets clearly defined targets. Relationships are invariably good and pupils with special educational needs are given sensitive support in learning difficult technical procedures.

26. The school is making good progress in developing application and use of information technology at both key stages in subjects across the curriculum. The information technology co-ordinator is managing this well and has clear and appropriate plans for future development. In order to make further progress, the school should plan to enhance the resources to enable easier access to information technology

facilities by subject teachers who wish to teach their subject through information technology to whole classes.

History

27. In 1996 GCSE results for pupils gaining both A*-C and A*-G grades improved on those for 1995 and preceding years. The percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades rose from 47% to 57%. The 1996 results were above the national averages for all pupils in maintained secondary schools whereas the 1995 results were broadly in line with them. Although both boys and girls performed equally well in the highest A* or A grades, which a fifth of the entry obtained, girls significantly outperformed boys elsewhere. Past pupil performances are analysed carefully and the future performance of individual pupils is monitored through the use of specific targets.

28. Evidence from the inspection indicates that a clear majority of older pupils achieve at least the national expectation towards the end of Key Stage 4, and some beyond, or well beyond, this level. Their studies of changes in medical knowledge, and of modern China, benefit from sound factual knowledge, the ability to express and support a judgement, and from generally well presented work which often makes good use of information technology. In their study of the Holocaust and of Auschwitz in particular they displayed a good understanding of the moral issues involved. Younger pupils also achieve the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 3 and some do better than this. In more than two thirds of lessons seen, for example, pupils reached national standards, with some attaining above or well above this level. They generally make good use of a range of historical sources, for instance in their studies in Year 7 of the murder of Thomas Becket, and in their examination in Year 8 of contrasts in food, dress, and transport between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve at least in line with their known capabilities, and sometimes better than this.

29. Both older and younger pupils generally make good progress at both key stages. This was clear from both lessons and by looking at their books. The appreciation of the moral issues of the Holocaust by older pupils was heightened from a gain in understanding of how the use of railway transport influenced the choice of industrial scale methods of extermination. Younger pupils realised why Henry became critical of Thomas Becket's actions as archbishop. Pupils in Year 9 came to a deeper knowledge of the range of methods used by Hitler to consolidate his power in Germany. Where sometimes progress was less satisfactory it was linked either to insufficient explanation of the task set, or to over lengthy explanations, both linked to pupils being asked to work in ways with which they were relatively unfamiliar. Pupils with special educational needs generally make sound progress.

30. Teaching at Key Stage 4 was always good. At Key Stage 3 it was sound or better in almost all lessons seen, and in majority of lessons it was good. Some very good teaching was seen. Teachers have generally good subject knowledge, sustain the challenge to pupils throughout generally well paced lessons, which are well planned. Within a mainly whole class approach activities are varied, with some good paired work and use of information technology. Work is marked regularly and consistently, although there is scope for more written feedback to individual pupils to help them to improve in future. Homework is set regularly and is usually well integrated with classroom work. Teachers know the pupils well, set high expectations, and generally involve them in effective sequences of questions and discussion. Pupils generally respond well, are keen to learn, stay on task, listen to the views of others very well, and make good use of opportunities to use information technology and to work independently. Homework diaries are generally well used. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how well they have done.

31. The department is well led and managed. Planning and reviewing are good. The contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is generally good. Moves towards independent learning and the use of information technology have been initiated, but the time allocated for most younger pupils is already barely adequate to deliver the National Curriculum, and this will restrict such valuable innovation.

Geography

32. Over the last four years GCSE results have risen and are above the national average. Significantly, a third of pupils who take the GCSE achieve A* or A grades. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attain national expectations and many do better than this. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment in the lowest set was less than satisfactory, but was at or beyond national expectation in the others. Pupils show competence in using maps and are able to relate them to satellite, aerial and landscape photographs as well as by direct observation when doing projects in the local area or field studies of the River Wyre and variations of land use in and around Preston. They are also able to relate local experience to studies of other environments at a regional, national and international level. There has been an updating of the programmes of study to meet National Curriculum changes. Pupils are encouraged to use geographical terms and develop an understanding of the relationship between place and the way physical, economic and social factors interact to create differences in the environment.

33. The good behaviour of pupils and their ability to relate well and work collaboratively helps them make good progress in developing geographical skills and understanding. They are keen to learn, willing to ask and respond to questions and take part in discussions and role play when given the opportunity. At both key stages progress is always at least sound and is often good.

34. The teaching in nearly three quarters of the lessons seen was good or very good and there was a high correlation between the quality of teaching and the attainment and progress of pupils. Lessons are well planned and prepared with appropriate use of resources in relation to the task; tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities. Good subject knowledge is used by teachers to reinforce key skills and concepts and to ensure that pupils are interested and actively involved in learning. In the best lessons there is a good use of varied teaching and learning strategies to maintain pace and motivation. A variety of resources is used without an undue reliance on any single textbook. There are very good printed information and worksheets, largely produced by the geography co-ordinator, as well as use of overhead projector, television and videos, maps and photographs. There is an increasing emphasis on encouraging pupils to investigate and learn for themselves. This is done in Year 7 through such things as the study of the micro-climates in the immediate vicinity of the school, but is part of a progressive development of skills built into the scheme of work. There are high expectations of pupils. They are attentive, enjoy opportunities to work in pairs and do very well in interactive groups when given the opportunity. The best lessons use a variety of activities; pupils understand what is expected of them and receive positive support and encouragement. Pupils' presentation is of a high standard; they use a wide range of techniques including, drawings, maps, various types of graphs and charts and in some cases there is good use of computer skills. There were good examples of this in work done on the water cycle and on weather and climate by pupils in Year 8. At both key stages pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the class teacher and in some cases by additional support staff. They often made good progress towards meeting the targets in their individual education plans.

35. The department is well led by the co-ordinator. There is a carefully structured scheme of work that covers the requirement of the National Curriculum. The school has changed exam boards and will make use of the on-going assessment carried out within the department as well as discussions with pupils and parents to determine who are entered for the higher tier exam. The adjoining rooms are of a good size and there are appropriate storage facilities. Levels of resources and equipment are adequate and there are good links with other departments to share equipment for fieldwork. There are good cross-curricular links and the use of information technology. However, there should be access to a computer with CD-ROM within the department to encourage and enable independent learning skills and raise further attainment in the subject.

Modern Foreign Languages

36. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C passes in French in recent years has remained above the national average. A*-C passes in German over the same period have been below this, although the 1996 results showed significant improvement. Boys at GCSE have sometimes underachieved in languages, although their attainment in some German lessons is now improving greatly.

37. Most pupils at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, achieve at least in line with national expectation and many achieve above or well above this, particularly at Key Stage 3. Most pupils develop good listening skills through regular opportunities to hear the foreign language. They can usually follow instructions or find out information from short texts and even the younger pupils sometimes show impressive skills in listening and responding to the fluent use of French or German. Pupils' spoken skills are usually sound, although standards vary. Most pupils by the end of both key stages can give short responses, sometimes giving basic opinions and justifying them. Pupils' pronunciation is usually at least satisfactory and in some German lessons particularly, pupils' willingness to speak spontaneously is exceptional. However, pupils often lack appropriate oral confidence towards the end of Key Stage 4, although some can manipulate language. Increased opportunities for pupils to speak at greater length are therefore needed. Pupils can usually read appropriate short texts and develop dictionary skills to enable them to read independently. However, there is a need for more regular opportunities for pupils to read more widely, particularly at Key Stage 4. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils can complete simple writing tasks and some can write longer pieces. At Key Stage 4, some pupils' writing skills improve rapidly and more able pupils sometimes write with good formal accuracy. However, teachers' demands and therefore standards vary and writing tasks are too often limited in scope.

38. Pupils often make sound and some make exceptional progress. Their progress is best when lessons provide a good balance between consolidation and the development of language skills. In a significant minority of lessons, however, language tasks set lacked challenge and progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are usually well taught. They therefore mainly make good progress and attain well.

39. Almost all pupils show positive attitudes to their work. Classroom relationships are generally respectful and pupils respond particularly well when involved enthusiastically in intensive oral work with the teacher and other pupils. Very occasionally, the behaviour of a very small number of boys is poor.

40. All teachers are committed to using their foreign language skills fully in the classroom. Almost all have sound methods, although some show greater enthusiasm and use more imaginative approaches than others. Lower attainers are often well supported and pupils are expected to work hard and behave. Teaching is mainly well structured, although planning needs to take greater account of how pupils are intended to progress through National Curriculum levels. Some aspects of the programmes of study, such as the use of information technology, are insufficiently covered. Unsatisfactory lessons observed were related to the lack of pace, insecure teaching techniques or limited foreign language skills.

41. The department is working as a team but now needs to agree common policies and practice across both languages. National Curriculum assessment arrangements are urgently needed as is the increased monitoring of standards. Curriculum provision should be reviewed carefully in the light of future staffing and management arrangements, in order to resolve current constraints, while continuing to allow those who wish to continue their study of two languages to do so.

Art

42. This is a good, well run department in which overall attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with or better than those expected nationally. There is a good balance in pupils' work between observation and imagination. Technical skills are well developed and pupils are familiar with a wide range of materials and processes. Pupils have the necessary skills to develop, modify and refine their ideas, and are acquiring an understanding of the work of other artists and designers which they are beginning to apply to their own work.

43. Just over half of the 67 pupils entered for GCSE art in 1996 achieved passes at A*-C grades. This is close to the LEA and national averages and above the LEA average for the syllabus entered. The numbers of pupils entered for art at GCSE level is above the national average.

44. Files, portfolios and completed work on display around the art rooms demonstrate both steady and significant progress across both key stages. The emphasis in the Year 7 course on the development

of basic skills and understanding ensures that courses undertaken in subsequent years build on secure foundations. Special educational needs pupils are well catered for in this department and the majority make satisfactory or good progress and all benefit from their involvement in the subject.

45. Pupils work productively throughout their lessons. Behaviour was always good and relationships positive and relaxed. When required to do so pupils work co-operatively. A number of aspects of the planned course require pupils to undertake individual research. In general they respond well to this requirement. Pupils at both key stages demonstrate a capacity for sustained study and respond with enthusiasm to the challenges set in a well structured course.

46. In all the lessons seen the teaching was either good or very good. Teachers have a secure command of their subject and a sound understanding of the way in which pupils learn through art. Expectations are high but realistic; planning is thorough and appropriate teaching methods and organisational strategies are employed to good effect. Discipline is well established; time is well managed and resources are well chosen and very well used. Pupils are given access to a broad and balanced programme of art, craft and design activities. They are encouraged to generate and develop their own ideas and are given the support and guidance they need to work with confidence.

Music

47. This is a good department which is benefiting from recent reorganisation and is building on foundations laid by the recently retired Head of Department. Standards of attainment of the majority of pupils are average or better. A significant number perform and compose very well, though GCSE results were below national standards in 1996.

48. The curriculum is based on practical music-making and lessons are planned to enable all pupils to learn the skills of performing and composing music. Many use keyboards and other classroom instruments with confidence and use the technical language of music with understanding. Many members of the band, ensembles and choir are skilled performers and show sensitivity and style in their playing. Pupils with special educational needs are given specific targets and make good progress.

49. The attitude of the majority to music is good. They enjoy participation and there is enthusiasm and commitment both in the classroom and in the growing number of ensemble groups which meet at lunchtimes and after school. In Key Stage 3 pupils learn very effectively when they are working independently or in small groups, supported by teachers acting as advisers.

50. At best, teaching is very good and delivery is lively, enthusiastic and considerable expertise is evident. Extra-curricular groups are well organised and regular rehearsals planned at lunchtimes and after school.

51. The music curriculum, which has recently undergone a review, meets National Curriculum requirements and provides a structured programme of progressive practical activities for all pupils in Key Stage 3. Arrangements for assessment measure pupils' progress and achievement in developing performing and composing skills and the resulting knowledge they acquire.

52. The leadership of the acting head of department, supported by the school's senior management, is effective and is a strength in the re-establishment of music as a positive element in the life of the school. Resources for learning have been recently increased and provide a wide range of good quality sound sources. Accommodation is potentially good but needs to be adjusted to maximise its effectiveness. The atmosphere of the music department encourages pupils to participate and many show respect for the subject and are eager to take responsibility and use initiative to extend further the opportunities already available for music-making. Performance groups play regularly inside and outside school in the local community and visits to professional concerts are arranged by the music department for groups of pupils and staff.

Physical Education

53.The attainment in physical education of most pupils at the end of both key stages is at or above national expectations. Pupils have a clear knowledge and understanding of the technical aspects of a range of basic games skills and are confident in their ability to execute such skills successfully. GCSE results were twice the national average in 1995 but only just above the national average in 1996. However, in 1995 it was the first time pupils had taken the GCSE course in physical education and special conditions applied. Although fewer girls took the examination in 1995, they achieved better results than the boys.

54.The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages, with a small number making good progress. They build on previous learning to develop their skill levels, particularly in games, and extend their knowledge and understanding of the principles and tactics used in games. Pupils with special educational needs are generally making satisfactory progress. The department caters well for such pupils through caring and sensitive teaching and the use of specialised equipment.

55.Pupils' response in almost all lessons is at least satisfactory and, in the majority of lessons, is good. Pupils are very well-behaved, highly motivated, show an interest in the lesson and have a positive attitude towards learning. They work effectively in pairs and in groups and are willing to sustain their practice in order to improve upon existing skill levels. They show high standards of sportsmanship and fair play when working in the game situation.

56.Teaching is nearly always satisfactory and very often is good or very good. Teachers have an in-depth specialist knowledge of the activities being taught. Lessons are delivered at a brisk pace and are planned so that tasks logically build on what pupils have learned previously. Clear demonstrations are used to illustrate teaching points. Class control is good and teachers have high expectations of pupil performance. When teaching is less successful the pace of the lesson is slow and pupils show a lack of motivation and interest.

57.There is a positive and caring ethos in the department which, together with strong leadership contribute to high standards. The curriculum only just meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3, and is not broad and balanced. Too much time is devoted to the teaching of games at the expense of gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activities. The inclusion of dance would broaden the curriculum and would contribute to the aesthetic and creative development of both boys and girls. There is a good extra-curricular programme which supports and extends the work of the department and which enables a large number of boys and girls of all abilities to participate in a wide range of activities.

Religious Education

58.By the end of Key Stage 3, where the curriculum reflects LEA Agreed Syllabus requirements, most pupils are achieving or exceeding the expectations of the Syllabus. Where elements of the course at this key stage and at Key Stage 4 insufficiently reflect those requirements, pupils achieve below expectation. The school does not offer pupils the opportunity to take religious education at GCSE level.

59.Similarly, pupils are making good progress in newly introduced courses which are in line with the Agreed Syllabus and less satisfactory progress where such courses have not been fully developed. Pupils respond well when challenged by teaching planned to the subject's field of enquiry, but currently some have a restricted view of the potential of religious education. An example of pupils making good progress was observed in Year 7, where each pupil had carried out a survey of the religious communities of Preston. The pupils' folders, containing records of interviews with representatives of the different faiths in the town, mapping and photographic reconnaissance, graphs and other statistical presentations and personal reflections on the project were indicative of serious commitment to the subject and the self and peer evaluation undertaken unusual in its detail and scope.

60.Pupils' attitudes to their learning are mostly good or very good at Key Stage 3. Unsatisfactory attitudes were observed on occasion in Year 9 and in Key Stage 4. The potential for the subject to make a significant contribution to the personal development of pupils was evident in the positive

attitudes many bring to their work. Voluntary and community action undertaken by pupils with a number of local, national and international charitable organisations is facilitated by religious education staff. It is an important aspect of the life of the school and is to be commended.

61. Teaching was sound or good in seven out of ten lessons seen and unsatisfactory in the rest, mainly because of a lack of familiarity with the Agreed Syllabus. Teaching is best where new courses are being introduced. Lessons are always carefully planned, but the single period allocation often restricts the teaching strategies which can be employed to challenge and extend pupils. Resources available to support the teaching of the new syllabus are currently inadequate: the stock of books in the school reference library is particularly poor, though there is a small departmental library. The main subject base is an attractive room, featuring many good examples of pupils' work. However, a significant number of lessons are taught away from the specialist area in a variety of rooms. This makes for great difficulties in resourcing and managing classes and has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress.

62. The school should now fully implement the statutory LEA Agreed Syllabus for religious education and provide sufficient curriculum time at Key Stage 4 for pupils to receive their proper entitlement in the subject.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of Inspection Evidence

63. The inspection team consisted of 15 inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week 185 lessons were observed as well as a range of registration periods, assemblies and extra-curricular activities over a total period of 151 hours and 30 minutes. All full-time teachers who were present during the inspection week were seen teaching at least once and many several times. Some supply and support teachers were also seen. Meetings took place with most staff who had major responsibilities in the school as well as many more informal discussions. The registered inspector met the full governing body. Inspection team members also met the chairmen of various governors committees. A parents' meeting attended by 40 parents was held and a note taken of comments made by parents. The collated responses of a questionnaire associated with the inspection were also noted. A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. All the available written work of a representative sample of pupils from each of Years 7 to 11 was inspected in addition to work seen in lessons. Planned discussions were held with some of these and other pupils. The behaviour of pupils was observed before, during and after school hours. Discussions also took place with associated primary schools, industry, commerce and various institutions which have connections with the school. The registered inspector also received letters from parents, local business and industry, associated institutions and members of the community.

Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 - Y11	882	22	96	67

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (Y7- Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	49
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Education support staff (Y7- Y11)

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked each week	200

[Secondary schools]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	79	
Average teaching group size:	KS3	24
	KS4	21

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1995-6
	£
Total Income	1,568,353.00
Total Expenditure	1,598,593.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,824.88
Balance brought forward from previous year	60,373.00
Balance carried forward to next year	30,133.00

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

879

Number of questionnaires returned:

488

Percentage return rate:

51.52

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	17.3	67.8	10.9	3.7	0.2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	27.7	61.6	6.6	4.1	
The school handles complaints from parents well	12.6	51.0	30.6	5.4	0.4
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	16.8	60.3	13.3	9.4	0.2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	18.8	57.1	12.9	9.6	1.7
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	29.3	61.2	7.2	2.3	
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26.3	57.3	12.4	3.9	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21.4	63.5	6.6	6.8	1.6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	19.1	59.1	17.2	4.1	0.4
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	14.5	61.1	15.1	7.0	2.3
My child(ren) like(s) school	32.9	54.1	7.0	3.7	2.3

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