

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Moor Park High School**  
Preston

LEA area : Lancashire

Unique Reference Number : 119773

Headteacher : Kath Moss

Reporting inspector : Mark Woodward  
T12987

Dates of inspection : October 19 – 23 1998

Under OFSTED contract number: 700987

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive
Type of control :	LEA maintained
Age range of pupils :	11-16 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Moor Park Avenue Preston Lancashire PR1 6DT
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Appropriate authority :	Governing body
Name of chair of governors :	Valerie Wise
Date of previous inspection :	February 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Trevor Smith, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Welfare and guidance Partnership with parents and the Community Equal opportunities
Moira Fitzpatrick	English	Curriculum
Ann Axon	Mathematics	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural
Alan Quinn	Science	Assessment
Elizabeth Charlesworth	Music	Resources
Jeffrey Hardman	Design and technology Information technology Business education	
Graham Laws	Modern languages	Staffing
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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- GCSE examination results are improving at a faster rate than the national average and exceed the targets set by the local education authority
- Pupils make good progress, particularly those who have English as an additional language
- The attainment of the pupils in art is very high
- The quality of teaching is good
- The leadership of the school, particularly of the headteacher, is very good
- The school is a harmonious community
- Increasing numbers of pupils are choosing to continue their education after leaving the school
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged vigorously, for example, through the extensive extra-curricular programme
- Links with the wider community, including business, are excellent
- Financial planning and control are very good

### Where the school has weaknesses

- Attainment on entry to the school is extremely low
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are weak, boys' literacy skills being worse than girls
- By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have made good progress, but attainment levels are still well below average compared with all schools
- The number of boys gaining 5 A\*-C GCSE passes is substantially below that of the girls
- The attainment of the pupils in design and technology is well below average and the management of the department is unsatisfactory
- The provision for information technology and modern languages does not fulfill National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 4
- Attendance is poor

Moor Park High School is a good school which has improved significantly in recent years. Critical to its success is the leadership offered by the headteacher, who has nurtured the development of a culture that promotes and recognises achievement. This, alongside the evolution of policies and practices that encourage personal growth and responsibility, has resulted in a school community that is tolerant, harmonious and forward-looking.

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and is in a strong position to sustain its improvement. The governors' action plan has been effective in addressing the majority of issues raised by the last inspection. GCSE results have risen significantly. In 1998, the pupils achieved at roughly national average levels for all schools against the 5 A\*-G and 1 A\*-G benchmarks. The numbers of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C GCSE passes has risen from 6% to 20%, although girls outperform boys significantly by this measure. The numbers of pupils entered for examinations has risen substantially too. This has been an important step in changing the culture of the school. The expectation now is that all pupils will be entered for GCSE examinations. By focusing on raising the attainment and aspirations of the pupils, the quality of teaching has improved and is a strength of the school.

Now that the budget is moving out of deficit and management structures appropriate to the school's size are in place, the school is appropriately making long-term plans for its further development.

## Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1997:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			<i>well above average</i> <i>above average</i> <i>average</i> <i>below average</i> <i>well below average</i>
Key Stage 3 tests	E	C	B C D E
GCSE examinations	E	C	

Compared with the 1997 results, results in the Key Stage 3 tests in 1998 were better in English and mathematics and similar in science. Boys performed substantially less well than girls in English. The GCSE 5 A\*-C results in 1998 were similar to the 1997 results but the 5 A\*-G results were significantly improved. On the basis of the local education authority's analysis of performance, the school exceeds its GCSE targets. Results in art are very high and, compared with results in other subjects, the results in mathematics, history, religious education and modern languages are also good. Results in science, design and technology and geography are weaker compared with results in other subjects.

## Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	good	Art, music, English, mathematics, religious education, science, hearing impaired unit, physical education	Design and technology, cross – curricular information technology
Years 10-11	good	Art, English, mathematics, religious education, hearing impaired unit, music, physical education	Design and technology, cross-curricular information technology
English	good		
Mathematics	good		

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 96% of the 135 lessons seen during the inspection. It was good in 61% and very good or excellent in 23%. 4% of the lessons were unsatisfactory.

The core information technology lessons at Key Stage 3 are well taught; the weakness is in the support given by other subjects to the delivery of the information technology curriculum.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The behaviour of the pupils is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is poor. There has been little progress in raising attendance since the last inspection despite the adoption of a range of strategies.
Ethos*	The ethos of the school is excellent. A culture of achievement prevails within a caring and supportive community.
Leadership and management	Very good overall, and excellent in the case of the headteacher.
Curriculum	The curriculum is well balanced at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 it is unsatisfactory, due to the absence of a modern language for some pupils and the lack of an effective provision for information technology.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision for hearing impaired pupils is a strength of the school. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress whilst at the school.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The staffing, accommodation and resource arrangements are all satisfactory.
Value for money	The school offers satisfactory value for money. Whilst the progress of the school has been very good, the expenditure per pupil is also very high.

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The improvements made in standards of attainment.</li> <li>• The care offered by the staff.</li> <li>• The transition arrangements from feeder schools and the arrangements in Year 7.</li> <li>• The drive of the headteacher.</li> <li>• The good behaviour of the pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The variability of daily homework loads.</li> </ul>

The views of parents were mostly in line with the views of the inspection team. One area of disagreement was in the quality of reports, where the team felt that parents should have more specific information about the attainment levels and progress of their children.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

- Continue to raise the attainment of all pupils, particularly boys.  
(Paragraphs; 4-9, 11-13, 15-22, 82, 85, 89 – all subject sections)
- Continue to improve the literacy skills of the pupils by:
  - Giving pupils more opportunities for extended writing across all subjects
  - Ensuring that pupils receive daily reading practice across all subjects
  - Giving pupils more opportunities to develop thinking skills through discussion and paired work
  - Building on the approaches to literacy being adopted by primary schools.  
(Paragraphs; 12, 15, 18, 36, 50, 53, 110-114, 118-119, 156, 173)
- Continue to improve the numeracy skills of the pupils by:
  - Developing a whole school approach to numeracy
  - Building on the approaches to numeracy being adopted by primary schools.  
(Paragraphs; 16, 18, 36, 53, 120-126, 130)
- Improve attainment in design and technology by:
  - Developing schemes of work which meet National Curriculum requirements
  - Planning how the curriculum is taught in order to serve the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and the more able
  - Developing lesson plans which clearly outline attainment objectives
  - Developing assessment practices which clearly identify pupils' attainment levels.  
(Paragraphs; 9, 11, 13, 19, 33, 35, 38-40, 44, 59, 61, 87, 92, 141-146)
- Raise levels of attendance, for example, by improving the first day of absence procedures which form tutors are unable to fulfil satisfactorily.  
(Paragraphs; 30, 74)
- Improve the curriculum at Key Stage 4 by:
  - Ensuring that all pupils receive the full statutory entitlement to modern languages and information technology
  - Exploring the potential for broadening the curriculum, particularly with regard to vocational courses.  
(Paragraphs; 20, 49, 53, 94-95, 104-105, 158-160, 162-163, 171, 173)

The team also felt that:

- some of the special support assistants were not sufficiently well trained to fully address the special educational needs of their designated pupils in all subjects.  
(Paragraphs; 45, 96-97)
- the majority of teachers in all subjects were in need of training in information technology skills.  
(Paragraphs; 35, 37, 95, 160-163)

## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

1. Moor Park High School serves an area of high social deprivation near to the centre of Preston, 59% of the pupils being eligible for free school meals, around three times the national average. There are currently 448 pupils in the school of which around half are from ethnic minority backgrounds, namely Asian Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Moroccan Muslims, Afro-Caribbeans and refugees from Montserrat. Many pupils do not speak English at home. The school has the greatest cultural mix of pupils in Lancashire. There are equal numbers of boys and girls in the school.
2. The attainment of the pupils on entry is very low. The mean cognitive ability test score is around 86, with girls scoring approximately 3 points higher on average than boys. Pupils' literacy skills are weakest. Many have difficulty with basic reading and writing. Around 24% of the pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is higher than average. This figure would be considerably higher if the school were not cautious about identifying pupils at stage one of the Code of Practice. Nearly 11% of the pupils have statements of special educational need. This is around four times the national average. The school also has a unit for 6 hearing impaired pupils. The characteristics of the pupils on entry to the school have not changed significantly since the last inspection, although the number of higher ability pupils is growing.
3. The schools' aims are contained in its vision statement. Central to the vision is the valuing of individuals and cultures. Priorities also include having high expectations of the pupils, promoting pupils' personal development, operating a consultative management style, increasing the skills of staff and developing partnerships with the wider community. The school's logo is 'Excellence in All'.

## Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	45	49	94

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	14	13	11
	Girls	30	15	15
	Total	44	28	26
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	47(44)	30(25)	28(31)
	National	➤(56)	➤(60)	➤(60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	19(10)	12(14)	10(5)
	National	➤(23)	➤(37)	➤(29)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	13	15	19
	Girls	25	19	26
	Total	38	34	45
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	40(44)	36(22)	48(33)
	National	➤(59)	➤(63)	➤(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	12(9)	13(12)	24(5)
	National	➤(28)	➤(37)	➤(29)

National comparative data is unavailable for 1998

<sup>1</sup>

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

## Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	40	40	80

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	3	37	39
	Girls	13	35	37
	Total	16	72	76
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	20(20)	90(78)	95(95)
	National	➤(43)	➤(88)	➤(94)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	9	100
National	➤	➤

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	13.07
	National comparative data	8.3
Unauthorised Absence	School	.49
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	31
Permanent	1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	23
Satisfactory or better	96
Less than satisfactory	4

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

4. Pupils arrive at the school with extremely low attainment levels. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is still very low, but given their starting point, pupils make good progress.
5. GCSE results since the last inspection have risen substantially. 6% of the pupils in 1993 achieved 5 A\*-C grades, compared with 20% in 1998. 20% of pupils also achieved 5 A\*-C grades in 1997, which was well below national average levels but in line with the average for similar schools. Based on prior attainment and other indicators, the local education authority predicted that the school ought to achieve a 5 A\*-C figure of 14%. Considerable progress has also been made in raising the numbers of pupils achieving 5 A\*-G and 1 A\*-G grades, which are now broadly in line with the national average for all schools and well above the national average for similar schools. At the time of the last inspection, 67% of pupils achieved 5 A\*-G grades compared with 90% in 1998. Parents are aware of the improvement in examination results and said that this is one of the major reasons for the school becoming more popular.
6. Boys' results at GCSE are further behind girls' results than is the case nationally. The gap is not large when average grade point scores are compared, but in 1998, 33% of girls achieved 5 A\*-C grades compared with 8% of boys. More boys than girls achieved 5 A\*-G grades.
7. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make more progress than white pupils, as graphs plotting entry level test scores against GCSE results indicate. They enter the school with poor English language skills, which depress their results in school and national tests, but then these skills develop well during Key Stages 3 and 4 and their improvement becomes reflected in the GCSE results. The majority of pupils achieving the highest GCSE results in the school come from ethnic minority backgrounds.
8. GCSE results are very high in art due to the very good teaching in this department. In 1997, pupils achieved higher results in mathematics, history, art, French and religious education than they did in their other subjects. They achieved worse results relative to other subjects in science, geography and design and technology. Comparative results for 1998 are not yet available.
9. Attainment in design and technology is unsatisfactory. This is principally due to weaknesses in some of the teaching, curricular planning and assessment.
10. In 1998, 9 pupils took engineering NVQ Level 1 and all passed.
11. Overall, attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is very high in art, average in French, religious education and physical education, low in mathematics and history and very low in English, science, design and technology, information technology, geography and music.
12. In the 1997 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3, the results of pupils gaining Level 5 or better in English were below the national average for all schools but above average for similar schools. They were very low in mathematics and well below average for similar schools. In science, they were well below the national average for all schools but average in comparison with similar schools. Results in 1998 were better in English and mathematics but slightly worse in science. In both 1997 and 1998, boys and girls achieved similar results at Level 5 and above in mathematics, with girls out-performing boys slightly in science. The English results at Level 5 and above were close to national averages for girls but well below national averages for boys. This variation in performance by girls and boys in the three core subjects is accounted for in the weaker literacy skills of boys throughout the school, although the gap between the sexes closes noticeably by the end of Key Stage 4.

13. Overall, standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are very high in art, average in physical education, low in science, design and technology, information technology, modern languages, history, geography, music and religious education and very low in English and mathematics. The English and mathematics attainment levels reflect the low core skill base of the pupils as they enter the school. In other subjects, the introduction of more subject specific skills, together with the progress made in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, explains the higher levels of attainment.
14. The attainment of pupils in art at both key stages is exceptional. This is due to teaching of a very high quality by both members of the department. Pupils are taught to recognise the codes and conventions used by major artists, can respond to the work of these artists critically and can explore tone and texture in two and three dimensions.
15. On entry to the school, pupils' literacy skills are very poor, particularly in writing. Boys perform less well than girls as the results of the entry level tests confirm. From this low base, pupils make good progress but attainment remains low and significantly affects the ability of pupils to achieve high grades at GCSE. Weak reading and writing skills are the principle reasons for the low level of attainment in the school. Listening skills are most well developed, pupils achieving good standards. Pupils speak confidently and clearly, although generally in short phrases and with limited vocabulary. Boys tend to be more confident speakers than girls and make more contributions to discussions. Reading skills are weak in Years 7 and 8 but then show steady improvement through to Year 11. Writing skills also improve and by the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils are able to sustain descriptive and narrative forms.
16. The level of numeracy skills is very low across most areas of the school. The summer numeracy school for new pupils in Year 7 has improved the numeracy skills for those pupils. Although pupils demonstrate sound proficiency in mathematics, they are not able to use number effectively in many subjects and their skills are well below average. The use of graphs is satisfactory in geography and science and in science they measure lengths and use simple formulae. The mathematics and science faculties are developing a numeracy policy but there is no whole-school numeracy policy, which is a weakness.
17. Pupils' information technology skills are below average on entry, remain at this level at the end of Key Stage 3 and are poor at the end of Key Stage 4. Provision at Key Stage 3 has recently improved and the impact of this can be seen in the quality of work shown by pupils in Years 7 and 8. Information technology skills at Key Stage 4 are poor because pupils have little opportunity to use the technology, and there is no programme of study, which is a major weakness.
18. Across the school, pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. Progress overall is good. The impact of the good teaching in raising attainment levels increases as the pupils move through the school. This is directly related to the progressive improvements in literacy and numeracy standards.
19. At Key Stage 3, progress is very good in art, good in English, mathematics, information technology, music, physical education and religious education, satisfactory in science, modern languages, history and geography and unsatisfactory in design and technology. The very good progress in art is due to high quality teaching and a well planned curriculum which inspires pupils to think deeply about their work. In design and technology the unsatisfactory progress is largely due to a curriculum which is not well planned or organised. Pupils are unsure of what they should know, understand and be able to do within each scheme of work.
20. At Key Stage 4, progress is very good in art, good in English, mathematics, history, physical education and religious education, satisfactory in modern languages, unsatisfactory in science, design and technology and geography and poor in information technology. The unsatisfactory progress in science and geography reflects the poorer performance of pupils in those subjects at GCSE in recent years. Evidence from the quality of teaching seen in those subjects suggests that progress is improving. Progress in information technology is poor at Key Stage 4 due to the lack of an appropriate curriculum. However, this is a priority that is currently being addressed appropriately by the school.
21. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory with regard to the targets contained in

their individual education plans. The great majority of these pupils function at well below average levels in most National Curriculum subjects but their attainment is in line with their abilities. Comprehensive records on the attainment and progress of the pupils are kept and are used to inform teaching and planning. Overall, they are making good progress in most subjects and in their personal and social development.

22. Pupils in the unit for the hearing impaired achieve levels of attainment commensurate with their abilities and, in some subjects, they achieve higher levels than the majority of their hearing peers. Progress over time is good and in line with targets set in individual education plans. The progress of all hearing impaired pupils is regularly monitored and comprehensive records are kept.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

23. Attitudes, behaviour, relationships and pupils' personal development are strengths of the school, and result from strong social and moral provision, together with the dedication of staff who understand and respond to the pupils' needs. These findings are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.
24. Pupils have good attitudes to work. This has a positive impact on the standards achieved. They enjoy learning and are keen to respond to the challenges offered. In lessons they listen carefully, answer questions confidently and are willing to take part in discussions. They settle quickly to each new task and, overall, have good levels of concentration. The reward system is highly valued by pupils.
25. Overall, behaviour in and out of class is very good. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them and react accordingly. When moving about the building between lessons, and at other times, they are sensible and orderly. The number of exclusions is average compared to similar sized schools which, given the number of pupils who have behavioural difficulties, represents a good performance. One pupil was permanently excluded last year and a there were a further 32 fixed term exclusions, mostly of boys. Recent exclusions were dealt with appropriately. Pupils at Moor Park are proud of their school and treat its fabric and facilities with a high level of respect. Bullying is not perceived as a serious problem by pupils, parents or staff.
26. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. There is a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere which is recognised by parents. No racial tensions were evident. Pupils are polite, welcoming towards visitors and are always ready to be helpful. In lessons they work well together in pairs or groups when required to do so, and share ideas and equipment sensibly. During breaks, and at lunchtime, they are friendly and sociable.
27. Pupils' personal development is good. They are socially skilled and are aware of, and respect, each others' rights, feelings and beliefs. Opportunities for pupils to plan their own learning, or for them to show initiative are, however, limited. They follow instructions well, but occasionally lack confidence in working independently. Pupils of all ages are keen to take on responsibility, and exercise it well. For example, prefects support Year 7 pupils registration period and act as hosts at parents' evenings. The School Council is an effective body. Links with business, involvement with the local community and the wide range of educational and residential visits also make a significant contribution to the formation of pupils' personal values.
28. Pupils with special educational needs are interested in their work, concentrate well and co-operate well in class. They are able to take turns and show respect for other pupils' ideas and contributions. They are willing to take responsibility and carry out their assigned or volunteered duties in a positive manner. Overall, their behaviour is good. Occasional misbehaviour is dealt with by teachers and other staff in a sensible manner.
29. All hearing impaired pupils work with interest and consistency and are full participants in all activities of the school.

### **Attendance**

30. Attendance has not improved since the last inspection. Overall, it is well below the average for secondary schools nationally, although in Year 7 it remains broadly satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. The poor attendance of some pupils affects the progress they make in school and damages

their performance in examinations. This is particularly true for those pupils who are taken out of school for extended periods to visit their families' former country. The absence of these pupils affect the overall attendance figures but it is not the most important factor in explaining their low level since it accounts for less than 1% of the total absences.

31. Punctuality is generally good. Most pupils arrive at school on time and move quickly from class to class between lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

32. The quality of teaching across the school is good at both key stages. The positive attitudes of the pupils and the progress made in improving attainment are directly linked to the quality of teaching. Almost all the lessons seen were judged to be satisfactory or better which represents a very significant rise in performance since the last inspection.
33. Within individual subjects, teaching is very good in art and music at Key Stage 3 and good in English, mathematics, religious education, physical education, the hearing impaired unit, science at Key Stage 3 and music at Key Stage 4. It was satisfactory in modern languages, history, geography, personal and social education and science at Key Stage 4, but unsatisfactory in design and technology and cross-curricular information technology at Key Stage 3 and poor in information technology at Key Stage 4.
34. The teaching in art is exceptional. Both teachers are knowledgeable and skilled specialists, whose individual skills complement each other. Pupils are therefore offered a broad range of opportunities to develop their artistic capability and creativity. The curriculum is well planned, enabling pupils to explore materials and forms whilst discovering and being stimulated by the ideas and processes of the great artists. Good teaching was also seen in most subjects. It was generally characterised by an awareness of the needs of individual pupils leading to the creation of appropriately challenging work.
35. Teaching in design and technology is unsatisfactory overall, although some good practical lessons were seen in food and textiles. The key weakness is in the planning of the curriculum, which does not clearly identify what pupils need to know, understand and be able to do within each scheme of work. Also, the standards of work expected of the pupils are not high enough. Some good and very good lessons were seen in information technology at Key Stage 3, but the overall contribution of teachers across the curriculum to developing skills is unsatisfactory. The teaching of information technology at Key Stage 4 is poor. There is no programme of study and little contribution from most subjects.
36. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well within the English and mathematics departments but the contributions of other departments are variable. An area of strength is in the teaching of specialist vocabulary which many departments, such as art and science, do well. Overall there is not enough regular reading practice given to pupils across the curriculum. Extended writing tasks are also insufficiently seen as are group discussions which enable pupils to develop their thinking skills. There is no whole-school numeracy policy and therefore the input across the curriculum is under-developed. The school has not fully investigated the guidance and methods of teaching advised under the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, although the planning for last summer's numeracy school began this process.
37. The knowledge and understanding of teachers is good, for example, all language teachers are confident in the target language and therefore provide good role models for the pupils. The information technology skills of teachers are inadequate. There has been little whole school in-service training in recent years, which partly explains why so little use is made of information technology across the curriculum. Teachers' lack of specialist qualifications in some subjects does not have an adverse affect on standards of attainment.
38. Teachers generally expect pupils to produce high quality work. In the art rooms, throughout the school and in the community, pupils can see examples of the excellent work produced in the art department. This is

illustrative of the methods by which the department encourages and inspires all pupils to produce their best work. Expectations are also very high in music, where pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their listening, performing and composing skills. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to achieve high standards in design and technology and across the curriculum in information technology.

39. The planning of work in most subjects is satisfactory. There are weaknesses in some schemes of work, for example, in mathematics, design and technology and information technology. In mathematics, there is no scheme of work for Key Stage 4 and the Key Stage 3 scheme is still under development. The planning in religious education is good, conforming well with the locally agreed syllabus. The needs of individual pupils are generally met satisfactorily, some departments such as modern languages using a good range of strategies to stretch pupils of all abilities by the creation of extension work for the more able. Other departments, such as geography, do not match work sufficiently carefully to individual pupils' needs.
40. The teaching methods and organisation used across the school are good. In music, art and religious education, this area of provision is very good. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to explore knowledge and skills within the subjects. For example, in music pupils are taught basic singing and rhythm skills which enable them to compose and perform with confidence. The organisation of teaching in design and technology and information technology is unsatisfactory.
41. The school is a very civilised environment, both inside and outside the classroom. This is considerably due to the effective methods used by teachers to motivate pupils and sustain good relationships with them. The additional funding for pupils with special educational needs enables the school to have smaller classes. This makes a significant contribution to the enhancement of the learning environment, which in turn is reflected in the good progress made by pupils. The emphasis of the school is on rewarding achievement. This is seen across subjects and effectively supports the raising of pupils' self-esteem and their belief that they can succeed.
42. Teachers generally use time and resources well, for example, in art the good quality resources are well maintained and managed so that there is no wastage. The physical education department has built up good links with outside organisations such as Preston North End Football Club, in order to enhance the opportunities available to the pupils. These resources are used well and motivate the pupils. Teachers generally make good use of the time available in lessons.
43. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory across most departments. In some subjects such as mathematics, marking is thorough, with well considered guidance given to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. In science, learning objectives are not linked closely enough to assessment practices.
44. Homework is used satisfactorily in most subjects to support the pupils' learning. It is used well in modern languages, where it comprises a mixture of new learning, consolidation and extension exercises. Homework is not used effectively in music or design and technology. Some parents have concerns about the irregularity of the homework load. On some evenings, pupils have work to do in a number of subjects and on others there is little.
45. All pupils with special educational needs are taught in mainstream classes. The great majority of them receive additional support from 2 full-time and 7 part-time teachers plus 13 classroom assistants. The individual teaching for these pupils is consistently good but has a limited scope, embracing primarily basic literacy skills. Classroom teaching is also generally good. Good teaching occurs when teachers prepare materials which are well matched to the abilities and interests of the pupils. Unsatisfactory teaching is seen when the special needs of the pupils are marginalised, lessons are poorly planned and there is little or no additional in-class or follow-up support.
46. Teaching within the unit for hearing-impaired pupils is good. The classroom assistant is competent, shows commitment and provides good support. Teaching within mainstream classes is also good, except in a small minority of classes where hearing-impaired pupils are not sufficiently well involved and therefore derive little benefit from the varied linguistic environment. Most mainstream class teachers support the integration programme but some have insufficient knowledge and training to appreciate the effects of deafness on

educational development.

47. There are good links between the Unit staff and mainstream teachers. They meet regularly, monitor the progress of the pupils and plan close co-operation. There is also good liaison between the staff of the Unit and parents. Relationships between pupils, staff and hearing-impaired pupils are good. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are approachable and friendly.

## **The curriculum and assessment**

### *Curriculum*

48. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced. All National Curriculum subjects are provided and time allocations allow appropriate coverage of the Programmes of Study. Religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus, which recognises the diversity of faiths represented in the school's population. There is a policy for sex education, and the subject is taught in science and through personal and social education. The school has taken into consideration the views of parents when establishing this policy and the needs of the diverse cultures within the school are met in the teaching of the subject. Courses of study are generally well planned, with the exceptions of design and technology where there is an inadequate link between curricular planning and the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and in science, where the schemes of work have too much content and detail.
49. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is not sufficiently broad and balanced. This represents a decline in provision since the last inspection. Information technology is not taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum. In addition, not all pupils are able to study a modern foreign language, although there is after-school provision for pupils wishing to study Urdu or Gujarati to GCSE level and a good number of pupils take advantage of this opportunity. The range of subjects offered to pupils at Key Stage 4 is somewhat restricted; for example, there is little opportunity to study vocational courses. The time allocated to the taught curriculum at Key Stage 4, (24 hours 10 minutes), is below the national recommended minimum of 25 hours. This was also criticised in the previous inspection report.
50. There is a policy for language across the curriculum. In some departments lists of key words for the topics to be studied are displayed and discussed. These are then reinforced by the English department. There are too few planned opportunities across the curriculum, beyond physical education and personal and social education, for group discussion, brainstorming and pupil presentations. As a result, some of the pupils' considerable thinking skills remain under-developed. In English and religious education, pupils are given opportunities to write unaided and at times collaboratively. This is not a feature of the work of other departments and is a weakness. There is also little evidence of any subject other than English or French using whole-class or silent reading in lessons, which means that pupils do not have enough practice in interpreting a range of written material.
51. Personal and social education is followed by all pupils in each key stage. This includes careers education, self-awareness, health education, education for citizenship and economic and industrial understanding. The programme is satisfactorily planned, with topics carefully selected to match pupils' age. Since the last inspection, an appropriate policy and provision for sex education has been put into place. Careers education is good. Strong links with the local careers service, the local training and enterprise council and local businesses all provide opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge of the world of work. Work experience forms an integral part of pupils' careers education.
52. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich the curriculum for many pupils. There are clubs for art, sport, technology, and musical activities, including a wind ensemble, a brass ensemble and a number of choirs. There are many theatre and art visits, a ceramics club and an environmental group. A young enterprise group and the Scrabble club are further examples of the many opportunities open to pupils.
53. Progression between Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory in all subjects. However, curricular links with Key Stage 2 are variable and a lack of knowledge and understanding of what the pupils learn in Years 5 and 6 hampers pupils' progress initially in some subjects. Developments in Key Stage 2 literacy and numeracy need to be understood to enable effective progression to Key Stage 3. Post-16 links are supported by good links

with the local college and through the careers service. The transfer of pupil information between school and receiving colleges ensures that pupils are well supported as they begin new courses in post-16 education. Apart from those pupils who do not study French at Key Stage 4, all other pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

54. Pupils with special educational needs are valued members of the school community. They are full participants in the whole curriculum and extra-curricular activities of the school. Individual education plans for pupils above Stage 2 on the special needs register provide appropriate targets, especially for basic literacy work and for personal and social development. Individual educational plans are regularly reviewed. Statements are reviewed annually and stated needs are met. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is well co-ordinated. In most of the subjects both medium-term and short-term planning make reference to the special needs of pupils, but long-term planning in some subjects is not as secure.

#### *Assessment*

55. A key issue arising from the last inspection was the requirement to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress more rigorously. The school has responded positively with a comprehensive and effective central system for collating key assessment data on each pupil. Attainment in the cognitive assessment tests, taken on entry to the school, and in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are entered as a starting bench-mark for each pupil. Recording, bench-marking and target-setting procedures now being applied centrally have yet to be adopted fully and rigorously across all departments. Until this is achieved, the effective monitoring necessary for consistency across the curriculum called for at the last inspection cannot take place.
56. The new database is used effectively to estimate GCSE grades in each Year up to Year 10. In Year 11, estimates and forecasts are based on trial GCSE examinations or tests and coursework. It enables the progress of all pupils to be monitored and, at an early stage, can identify pupils of higher ability as well as those with special educational needs. Analysis of the assessment records is also providing a valuable mechanism for identifying those pupils whose attainment and progress are below expected levels. Setting within subjects is based on attainment, but there are opportunities for movement between sets at various points through the key stages. Records for each subject are held within departments but not duplicated centrally.
57. In a drive to raise standards of achievement, a valuable monitoring process has been introduced at both key stages to track pupils' progress. Every half term an effort grade, (1, 2 or 3), is given in each subject, which enables form tutors to identify pupils who may be under-achieving. It also effectively acts as a means of identifying and rewarding pupils who are working hard.
58. The basis for assessing attainment in each subject varies but at Key Stage 3 has been rationalised into a three-grade system; (A, B and C). There is no secure comparability of these grades between subjects, as they are not related to agreed criteria nor are they uniformly linked to National Curriculum levels or descriptors. They are therefore unreliable measures of attainment across the school. At Key Stage 4, there is greater consistency and reliability, as assessment is linked to GCSE requirements and grades. Since the last report, the school has improved its monitoring of GCSE coursework.
59. There is a good correlation between National Curriculum test scores and teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 in English and science, indicating accuracy in assessment, but it was poor in mathematics. Procedures for assessment are not effective in design and technology at both key stages nor in information technology at Key Stage 4. There is good practice in much of the marking seen in exercise books but consistency in quality and frequency ranges from good to unsatisfactory. There is a need for more comments that are helpful in advising pupils what it is they need to do to improve attainment. Overall, assessment procedures are good at both key stages.
60. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good and regularly carried out. The results obtained are extensively used to inform teaching and planning. A number of professionals from outside services visit the school and provide appropriate advice on the assessment of the pupils. Identification of learning difficulties is thorough and well documented. Statements are in place and are annually reviewed, with full participation of the parents and pupils. Individual education plans are in place, are well targeted and are regularly reviewed on

a six-monthly basis or earlier. All pupils with special educational needs, including hearing-impaired pupils, participate in setting and approving targets in their individual education plans. This is good practice.

61. The use of assessment information in planning for the needs of all pupils, by reviewing and modifying the curriculum and teaching methods, has improved since the last inspection but is not securely in place in all subjects. There are weaknesses in science and design and technology at both key stages, in history and geography at Key Stage 3 and at information technology at Key Stage 4. Good practices identified by the curriculum group need to be more effectively conveyed to teachers and outcomes monitored more closely. Overall, the use of assessment to inform curricular planning is satisfactory in each key stage. It is used extensively for pupils with special educational needs to support both teaching and planning.
62. Annual reports are sent to parents but the quality of information about pupils is unsatisfactory in most subjects. There is a useful general action plan for each pupil, with targets attached, but in subject reports the comments are insufficiently related to the attainment and progress of the pupils. The parents also receive the useful monitoring report on effort every half term. The use of information from the feeder primary schools has significantly improved since the last inspection. Formal records on every pupil are properly maintained and forwarded when a pupil transfers to another school or institution.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

63. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Whilst praised in the last inspection report, the provision has improved further. The teachers and other adults provide very good role models and this encourages pupils to behave well and to show self discipline. The school creates an atmosphere that is purposeful, where pupils are valued and where a diversity of cultures work in harmony.
64. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual development. Pupils acquire good knowledge and insight into values and beliefs through religious education and personal and social education. Elsewhere in the curriculum, these values are reinforced; for example, in art, through the use of symbols relating to the spiritual universe and in music, through the creative process of performing and composing. Assemblies are orderly and bring sections of the school together in a positive way. They focus on important issues and make a positive contribution to pupils' moral and social development. However, they rarely contain an element of worship and this, combined with the fact that they are not a daily occurrence for all pupils, means that the present arrangements do not comply with the statutory requirements.
65. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Adults are very good role models and the school's ethos is one of consideration for others. A strong emphasis is placed on moral development in the registration topics, in the school vision policy and in the code of conduct. Pupils respect property and have a caring attitude towards each other. Good contributions are made by the humanities subjects in the issues they study. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss moral issues and to develop their sense of right and wrong. In religious education, they see virtues in the ideals of the great world religions and in geography various environmental issues are considered. In the personal and social education lessons they explore and show understanding of the effect of crime on the victim.
66. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The school is a friendly place and emphasises caring values. Pupils are encouraged to make a positive contribution towards society by raising funds for several charities, and through this they develop a good understanding of citizenship. Through the Green Club and in many subjects they understand the importance of recycling and develop a responsible attitude towards the environment both around the school and the wider world. The School Council gives the pupils the opportunity to represent their peers and to influence some of the decisions that affect them directly. There are several opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the school. Year 11 pupils are appointed as prefects; they are good role models and make a positive contribution to parents' evenings as well as helping new pupils to the school settle in. Other pupils volunteer to support work elsewhere in the school as library assistants, as a leader in physical education and in the shared reading scheme. Pupils conduct themselves in a mature fashion and relationships are very good. In many subjects they learn how to work with others and to share ideas. Teaching is supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular activities and many opportunities for residential

experience. These activities contribute very positively to pupils' social development.

67. Cultural provision is good. A great deal of valuable work is done to increase pupils' knowledge of the society in which they live, including its cultural traditions and values. In religious education there is exploration of a wide range of faiths and pupils are keen to discuss their own faith and cultural traditions. They visit local churches and mosques as part of the curriculum. In geography, history and art, they study other cultures, both current and in the past. Visits to France give useful experience of European culture. The English department arranges theatre visits, and the support and development of the Asian band reflects the music departments' multi-cultural approach.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

68. The school provides good educational and personal support and guidance for its pupils. It is a very caring institution. The pastoral system is well managed and operates effectively through heads of year and form tutors, who have good knowledge of their pupils, understand their needs and respond to them. In Year 11, it is strongly underpinned by mentoring of those pupils who the school feels would benefit from additional support.
69. Parents are particularly satisfied with the work that the school does in easing the transition of pupils, including those with special educational needs, from the primary feeder schools. They also praise the special arrangements for Year 7 pupils, who have their own pastoral base and playground.
70. Pupils' social development, behaviour and attendance are regularly monitored by the form tutor. Any pupil giving cause for concern is referred to the head of year and appropriate action is taken quickly. This includes involvement of outside agencies, the offer of counselling and contact with parents. Personal and social education is taught explicitly to all year groups by form tutors.
71. Satisfactory procedures exist for monitoring pupils' general academic progress, but there is a lack of rigour in the way results are analysed, particularly with a view to target setting. Nevertheless, the procedures have improved since the last inspection. The half-termly progress monitoring is effective in motivating pupils to maintain positive attitudes to work and in identifying pupils whose effort is unsatisfactory. Support for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good, and well co-ordinated. Existing in-class support for other pupils with special educational needs is generally sound and well organised. The personal, social and medical needs for these pupils are well met.
72. There is a well organised and effective careers advice programme which includes work experience for pupils in Year 10 and mock interviews. Pupils are also well informed about the range of further education courses available for them.
73. The school very successfully promotes high standards of behaviour and discipline. Its code of conduct forms an important part of the Home School Partnership agreement, and is constantly reinforced by all members of staff, particularly form tutors. Rewards and sanctions are fair and appropriate. The merit system in the lower school is operated effectively on a day-to-day basis. Special outings are periodically arranged to recognise and reward pupils showing significant effort during the year. Effective arrangements are in place to deal with bullying, and pupils are generally confident that any incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with.
74. Registers are maintained properly. They are monitored regularly, and satisfactory arrangements are in place to investigate unexplained absence, although the requirement for form tutors to contact parents on the first day of absence is unrealistic and therefore unsatisfactory. The school works extremely hard to encourage better attendance and has implemented a wide range of schemes (such as merit awards and certificates, displays, individual records, involvement of the education welfare officer and governors' attendance panel) to achieve this. However, whilst they are often successful in individual cases, they do not have sufficient impact overall. Levels of attendance are reported to parents.
75. Child protection arrangements are good and reflect local authority guidelines. Two teachers have designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies and most staff are aware of the procedures to follow.

76. Pupils' general well-being is promoted successfully. A health and safety policy is in place and most departments have carried out a full risk assessment. Accidents are dealt with appropriately. They are recorded and parents are informed. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid. Pupils are well supervised and a calm, orderly atmosphere is maintained. There are regular fire drills and most emergency equipment is inspected regularly. The building is spotlessly clean and maintained in good condition. Nevertheless, a few health and safety matters were raised with members of staff during the inspection.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

77. Satisfactory links have been developed with parents. They are encouraged to support their children's learning and are made to feel welcome in school. Meetings of the Home School Association are well supported and frequently include talks about specific areas of the curriculum. Parents also respond well when special events are organised, for example, when Year 7 pupils are invited to 'bring an adult to school' as part of the settling-in process. At other times, regular communications are maintained with parents through homework diaries. The recent rise in applications for pupils to enter the school reflects the growing confidence amongst parents and the wider community that the school is performing well.
78. The quality and range of information provided to parents are satisfactory. The school makes considerable efforts in this area; for example, to help parents attend parents' evenings a crèche is made available. Attendance at parents' evenings is improving. Correspondence is sent out whenever necessary and there are regular and informative newsletters from the school and Home School Association. An area of weakness is in the written annual reports by a number of subjects since they are not sufficiently informative about the attainment and progress of the pupils. Parents feel at ease approaching the school if they have any concerns, and consider that any matters raised are handled well. The prospectus and the governors' annual report meet statutory requirements.
79. The school continues to have many excellent partnerships with local industry, and recently received a visit from the Prince of Wales in recognition of its achievements. It has raised significant levels of sponsorship to fund technology initiatives and is a member of the British Aerospace education network. There is a strong work experience programme for pupils in Year 10, and each year the school actively participates in a Young Enterprise project under the dedicated mentorship of local business personnel.
80. The school provides a wide range of educational and residential visits, and has many close links with the local community which enrich the curriculum and also help to enhance pupils' personal development. There are well-established transfer arrangements for pupils entering the school in Year 7 and close links with local colleges which ensure that pupils are well informed about the range of further education courses available for them.
81. The school has good working relationships with a range of services which provide a substantial input to the provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairments. In particular, links with health and local education advisory services are well established and contribute significantly to the educational management and progress of the pupils. Parents are kept informed of developments and they are full participants in reviewing and setting targets in the individual education plans of their children. Links with the feeder primary schools and post-16 educational services are good and this ensures continuity of specialist provision and support.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

82. The leadership and management of the school are very good, as parents and the wider community are keen to acknowledge. The key person is the headteacher, who has ably led the staff through a challenging period in the school's history, during which time attainment has risen, the budget has been brought under control and confidence in the school has grown.
83. The vision statement expresses an active set of aims for the school. These can be seen in operation on a day-

to-day basis and in the development of policies and practices. Central to the vision is the valuing of individuals and cultures. The good relationships throughout the school and the lack of tensions between groups of pupils are testament to the success of the school in establishing this principle. The vision also sets as priorities having high expectations of the pupils, promoting pupils' personal development, operating a consultative management style, increasing the skills of staff and developing partnerships with the wider community. These features are all highly recognisable in the way that the school operates. The school's logo 'Excellence in All' is promoted vigorously.

84. The governors are ably led by a relatively new chairperson, who takes a close, supportive and evaluative approach to the role. The remaining governors include representatives from the local community and from business. They offer wide experience to the school, which has been helpful in securing support for the vision promoted by the school and in developing effective partnerships with other organisations. Appropriate policies and committees are in place which enable the governors to carry out their duties effectively. Recently, the governors have worked hard to develop closer links with departments. Relationships between the governors and the headteacher are good.
85. The headteacher's achievements in leading the school forward are excellent. She has been at the school for over 5 years and in this time has effectively managed change in a number of key areas. Examination results have risen by all the accepted measures, achieving national average levels in two of them. This marks a significant improvement in the school's performance since the last inspection. The headteacher inherited an expensive staffing structure which was unsustainable. Decisive yet sympathetic action was taken over a period of years to address this issue and, as a result, the staffing budget is now under control whilst good staff relationships have been maintained. A cornerstone policy of the headteacher has been to reach out into the community for support. By demonstrating her commitment to the pupils and her success in improving the school, that support has been won. This can be clearly seen in the recent decisions by a number of businesses to keep their pledges of financial support for the improvements in technology despite the school's failure to achieve technology college status.
86. A new senior management team ably supports the headteacher. The new deputy headteacher is well respected in the school, having successfully managed a department and acted in a senior management role prior to her appointment. The team is completed by a well-organised and efficient financial manager and two senior teachers, one of whom is currently acting as a deputy head. Job descriptions have recently been finalised and all the personnel have shown competence and commitment in their areas of responsibility.
87. Departmental leadership is good in almost all cases. It is very good in art, where a rich curriculum has been developed for the pupils which is both artistically stimulating and fully compatible with the National Curriculum. Leadership and management in design and technology are poor. Schemes of work do not cover National Curriculum requirements and do not take sufficient account of the individual needs of all pupils. Departmental documentation is generally good, although schemes of work are incomplete in some areas, for example, mathematics and information technology. The documentation of the department for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and of a high quality.
88. The objectives of the school's policy on special educational needs are sound and are well known both to the school staff and to parents. Teamwork between the special educational needs co-ordinator, the class teachers, classroom support staff, professionals from other agencies and some of the parents is good. The identification of pupils with special educational needs is well organised and managed.
89. The ethos of the school is excellent. The headteacher leads the staff in emphasising achievements and positive contributions to the life of the school; for example, during the inspection week there was a whole-school assembly in which pupils from the previous Year 11 were presented with their GCSE certificates by the headteacher. Their success in gaining entry to further education courses or in gaining employment was also detailed, thereby showing the current pupils in the school that examination success creates opportunities. Throughout the building are displays of achievement, from high class ceramics to photographic records of the visits of national figures such as Prince Charles (who had been encouraged to visit the school by members of the business community). Non-teaching staff such as the financial manager and the caretaker reinforce the positive whole-school ethos by taking part in school events both during the day and after school. All of these factors, and many more, serve to remind pupils constantly that they are capable of succeeding and that they

are valued.

90. Across the school the support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development are good although there are weaknesses in design and technology. Members of the senior management team conduct reviews of pupils' books in order to monitor teaching quality and curriculum development. The arrangements for conducting the reviews are well thought out but the written reports are not specific enough to give departments a clear idea of what they are doing well and how they need to improve. Senior managers also spend time observing lessons, particularly those of newly qualified teachers. A very good observation form has been created, which includes a grading system to evaluate performance across a number of indicators. The judgements are shared with the teacher and suggestions about how to improve are made. A good guide to target-setting and benchmarking has been produced by one of the senior teachers. The process is understood by some departmental heads such as the head of mathematics, but it is not established throughout the school.
91. Most departments have appropriate systems for monitoring pupils' books. Teachers are given formal feedback by some heads of department, whilst others operate an informal approach. The rigour of the process is therefore variable. Most heads of departments do not make formal observations of lessons, the exceptions are the heads of mathematics and modern languages. In modern languages, observations are conducted by all staff in order for experience and skills to be shared. This is good practice.
92. The school development plan is good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. It is clearly laid out, with key targets summarised at the start. The current plan identifies a number of the weaknesses and areas for improvement which are confirmed by this report, for example, the Key Stage 4 curriculum and the target-setting and benchmarking practices. This indicates that it has a clear idea of its future priorities. The school's vision statement is recognisable in the development statements and the work load appears to be realistic. Departmental development planning is very good in art, good in science, modern languages, music, physical education and religious education, satisfactory in all other subjects except design and technology.
93. In the last inspection report, curriculum time was identified as being below recommended levels. No action has yet been taken to remedy this weakness. All the other areas identified in the key issues have been worked on and significant improvements have been made. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and is in a good position to continue this trend.
94. Statutory requirements are not met with regard to modern languages and information technology at Key Stage 4. Not all pupils have the opportunity to study a foreign language and information technology is not taught effectively across the curriculum, as there is no scheme of work. These deficiencies represent major weaknesses in the school's educational provision. A daily act of collective worship is not observed, as it was not at the time of the previous inspection.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

95. There have been significant changes in staffing and school organisation since the last inspection. There is now a faculty system and many staff have taken early retirement. In the past year the school has appointed 14 new teachers, 6 of whom are newly qualified. Appointments include subject leaders in mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. The age profile of the teaching staff has been lowered considerably. Most teachers have at least one identified area of responsibility, and more senior members of staff have at least dual responsibilities and often more. Although there is some non-specialist teaching in English and mathematics, this does not have an adverse effect on standards of attainment. Overall, there is a satisfactory match of teachers' qualifications with the subjects they teach. The number of full-time teachers in relation to the pupil population is high, and compares very favourably with similar schools. Class sizes are comparatively small. Skills available for the discrete teaching of information technology are good, but many teachers lack the skills necessary to provide supplementary activities in their own subjects, particularly at Key Stage 4. There are too few language teachers to teach all the pupils at Key Stage 4 and hence some pupils do not study a language. This is a breach of statutory regulations.
96. The number of teaching and non-teaching staff is sufficient to support all pupils with special educational

needs. The school has appropriately identified the need to upgrade the skills of some support assistants in the current development plan. There is not enough technician support in design and technology, but in science, provision is good. The school derives immense benefit from the commitment and loyalty of the caretaker and the financial manager, both of whom offer informal guidance to staff and pupils in areas that extend beyond their formal job descriptions.

97. The school has developed a well-considered professional self-evaluation schedule which is complemented by a departmental monitoring structure. This appraisal system is currently halfway through the current cycle, and almost half of the staff have still to begin their own programme. There is a comprehensive and good quality induction programme for all new staff. Staff development is geared towards priorities identified in the school's development plan. Whilst this is generally an appropriate strategy, it sometimes inhibits the opportunities for subject staff to upgrade their specialist knowledge. The school benefits from having a range of staff who support pupils with special educational needs. Good skills were shown by the majority of this team, but deficiencies in the skills of others need to be addressed. Staffing issues identified in the previous inspection have been tackled resolutely and effectively.
98. Overall, the accommodation enhances the delivery of the curriculum; classrooms are airy and light creating a warm and welcoming environment in which to learn. The school is well decorated. High quality displays of work give strong messages to the pupils about the value of endeavour and achievement. They also enliven the whole atmosphere of the school. The accommodation is well maintained, for example, the floors are superbly polished. This is due to the dedication of the caretaker and his staff. The school is remarkably clear of both litter and graffiti. Overall, these findings are similar to those of the last inspection report.
99. Most subjects, with the exception of modern languages, have their teaching rooms close together which facilitates the effective day-to-day running of departments. The Unit for hearing impaired pupils is partially sound treated but noise generated in adjoining rooms and corridors sometimes interferes with the proper use of amplification. The room in which pupils receive individual special educational needs tuition is too small. In the physical education department, the well-equipped gymnasium is on the small side when used by pupils in Key Stage 4, and the school hall in which some activities take place is really only suitable for activities such as dance, gymnastics and non-contact sports. The school has to borrow external facilities as there are no games fields and the hardcourt area is in need of refurbishment.
100. Since the last inspection the school has had a wheelchair lift installed. This feature, combined with ramps from the outside and in the corridors, means that the whole school is accessible to all pupils and visitors.
101. Overall, the school's learning resources are adequate, as they were at the time of the last inspection, but there are variations in the quality of provision between subjects. In art and English, the quality and quantity of resources are good but there are insufficiencies in design technology, particularly in graphics and across all sections of the department for Attainment Target 1. At Key Stage 4 in mathematics, pupils have to share textbooks, which is an unsatisfactory situation. The department has, however, benefited from the resources provided for the summer school on numeracy. Music is well resourced with keyboards, ethnic instruments and computers with appropriate software. Since the last inspection the library has improved, especially with the provision of research material through CD-ROM's. However, due to insufficient staff coverage, the library is under-used during the school day. Computers have been updated and through the National Grid for Learning the school is about to take possession of new computers which will give them two rooms capable of accommodating whole classes. Until these new resources arrive, the school has an inadequate provision for information technology. Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils on the special educational needs register, including those with hearing impairments. Specialist audiological equipment, especially the FM wireless hearing aids of the pupils, are checked daily and adequately maintained.

### **The efficiency of the school**

102. Financial planning is very good. The school's budget has been in deficit for the past three years, following the preservation of an expensive staffing structure which gradually used up the school's reserves. A recovery plan was negotiated with the local education authority which has been very successfully managed. For example, at the time of the last inspection, the cost of teachers was over 80% of the total budget; this has now been

reduced to 74%, which is in line with national median levels. Targets have been exceeded each year and the school is now close to being able to eliminate the deficit.

103. The deficit has been damaging in a number of ways. Staffing has had to be reduced and other savings have had to be made across all spending areas, with the result that few major developments could be planned. Now that a balanced budget is in sight, the school is appropriately starting to create a long-term development plan which will enable strategic improvements to take place. The current one-year development plan has appropriate and realistic targets which are costed in terms of money but not staff time.
104. Discussions with finance officers from the local education authority confirmed that the school has very good financial planning procedures, which is why the deficit has been successfully reduced. There is now a new staffing structure which reflects the size of the school and fairly distributes responsibility points. This has been achieved largely through natural wastage. Overall, this has been good for the school but it has left gaps in provision, for example, in modern foreign languages where there are too few teachers to deliver the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4.
105. Teaching staff are generally deployed satisfactorily. Some staff teach subjects for which they do not have a specialist qualification, but this does not affect the standards achieved by the pupils. There are weaknesses in modern languages - where there are insufficient staff to deliver the curriculum, and in information technology - where the lack of a scheme of work for the delivery of the subject at Key Stage 4 means that staff throughout the school are not clear about their teaching responsibilities. The accommodation is mostly used well; for example, in physical education use is made of a number of areas in the school, the local park and some community facilities. The caretaker is very efficient, monitoring the quality of cleaning on a weekly basis. He also attends to some repairs without the need for management intervention and is a real asset to the school. Resources are used well, except the information technology available to departments.
106. The school's use of its funding for pupils with special educational needs is effective. Most of the available money is used to finance mainstream teachers with a view to reducing the number of pupils in classes. This results in the school having a very favourable pupil-teacher ratio, which has a positive impact on the progress of all pupils including those with special educational needs, both in their academic studies and in their personal and social development. Teachers specifically assigned to support pupils with special educational needs are generally well used.
107. Financial control is very good, which is a significant improvement on the situation reported at the time of the last inspection. The financial manager has developed effective systems for monitoring spending and for managing departmental orders. Progress in relation to the recovery plan targets is monitored carefully. The most recent audit report said that financial control was good. The few issues raised by the auditors have all been appropriately addressed.
108. The school's administration procedures are satisfactory. A new computer system is about to be installed to improve efficiency further.
109. Given the very high expenditure per pupil, the good progress made by the pupils and the good educational provision, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### **English**

110. The majority of pupils join the school with very low literacy levels. Twenty five percent of pupils are on the special educational needs register (nearly 11% of the pupils having statements), and around half of the children come from homes where English is not the first language. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, and in all aspects of the English curriculum, pupils' attainments are very low. Since the last inspection standards of attainment have risen.

111. At Key Stage 3, in the 1997 National Curriculum statutory assessment tests (SATs) in English, 41 percent of the pupils attained Level 5 or above. This is below the national average of 56 percent. However, in comparison with schools of similar attainment on entry, the pupils' results in this school are above average. The 1998 results show a further improvement in the numbers of pupils gaining Level 5 or above at 47 percent, however, whilst girls reached levels close to the national average, boys achieved much lower levels. Throughout the key stage listening is good and often very good. Pupils are given a range of listening activities including taped extracts from Shakespeare. A Year 8 group listened intently to the witches' speeches at the opening of "Macbeth", and responded well in writing as a consequence. Speaking is clear and pupils are confident when making whole-class presentations or reading aloud from books they study. Pupils are able to expand their ideas when teachers encourage them to do so. The pupils read from books which have been carefully selected to match their reading ages and interests and are able to sustain silent reading for suitable lengths of time. They understand and retain the details of narrative, but few pupils readily make inferences about character. Writing skills are weak, but in writing for different purposes pupils develop a growing sense of their readers, as when they write book reviews. Some pupils write in a lively manner with engaging detail, particularly when writing about first hand experiences. The highest attainers are successful in expressing their personal response to the literature they read. Although they refer effectively to the text, they do not organise their ideas much beyond telling the story.
112. In the 1997 GCSE examinations, pupils' results were well below the national average, with 25 percent of pupils gaining grades A\*-C; the national average was 51 percent. In the grades band A\*-G 96 percent of pupils achieved passes which is broadly in line with the national average. In 1998, the number of pupils gaining A\*-C grades rose to 30 percent. The achievement of boys remains lower than that of girls at 21 percent gaining A\*-C passes against the girls' pass rate of 39 percent. Despite this gap in performance, this is an improvement on previous years and points to the success of the English department in developing strategies for raising boys' attainment. In the 1997 English literature examination, pupils achieved 31 percent A\*-C passes against the national average of 58 percent. In the 1998 examination, results improved, with 49 percent of pupils gaining an A\*-C grade and all pupils achieving an A\*-G grade.
113. At Key Stage 4 pupils' listening develops as they engage in class discussion about the literature they study. By the end of the key stage pupils' listening skills are above average. Speaking continues to develop; pupils read and speak clearly in whole-class situations and they are confident about expressing their ideas, particularly about the literature they have studied. A good example of this was a Year 11 class discussion on the characters in "Hobson's Choice". There are, however, too few opportunities to speak at length or develop ideas through discussion and planned debate. Pupils' reading is mainly restricted to their texts for literature in Key Stage 4. Pupils of all levels of attainment show an empathy for characters in literature. Higher attaining pupils include interesting detail in their writing but many have difficulty in organising material so that it answers questions effectively. Many pupils, including some higher attainers, are too dependent on the teacher to plan and organise their work. Although pupils use redrafting to improve their work, they are not always allowed to learn from their mistakes on the larger issues of planning and writing structure. However, pupils generally present their work well. Some pupils use computers to prepare finished work, but scarcely any use the computer as a drafting tool.
114. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress in all aspects of their English. From Year 7, they learn to write clear description, and to follow simple structures. As they move through the Key Stage their range of styles for written communication increases and by the end of the key stage many of the pupils write extended pieces, which they have improved through a careful drafting process. There are a few instances of pupils not having enough opportunity to develop skills of independent writing. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in reading. Pupils in Year 8 follow the Lancashire Book Chase, which stimulates their interest in books and sets challenges which ensure that pupils read a range of stories, scripts and poems.
115. Pupils also make good progress at Key Stage 4. Higher attaining pupils make significant progress in contributing to class discussion; lower attaining pupils make very good gains in confidence through role play and the improvisation of talk. They learn to understand characters and plot in their literature texts, and some higher attaining pupils can recognise the cause and effect of events across whole texts. In writing for a range

of purposes pupils include a satisfactory amount of detail. GCSE coursework files show the strongest element of pupils' writing to be descriptive. Whilst this is satisfactory for those pupils attaining the lower grades, pupils who have the potential to gain higher grades do not show sufficient skill in presenting arguments or developing analysis. Pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils who do not have English as a first language, make good progress at both key stages. They become functional readers; their writing shows a structure and they write with chronological accuracy by the end of Key Stage 4. They are good listeners and confident speakers. The quality of support and the range and quality of resources for pupils with special educational needs have a positive impact on the progress they make.

116. All pupils enjoy English lessons. They have very good attitudes to their work, are confident they will succeed and are proud of their efforts in class. They behave well, listening closely to their teachers and each other; they work well on their own and in pairs and small groups. They concentrate to the end of lessons and work on independent tasks in silence for extended periods. Pupils treat homework seriously, taking pride in presenting finished work or making contributions to the lesson using the preparation they have done at home. Relationships between pupils are very good. They are friendly and supportive towards each other.
117. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers are hard working and their good subject knowledge and understanding of the pupils enable them to plan well, both as a team and as individuals. They create a good learning environment, with supportive, good humoured classroom relationships. They set high standards in their expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort and conduct lessons to ensure that every pupil enjoys a measure of success. In the best lessons teachers insist upon clear speech, as in a Year 9 reading lesson; they keep the pressure of time on pupils by pacing their lessons well and they provide a balance of opportunities to listen, talk, reflect and write. All teachers, including the small proportion of non-specialists in the department, use homework effectively to consolidate what is learned in class or to prepare for future lessons. Teachers use assessment well to set appropriate targets for their pupils, to encourage pupils in the use of self-assessment and to inform the drafting process, all of which is central to much of the progress pupils make. Weaknesses in teaching arise where teachers echo pupils' answers instead of allowing pupils to repeat and amplify their ideas, challenging them to think and formulate their ideas in speech. Occasionally this tendency is found in relation to written work, when teachers direct the writing of pupils too closely, preventing them from learning to think and plan for themselves. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully, and in the best practice, they often enter into a dialogue with the pupil over key points in their work,
118. English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Through the study of literature, creative writing, reading stories from many cultures, theatre visits and performances in school by the pupils themselves, English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. A recent innovation in the department has been the fostering of a school newspaper which is compiled and managed by a group of Year 11 boys. Having established its initial success the editorial team is set to expand to include boys and girls from Year 10. Links with primary schools have not yet produced a clear view of the curriculum and teaching in Years 5 and 6. The department recognises the need to develop its use of information technology to support work in English and has recently agreed which elements of the information technology programme it will integrate into the subject. Assessment procedures are good. They include assessment of core tasks which are then moderated by members of the department. Reading assessments are carried out in Key Stage 3 and common tests are set annually. Teachers keep very thorough records of pupils' attainments which keep teachers fully informed about pupils who transfer between groups and inform annual reports to parents.
119. The department has been very successful in raising the attainment of all pupils since the time of the last inspection. The department has well established schemes of work and carefully chosen GCSE syllabuses for Key Stage 4 pupils. The ethos of the department is very good; colleagues work as a cohesive team whose philosophy centres on success for all individuals, rewarding effort and raising self-esteem by convincing pupils that they will do well. All members of the department, including those who make a small contribution to the teaching, know and understand the department's policies and structures and support the philosophy in all their classroom practice. The recent promotion of the head of department to deputy headteacher has not caused significant changes in the direction of the department and the very good practices established by her are continuing.

## Mathematics

120. Pupils arrive at the school with extremely low mathematical and numeracy skills. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment are very low. In the 1997 National Curriculum tests and teacher assessment in mathematics, the performance of pupils in mathematics was very low in comparison with the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 or above was well below the national average. The results were in line with those of pupils from similar backgrounds. Taking the two years 1996 and 1997 together, the figures show that the performance of the pupils in mathematics is well below the national average. There a slight difference between the performance of girls and boys, the girls' performance being higher. In 1998, there was an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above but the percentage of Level 6 or above stayed the same. At Key Stage 4, in 1997, the percentage of pupils achieving A\* - C grades at GCSE was significantly below the national average whilst the percentage of pupils achieving A\* - G grades was below the national average. In that year, pupils' performance in mathematics was significantly higher than that of other subjects in the school. In 1998, there was a downward trend in the GCSE results at A\* - C but there was an improvement in grades A\* - G.
121. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are developing skills for solving problems. The low attainers search for patterns in numbers but do not make general statements. The high attainers use simple algebraic terms to describe patterns. Pupils understand place value, and the high attainers draw graphs of linear, quadratic and simple cubic functions. Most pupils understand the probability of an event occurring. The high attainers construct scatter diagrams and have a basic understanding of correlation.
122. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below average. Good work was seen where students investigate inequalities by drawing graphs. Low attaining pupils measure and draw angles to the nearest degree and can describe different types of angles. They solve angle problems of straight lines and can find angles at a point. High attainers use angle properties of intersecting lines to solve problems and extend this to solving problems using angles in circles.
123. Progress relative to prior attainment is good at Key Stage 3. Pupils respond well to the good teaching. They concentrate throughout the lesson and the majority maintain a good working rate. Pupils consolidate knowledge, skills and understanding. The high attainers make good progress and they follow and implement mathematical procedures in finding factors. Pupils of low attainment consolidate mental arithmetic skills and apply them effectively when multiplying numbers. Satisfactory progress is made by middle attainers in gaining understanding of the need for coordinates. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 4 in consolidating graphs of quadratic functions and using the graphs to solve quadratic functions. There is good progression from Years 9 to 11 when pupils use and apply mathematics. They progress from generalising results in words to describing the pattern using mathematical notation. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages, particularly when they are taught in smaller groups. Work is differentiated and there is extra support from support assistants.
124. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning, working well both individually and when discussing their work with each other. They listen attentively to what is being taught, and respond positively to questions. Behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite and courteous. The relationships between pupils, pupils and teachers and adults are very good. A pride is take in written work and presentation is good. Pupils enjoy the mental arithmetic skills 'games'.
125. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is a strength of the department. Lesson plans are sound and give clear guidance on aims. The better lesson plans allow for progression and indicate the levels of attainment the pupils are expected to achieve. There are clear explanations and an emphasis on good mathematical techniques. In the best lessons, pace is brisk, maintaining pupils' attention, concentration and motivation. The pace in some lessons is a little slow and a variety of tasks and teaching styles within lessons needs to be developed further in order to promote even better progress and understanding. Teachers manage pupils very well. High expectations of behaviour promote good self-discipline. Questioning techniques are effective, teachers praise pupils' responses appropriately which boosts their self-esteem. Homework is set. Marking is thorough, and it is good when clear guidance is provided for pupils indicating what they need to do to improve.

126. The quality of leadership and management in the department is good. Members of the department have clear roles. This leads to a good working atmosphere and teamwork and contributes positively to the smooth running of the department and an effective learning environment. There is a clear educational direction for the subject and development planning is good. There is a good, well-documented development plan which gives details of; priorities, targets, approaches, staff responsibilities, resource implications, timescales and success criteria. This has a positive impact on the quality of education and achievement. Resources are adequate but there are insufficient text books for Key Stage 4 as pupils have to share. The recording of assessments is thorough and teachers use records both to monitor pupils' progress and to plan the curriculum. The schemes of work are unsatisfactory. The department is developing the scheme of work for Key Stage 3. There is no scheme of work for Key Stage 4. This needs to be developed to include reference to the National Curriculum attainment targets, assessment opportunities, the skills, knowledge and understanding to be achieved and the resources used. The use of information technology to enhance the mathematics' curriculum is weak. It is not integrated into schemes of work.
127. Since the last inspection, the attainment at GCSE has significantly improved. There has been an improvement in the standard of teaching and lessons include a wider range of techniques. Support assistants are used effectively to assist pupils with special educational needs. They work well with teachers when preparing the lessons.

## Science

128. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is below average. The National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 show a small but steady improvement between 1995 and 1998 in the percentage of pupils reaching attainment Level 5 and above. In 1997 this was well below the national average, a result similar to that in mathematics in the school, but below that in English. The percentage reaching Level 6 and above was very low in comparison with the national average but this improved in 1998. There is a rise in the average National Curriculum levels achieved between 1996 and 1997 but they are also well below national averages. These average levels show there is no significant difference in the performance between boys and girls. When compared with similar schools nationally, attainment is average.
129. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is low. At GCSE, in 1997, the percentages passing with A\*-C and A\*-G grades were well below the national averages and showed falls on the results of 1996. Results in 1998 show a dramatic improvement over 1997 in numbers gaining A\*-G grades and a small gain in A\*-C grades. Girls' average points scores were significantly better than those of boys. The attainment at GCSE in 1997 was well below that of most other subjects in the school, including mathematics and English. This indicates that progress, relative to these other subjects, was poor within the school.
130. Written work through both key stages shows the majority of pupils to be moving appropriately through the curriculum but the depth of understanding is not always apparent from the forms of assessment. Neither written work, nor the records of attainment show any clear strengths between the physical, material or life sciences but examples of good work were seen of each at all ability levels. Attainment in investigative science has improved since the last inspection at both key stages. In a lesson in Year 10, pupils showed growing understanding of the importance of controlling variables in an investigation into osmosis. Detailed and appropriate planning was seen, at Key Stage 4, in a number of pupils' investigations into reaction rates and in a study of enzymes. However, analysis and evaluation remain weaknesses in investigative work, which reflects the pupils' weak numeracy skills. Observations of lessons show attainment levels to be higher than test and examination results indicate, particularly at Key Stage 3. Progress was seen to be good when classes were obviously engaged and excited by the challenge of the work, for example, in a lesson for pupils with special educational needs which led to an understanding of the basic structure and function of the heart. By contrast, in lessons where pupils are not required to think for themselves or are over-led by the teacher, less than satisfactory progress is made in understanding.
131. Progress in attainment from entry to the school to the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Progress in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory given the nature of the GCSE results. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Almost all are entered for Double Award Science at GCSE. Progress in lessons is

very nearly always satisfactory or better and is often good. The occasions where it is less than satisfactory are directly linked to the quality of teaching. The progress observed at Key Stage 4 is not matched by results at GCSE. This is linked to an over-emphasis on detailed coverage of topics, including lengthy note-taking, at the expense of establishing firm knowledge and understanding of fundamental principles. Whilst progress is evident in most lessons, retention of material over time, even the shorter-term, is a weakness at all levels.

132. Pupils' attitudes to learning are never less than satisfactory and are often good and very good. The majority show interest, look attentive and concentrate on the work set. They mostly take pride in their work and present it to the best of their ability. Behaviour in class is good and pupils co-operate with their teachers and among themselves. Nonetheless, too many pupils are passive in class, being happy to be led by the teacher.
133. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. The effective aspects are the good subject knowledge, well-structured and varied lessons, class management, the use of differentiated materials in different sets, including awareness of language difficulties, and the assessment of pupils' grasp of facts and ideas as the lesson proceeds. Teaching is especially successful where it leads a class to realisation and understanding without the teacher or support assistants giving answers too readily and where key points are emphasised during the lesson and summarised at the end. Weaknesses are apparent when the teacher gives lengthy and laboured explanations, which lead to confusion, when pupils are set to extensive copying rather than using the teacher as a resource and when lesson plans and objectives are unrealistic. There is insufficient clarity in the learning objectives, which should be itemised in the schemes of work and lesson plans. Learning objectives are not linked to specific assessment procedures in classwork and homework. There are examples of conscientious marking of exercise books but the quality and frequency are inconsistent. Marking does not inform all pupils sufficiently of their progress. The department has an excellent and comprehensive record of pupils' attainment but it needs to be more clearly used in analysis and curricular planning. The department knows what pupils have achieved at specific points but is not using continuous assessment sufficiently to raise attainment standards overall.
134. The department is very effectively led and the teachers and the technician work well as a team. Staff, resources and accommodation are properly managed to meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.
135. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment have improved in both the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and at GCSE. The gap between the performance of girls and boys is now significant at Key Stage 4. Good progress has been made in developing investigative skills across the key stages. Insufficient questioning to encourage pupils to record or think scientifically is still an element to be tackled. The timetable provision is now adequate. Development planning is structured more effectively and is now linked to the school development plan.

## OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### Art

136. Attainment in art is very high at the end of both key stages and has been improving steadily in recent years. In 1998, 80% of pupils entered for GCSE achieved the higher grades A\* – C. A larger than average percentage of pupils take this subject in GCSE. Pupils acquire the skills of drawing and painting formally from the beginning of Year 7. All units of work are well structured. Pupils in both key stages can use their own observational drawings of natural forms as the basis for larger paintings, design work and ceramics. They explore the use of a wide range of media. They can recognise the codes and conventions used by major artists and they can respond to the work of these artists critically. The use of tone and texture are well explored. There is impressive work on shape; classical exploration of shape and space early in Key Stage 3 leads to high attainment in following work. There is a very good balance of two-and three-dimensional work in both key stages. The quality and range of imaginative work in drawing and painting, design and ceramics are equally impressive. At Key Stage 4, pupils research in depth for topics such as pollution using a wide range of resources. Their individual work shows very good initiative and imagination. Ceramic work, using natural designs as a starting point is very impressive with regard to skill in the use of clay and designs in high and low relief. As reported in the last inspection results in pottery are excellent. Some of this work will be on permanent display in the local regeneration scheme. High attainment in art is directly related to the high quality of teaching.
137. Progress in art is very good at both key stages. From Year 7 onwards there is an emphasis on developing skills and techniques, studying the works of major artists, being confident, showing initiative and using imagination. All these contribute to pupils' very good progress. Pupils on the special educational needs register are given very good, stimulating guidance and direction regarding the development of their work through a series of stages. They make very good progress, often achieving good grades in GCSE.
138. All pupils have very good attitudes to learning in this subject. They are well behaved and composed in class and concentrate fully on their work. There is no need for reminders about behaviour or about handling equipment or caring for work. They have good relationships with their teachers and with each other. There is a calm, studious atmosphere in all lessons.
139. The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages and, at times, excellent, particularly at Key Stage 4. The subject is taught by talented specialist teachers who complement each other, one being a specialist in drawing and painting and the other in three-dimensional work, largely ceramics. They have equal strengths in all aspects of their teaching. One of the greatest strengths is their ability to inspire their pupils with confidence. They have high expectations of their pupils with regard to attainment and behaviour. Units of work are very well planned, with good structure and detail, lessons carefully developed to lead pupils towards the creation of high quality finished pieces of work. Pupils know what they have to do in the short and long term. This helps them to focus on their work in a meaningful way. The skills of drawing, painting and ceramics are well taught from Year 7 onwards. All pupils get individual attention, which helps them to develop initiative and imagination. Homework usually comprises extension work or research, which helps pupils to consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils' work is assessed in detail and they are involved in evaluating their own work.
140. Art work shows good cultural diversity and is displayed prominently throughout the school, enhancing the environment and inspiring the whole community. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been rectified fully. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills, emphasising the use of technical and subject specific language. It also makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

### Design and technology

141. Standards of attainment in design and technology for the examination year 1997 are poor in relation to the national average. The percentage passes at A\*-C were 4% for design and realisation, 12% for food studies and 20% for textiles against national averages of 37% to 39% for all maintained secondary schools. Results

for 1998 have improved in some areas. The results for design and realisation have improved slightly to 6.25%, however, one third of the class were girls, none of whom was able to achieve an A\*-C grade, which is very poor in relation to national averages where the trend is for girls to achieve much higher results than boys. The results for food technology, whilst still well below the previous year's national averages, show a marked improvement through the achievement of 33% A\*-C grades. However, in this subject 10% of the class were boys and none were able to achieve any A\*-C grades. The small cohort of pupils, 13% of the year group, taking a DT: textile examination provide a 100% improvement in A\*-C grades with a 44% pass rate. Again, all A\*-C passes were obtained by girls. The variations in performance, however, indicate that boys achieved 7% A\*-C grades and girls achieved 29% A\*-C grades overall, which equates to an overall pass rate of 20%. The overall percentage of examination passes A\* -G was 87% for 1998.

142. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment for both boys and girls is very low. A group of Year 9 pupils preparing ingredients for the baking of biscuits were unable to demonstrate higher order skills than those demonstrated by Year 7 pupils. Similarly Year 9 pupils designing and making a simple switch game could not describe the electrical unit linked to their design. In contrast, a Year 7 class was able to demonstrate levels of attainment, which might be expected of pupils of their age. They were able to clearly demonstrate the skills required to cut out a template and to use that template in order to shape fabric pieces for the design of their pencil cases.
143. Whilst some pupils were able to demonstrate good progress during individual lessons observed during the inspection, progress by the end of Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. Progress at Key Stage 3 is affected by the lack of focus within medium-term and day-to-day planning, so that what pupils should know, understand and be able to do by the end of lessons or series of lessons is not clearly understood by teachers or pupils. As a consequence, key skills are not being developed progressively in line with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and National Curriculum levels of attainment. Good progress is demonstrated when special assistants in class support children with special educational needs. The converse of this happens when work is without support. Good progress was also demonstrated when pupils in Year 7 used the results from a questionnaire to influence their design criteria. They explained this through the use of graphs and as a result all were able to progress to a final design solution. Girls make unsatisfactory progress when they are not encouraged to participate actively in the lesson. The progress seen by some Year 10 pupils when developing the use of eggs in practical cooking was good. A Year 11 class made poor progress during a graphics lesson. Their folders showed unsatisfactory progress over time with either evidence of very little work or large amounts of unfinished work. Attendance at the lesson was poor at only 79%.
144. The response shown by pupils within lessons is satisfactory. However, in the resistant material workshops, some aspects of pupils' behaviour are not appropriate. For example, not all pupils wear the required protective clothing and some fail to return tools and equipment to store units at the end of lessons. An exemplar of good practice in the department can be seen in food technology lessons, where pupils wear aprons and wash utensils and clear worktops automatically on completion of tasks. Pupils in textiles concentrate well and work hard to complete their designs. During observation of a lesson on waistcoat designs, each member of the group (all girls) was able to share her work and explain her ideas. Whilst Year 11 pupils following a course in graphics are compliant, they lack independent learning skills.
145. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. During the inspection one in three lessons observed was unsatisfactory. The remaining lessons were judged to be satisfactory and good in almost equal measure. Those lessons which had good teaching were lessons in which pupils were involved in practical making activities in food and textiles. Demonstrations by the teacher in construction techniques using resistant material were satisfactory. The copying of theory notes at the expense of well-planned practical experience contributed to unsatisfactory progress. The poor planning for schemes of work and the lack of clear lesson plans which clearly identify what pupils will know, understand and be able to do are contributing to pupils' poor attainment and progress. The lack of assessment procedures by which pupils know and understand their level of attainment and how they might improve also contributes to the unsatisfactory progress, as does the lack of assessment to inform planning in the short term rather than by project outcome. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and in some instances they show a lack of rigour in ensuring that pupils know what is expected of them. There is also a lack of rigour in the enforcement of audit and monitoring procedures. Individual educational plans are not used to identify and support learning needs and tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the individual needs of pupils within a mixed ability classroom.

146. The previous inspection in 1994 identified the need to link the development plan to the provision of subject development and planned curricular change. This is still a recommendation. The fragmentation of finance in relation to the holistic nature of design and technology detracts from corporate planning linked to a long-term development plan. The previous report identified the need for staff to have a planned programme of in-service training if the demands of the National Curriculum are to be met. This is still the case. There is insufficient understanding of the Programmes of Study and how they are linked to levels of attainment. This is why the schemes of work are not well planned to help pupils make progress. The previous report also identified the need for monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. This is essential if standards are to improve.

## History

147. Pupils arrive in Year 7 with a limited understanding of history and with very low literacy skills. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, attainment is below average. GCSE results are below national average. In 1996, GCSE results in the A\*-C range were in line with the national average. The trend has been downwards and in 1997 results were below average. In 1997 and 1998 results in the range A\*-G were above national average. GCSE results in history in 1997 were almost half a grade better than in other departments and the results are high when compared with other schools in Lancashire. Boys do not follow the national pattern and in 1997 boys' results were better than those of girls. In 1998, boys' performance was only marginally below that of girls. Asian pupils tend to perform less well than other pupils in the school in terms of A\*-C grades. At the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment is well below the national average. The performance of boys at the end of Key Stage 3 is below that of girls. At the end of Year nine pupils are able to write about the changes taking place during the agricultural revolution and can explain the disadvantages of the open field system. They produce some colourful and thoughtful work on Islamic civilisations. Their thinking skills are more developed than their writing skills. In Key Stage 4, pupils have good knowledge of the development of medicine and produce some imaginative advertisements for herbal remedies. They know about the development of education in England and the improvement in social conditions as a result of improvements in public health. Pupils make detailed and accurate notes but they tend to be descriptive rather than analytical.
148. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, although progress is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. This is because of the concentration on examination work and more rigorous assessment. There is a tradition of good results in the department and this serves to encourage pupils to make progress. History groups in Key Stage 4 tend to have more girls than boys and this helps to explain the better progress being made in this stage. Progress is made in all lessons, especially in gaining factual knowledge and information. Pupils consider ideas such as continuity and change. They learn to examine different viewpoints but they are not confident with the detailed application of ideas such as chronology. Most Year 7 pupils are unable to say how long ago the Roman period was. Pupils use sources from textbooks but often in a descriptive rather than an analytical way. They are content to describe engravings of the towns in the industrial revolution without asking why the picture was made and whether the artist had reasons for his work.
149. Pupils are genuine, warm and friendly. They are very well behaved and trustworthy. Their respect for each other and for adults in the school is a pleasure to experience. They generally co-operate and work together sensibly and effectively. In lessons, most pupils' concentrate well and participate in answering questions. In too many lessons pupils are dependent on the teacher for the pace and direction of the lesson and their ability to take responsibility for their learning is not well developed.
150. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In all stages the teachers have good knowledge of the subject and can respond to pupils' questions with confidence. The plans for the units of work are useful and show good coverage of the National Curriculum. The decision to include work on Islamic civilisations is very sensible and shows an ability to respond to the needs of the pupils. Often the objectives are shared with the pupils, but this is not always the case and sometimes the aims of specific lessons are rather vague. In some lessons teachers make good use of their questioning skills to enhance pupils' learning but often questions are closed and do not allow pupils the opportunity to develop and extend their answers and to reflect on the work. The introduction of more open-ended work to learn about Islamic cities is a good development but the use and management of project work has not been considered sufficiently to obtain maximum benefit. The marking of pupils' work is diligently carried out and the department makes good use of the school's grading system.

However, this system has not been adapted to the specific needs of the subject and the use of the attainment grade is very subjective and not necessarily consistently used across the department. In many books there are helpful comments, although they tend to concentrate on presentation and effort rather than how to improve the history. The use of National Curriculum level descriptions in comments is not obvious. There is a heavy reliance on text books and published work sheets. Reports to parents do not provide sufficient information about pupil's strengths and weaknesses in history.

151. The head of department is new and has already made a good impact on the area by the development of schemes of work and the implementation of school and faculty policies. Uncertainties of staffing make planning very difficult. The monitoring of the department is beginning, but it is not helped by the limited time available for the head of department to observe lessons. The use of other members of staff to provide in-class support is also a useful way of widening staff experience. The library is inadequate to support work at both key stages. This youthful department has a very good foundation and is building on this in a professional and efficient way.

## Geography

152. The geographical education of many pupils prior to Year 7 leaves them ill equipped to cope with the demands of Key Stage 3. Therefore, attainment on entry is very low. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is still very low. GCSE results in 1997 were well below the national average for grades A\*-C and below average for grades A\*-G. Geography grades are low compared with other departments in the school and with other schools in Lancashire. The trend since 1996 has been downwards. Boys generally perform worse than girls but the gap between boys and girls is less than the national pattern. In 1998, the performance of Asian pupils was better than that of other pupils, as 62 percent of them gained A\*-C grades and all achieved grades within the A\*-G range. Some other pupils did not obtain a grade. Key Stage 4 pupils can carry out straightforward geographical enquiries to examine the impact of tourism on Bowness. Some are able to present the data accurately and draw simple conclusions but a significant proportion find it difficult to analyse the data and provide useful explanations. Pupils study real places and are able to make detailed notes but are often not able to relate this work to the theory and to use specific information about places studied in examination type questions.
153. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is below average. This is clearly indicated by the teacher assessments. The attainment of boys is much lower than that of girls. The majority of pupils can describe their route to school in detail and draw good sketch maps to show the information. Their knowledge of map skills is poor and whilst they cope well with compass directions they find grid references, scale and the measurement of distances more difficult. A few can locate Preston on a map of Britain but many cannot, and their knowledge of places on the National Curriculum maps is poor. Many pupils know that climate is influenced by the distance from the sea and from the equator but are not able to explain this clearly. The majority of pupils are very confident when using computers and can use a simple spreadsheet to input data about climate. They can use the computer to transform the data into climate graphs and they can add labels to the axes and titles to the graphs.
154. Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory because pupils are enthusiastic and teachers are trying to overcome the low starting point. It is, therefore, easier to see progress in the early stages. Progress in Key Stage 4 is not satisfactory because the results are still very low at the end of Year 11. In all lessons pupils make satisfactory progress in gaining new knowledge and orally the majority of pupils are able to demonstrate their progress. The problem is that many pupils are not able to show this progress through formal examinations that require a high level of reading and writing skills and a sophistication of thinking skills. Pupils also make limited progress because they do not retain, over longer periods, the knowledge and skills they learn in lessons.
155. Pupils are very well behaved and show a delightful naturalness. They are friendly, welcoming and very sensible. They show a remarkable degree of tolerance and work together in harmony. Most of the time they concentrate on their work and persevere. Many of them lack confidence in their own ability to do the work and need a lot of reassurance and support from their teachers. They sometimes become passive and rely on the teacher for too much direction.

156. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. In a significant proportion of lessons it is good. Teachers are good geographers and are clear about what they are trying to do. They understand and respond well to the pupils. If anything, they are too supportive and do not make the pupils think for themselves. Classes are well managed and provide pupils with good opportunities to learn. A lot of good planning has been done but the match of specific tasks to the abilities of pupils is not well established. The needs of the more able are not sufficiently catered for, although the extra classes after school are valuable. New assessment schemes are in place and teachers are considering new record keeping systems. There is already a lot of information on pupils' capabilities but not enough tracking of attainment and progress. Teachers do not establish clear targets with pupils and in Key Stage 3 do not use the National Curriculum level description to show pupils how they can improve. Teachers use appropriate language when talking to pupils and have a lively and distinctive style of teaching. However, they are not concentrating on language skills of reading, writing and speaking and the development of geographical skills in a systematic and planned way. Their computer skills are put to good use. The development of individual pupil portfolios is useful and when fully related to National Curriculum level descriptions and to the new assessments will form part of the department's efforts to raise attainment. Reports to parents do not provide sufficient detail about pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The library is poorly stocked to provide encouragement to pupils and to help them to become more independent learners. The practice of having reference sets of geography text books in the Study Centre is good and helps some pupils gain access to appropriate material for their homework.
157. Whilst the results in geography are disappointing, a lot of good work has gone into restructuring the curriculum. There are good schemes of work and the department is well led. There have been many changes since the last inspection and the department is establishing good procedures which have yet to be reflected in pupils' examination results. Staff are enthusiastic and work together effectively.

### **Information technology**

158. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is below average. However, the introduction last year of a scheme of work has had a positive effect upon raising standards. There is a lack of any planned programmes of study for Key Stage 4, except in the GCSE: Business Studies and Computer Literacy (CLAIT) courses. These are insufficient to cover National Curriculum requirements for all pupils. As a result of the weaknesses in information technology provision at Key Stage 4, the attainment of the pupils is very low. During the inspection there was evidence to show that in some areas of the curriculum information technology is used purposefully, for example, in geography and music lessons at Key Stage 4, where pupils made good progress through the use of information technology in order to achieve their learning outcomes. There are no GCSE examinations currently taking place in information technology.
159. Pupils in Year 7 are able to use menus to format their text, amend and store information and to recall information previously saved. Years 8 and 9 are working at a similar level. They can enter information into a spreadsheet, highlight the required cells and select a graph from the menu. They are able to use 'edit' in order to create the main title and axis titles. A Year 9 group used their understanding of spreadsheets in a geography lesson. They entered information on Mediterranean and desert climates into a spreadsheet and produced a graph of their findings. In music at Key Stage 4, a Year 10 group used a range of technologies inventively and competently. They used a cassette recorder and a laptop computer program along with keyboards to create a rhythmically interesting composition. In a Year 11 lesson, the low level of the pupils' information technology skills impeded ability to create curriculum vitae. A lower ability science group following a single science course follow a Computer Literacy programme, (CLAIT). These pupils are working hard and show a responsibility in their study of individual assignments. They use spell check, justification skills and are able to adjust fonts and font sizes. Their profiles show that they are able to load a program, save and re-load and also print their own work.
160. The overall progress of pupils in information technology by the end of Key Stage 4 is poor. However, in the core lessons at Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress. For example, in a lesson involving data, they could describe what they had learned previously about databases and how they were going to display the information using graphs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 3 core lessons. Good progress is made in the use of information technology in geography at Key Stage 3 and in music and during the CLAIT course at Key Stage 4. The progress of pupils' use of information technology to achieve their learning outcomes across the curriculum is poor. A number of subjects have agreed to deliver aspects of information technology during Years 7 and 8 but apart

from geography this is not taking place effectively. During the inspection there was unsatisfactory progress in the use of information technology in mathematics, science, English and modern foreign languages. In design and technology, pupils used information technology to develop graphics at a basic satisfactory level.

161. During their information technology lessons pupils concentrate well and show respect for the equipment. When response is good, as during core Key Stage 3 lessons, pupils make full use of the time by working hard. Behaviour is good throughout lessons. Expectations are high by both pupils and core teachers at Key Stage 3, and in those lessons where information and communication technology is used effectively. A lower set science/CLAIT group demonstrated good behaviour and independent working when achieving their learning outcome to set assignments. There is a good response to questioning by teachers and pupils always concentrate when either working independently or in pairs. The attitudes of boys and girls are equally good.
162. The quality of teaching within core lessons is very good. However, because of the weaknesses in information technology teaching across the curriculum and the lack of an appropriate curriculum plan at Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 and poor at Key Stage 4. In the core lessons, teaching is carefully planned and takes account of pupils' needs, ensuring that the aims and purpose of the lesson are carefully explained and that all pupils know what is expected of them. Targets are set and skills are carefully taught and reinforced. There is a good use of information technology in order that pupils can achieve learning outcomes in geography and music and satisfactory use in design and technology but little evidence of its use elsewhere. The Key Stage 3 core curriculum is well planned, but the agreed support from other subjects is not sufficiently rigorous and does not give the pupils adequate curricular coverage.
163. Since the last inspection the school has introduced an Independent Learning Centre. Through the introduction of a cross-curricular working party for information technology, discussion has taken place for the development of information technology into schemes of work across the curriculum and departments are to develop information technology policies. The mapping of programmes of study has taken place at Key Stage 3 and teachers are being made more aware of the use of information technology. Links with feeder schools have improved, and reporting on capability takes place at Key Stage 3 and is reported to parents. However, the school has many weaknesses that it must address in relation to the management of information and communication technology across the curriculum and in its introduction at Key Stage 4. The school has had no comprehensive training for teachers in information technology for three years, although individual teachers have attended subject-related courses. Overall, most teachers' information technology skills are not well enough developed to make good use of the available resources. Currently, information technology resources are inadequate, but new machines and software are about to arrive which will remedy this situation.

## Music

164. At Key Stage 4 results at GCSE have been below expected levels for the past two years. All pupils achieved a grade in the A\*-G range and two pupils above that in 1997. Compared with their performance in other subjects these pupils did better at music.
165. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards are below average. There has been little change since the last inspection. In some aspects of their work, particularly practical music-making, pupils perform well. They have good sense of rhythm and tonality, as was heard by Year 9 pupils working on an Indian song. Singing is good throughout the key stage; part-singing is clear, dynamics and diction well controlled. Pupils are attempting music reading on keyboards, but many of them do not use all five fingers, which inhibits the fluency of their playing. Pupils have some knowledge of musical terms and can place instruments correctly in their orchestral family, but work in this Attainment Target is generally of a lower standard than the practical work. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards of attainment are very low. This is considerably affected by the ability levels of the pupils who choose the subject. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' experimenting in composition is still in its early stages. They use the computer to store and edit their work, which helps them to hear what they have composed and improve it. They are gaining useful knowledge about historical periods in music by listening to music and attempting their own compositions based on what they hear.
166. Pupils enter the school with limited experience of music and make good progress at Key Stage 3. Because basic skills in singing and rhythm are taught, pupils are able to perform together well. During group and

individual practice time they concentrate on their work and this helps them to improve. Musical terms, which are taught systematically, are put into practice and pupils record the words in their log books. When describing music, pupils use a limited but expressive vocabulary and they are able to convey what they hear and feel effectively. The practical nature of the curriculum suits pupils with special educational needs and where the in-class support is appropriate they are able to make good progress. Work is broken down into specific targets in which they can be successful.

167. At Key Stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress according to their ability. They have limited vocabulary to express themselves but their good use of information technology enables them to develop ideas. For those pupils who do not attend regularly, progress is poor and they are not able to accomplish the group work which is an important part of the syllabus for GCSE.
168. Pupils enjoy music and behave very well in class and during out of school sessions. They look after the property and play a responsible part in the maintenance of good order in the room. At lunchtime and before school some of them come in for instrumental lessons or simply to practise. A small number of them are benefiting from the opportunity to learn a brass instrument on new instruments purchased following some careful financial planning. During lessons pupils work well in groups, sharing ideas and helping each other, for example in one lesson, a group of boys taught the rest of the class the words of 'Pardesi', an Indian song which they were arranging for performance. In a few instances pupils were heard to go beyond the work set and develop their own musical ideas.
169. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Lessons are planned imaginatively to provide a wide range of activities which stimulate and often inspire the pupils. There is a clear understanding of the nature of music and how to teach basic skills of singing, reading and rhythm. The benefit of this can be heard in the way pupils are quick to learn new songs and can then sing them on their own. Very good relationships based on mutual respect create an ethos of music-making which is enjoyed together. Lessons move at a lively pace and pupils' attention is watched closely to ensure that they all take an active part. Opportunity, however, to reflect on the effect of music on mood and feelings is often missed. Pupils' progress is checked both during lessons and as a more formal activity when a project is completed. There has been considerable improvement in the area of planning and assessment since the last inspection.
170. The department is energetically led with clear vision. Careful financial planning has led to the upgrading of resources, including instruments and computers, and the department is now ready to develop the instrumental teaching making use of available visiting teachers. Several members of the school staff contribute to the life of the department leading and playing in ensembles alongside pupils.

### **Modern foreign language**

171. All pupils study French in Key Stage 3, but in Key Stage 4 only selected pupils continue with the language - usually just over half of the year group. This is a breach of the statutory requirement for all pupils to study a modern language up until leaving school. The current provision for Urdu and Gujerati is an evening class, organised on the school site by Preston College.
172. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE A\* - C grades in 1997 matched national averages, but in 1998 these fell below, due mainly to the significant reduction in the number of boys attaining higher grades. The attainment of Asian girls is substantially higher than that of any other group. In 1997, attainment in Gujerati was in line with national averages, but only seven pupils were entered for GCSE examinations in 1998, and of these, five obtained grades in the range A\* - C.
173. Attainment in French, by the end of Key Stage 3, is below average. In Year 7, pupils understand basic classroom commands and questions. Their answers to questions are still single words or short phrases, although higher attainers can combine several pieces of information into meaningful dialogues. All pupils know the French alphabet. Throughout Years 8 and 9, pupils acquire a wide range of vocabulary over a variety of topics. They have an awareness of gender and plurals and some pupils are beginning to experiment with language. However, most are limited to standard responses to simple questions and the completion of repetitive exercises. The active use of language in speaking activities is underdeveloped, and many struggle to

follow sentences spoken at near normal speed. The reading programme, that all pupils follow, enhances the effective development of comprehension skills. The most significant achievements are in pupils' writing. They compose extended passages requiring them to combine structures they have learned over a period of time. This contributes to the satisfactory progress being made overall, since many pupils begin their course with limited linguistic skills. The inability of many pupils to retain critical information from one topic to the next is an important factor in low attainment levels in speaking and listening.

174. By the end of Key Stage 4 the attainment of the pupils who take the subject is average. Most pupils who continue to study French in Key Stage 4 have the potential to achieve GCSE grades in the A\*-C range. Pupils in the top sets are working towards A\* - C grades, mainly due to significant progress in speaking and listening skills. These higher attainers use a range of structures to devise their own role-plays and are becoming more confident when picking out key words in listening exercises. Extended writing often includes descriptive vocabulary and a range of tenses is used. However, the use of the future tense is still tentative, and there is too often a lack of attention to detail. In oral work, very few pupils can take the initiative in undirected conversations, since they lack a range of questioning techniques. Accents are often anglicised. The work of pupils in lower sets is generally confined to repetitive exercises, which they deal with comfortably. Progress throughout the key stage is satisfactory for all groups of pupils, including the few pupils with special educational needs. This is achieved through regular consolidation of writing skills and a developing ability to offer opinions. Asian girls are making the most significant progress, particularly in Year 10, as they begin to adapt previously learned language for their own purpose.
175. Most pupils enjoy their French lessons. They work well on their own and in pair work, and listen sympathetically when others are contributing to whole-class discussions. Many make a positive contribution in lessons, but some are prepared to coast and fail to take an active part unless prompted by the teacher. They enjoy the choral repetition of new vocabulary and generally take a pride in their achievements. Some boys occasionally cause low level disruption in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 there is a strong, supportive atmosphere, since all pupils come into lessons to learn and to work. They willingly offer support to pupils with hearing impairments.
176. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. All teachers use French confidently in lessons and planning is undertaken meticulously, ensuring that tasks are structured sequentially. Teachers generally have a good rapport with pupils. Most lessons have pace and variety and teachers always share learning objectives with pupils. A good Year 10 lesson based on the use of reflexive verbs was challenging, with the teacher insisting on accuracy, and pupils responded very positively. In most lessons there are realistic expectations and the value of extended speaking and writing is emphasised. However, most activities are directed by the teacher and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take the initiative, particularly in whole-class question and answer sessions. Resource preparation is good, and teachers frequently supplement classroom resources with artefacts brought from home. This can lead to a sense of fun in the classroom. Pupils with hearing impairment are fully involved in whole-class activities. Assessments at the end of each topic are used to set targets for the future in all aspects of learning. Day-to-day assessment is less well structured.
177. The department has responded very positively to issues raised in the last inspection. It does not, however, guarantee language provision for all pupils in Key Stage 4. The new schemes of work are comprehensive. Assessment is related to National Curriculum levels and regularly covers all attainment targets. There are good displays in classrooms and corridors, and pupils are able to take part in visits to France. The new head of department is highly organised and leads the department well. She has produced an excellent departmental handbook and ensures that all developments dovetail with priorities identified by the school. This is a successful department with the capacity for further improvement.

### **Physical education**

178. Attainment on entry is very variable, sometimes very low; however, progress across the key stages is good. All pupils, irrespective of ability, build up a core of skills and experience.
179. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is average. The majority of pupils can perform and evaluate simple

gymnastic routines. In addition, they can demonstrate good ball handling skills in netball, sound passing and ball control in soccer and they are beginning to learn simple court craft in badminton. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. There are no significant differences in the progress different groups of pupils make in developing their skills and performances.

180. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is average. Soccer skills such as heading, trapping, and ball control can be seen of an average standard in Year 11. Both boys and girls can demonstrate good basketball techniques, especially dribbling and shooting. Tactical awareness in all sports develops well between Key Stages 3 and 4. Overall, the progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.
181. School teams enjoy a degree of success in competition with local schools. Although there are no leagues for soccer in the area, there is competition at league level in cross-country, netball, basketball and hockey in the winter terms. The department is now offering a GCSE course.
182. Attitudes towards the subject are mainly positive. Pupils show sustained interest and a sound level of concentration. There are no racial or gender tensions and relationships, both among pupils and between pupils and teachers, are very good. Mutual respect is of a high order and this is seen at its best when pupils work collaboratively.
183. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is characterised by good planning and presentation. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they use a variety of strategies to raise levels of attainment and to ensure good progress. The department makes a good contribution to the moral and social development of the pupils by providing a wide range of sporting opportunities and by encouraging competitive and fair play. As a result of these factors standards of behaviour and discipline are very good.
184. A good system of assessment and recording is in place and it is used to inform planning. Parents are also kept well informed about attainment and progress through the annual reports. The department is very well led. Teachers are all competent, including the non-specialist, and they bring a range of expertise to bear for pupils' benefit. The school's facilities are of mixed quality. The gymnasium is well equipped but small, the hall is suitable for limited activities and the external facilities such as those at Preston North End Football Club are of a high quality. The school's own outdoor provision is very limited, being restricted to a tarmac area in need of re-surfacing and the local park.

### **Religious education**

185. Attainment in religious education is a little below average at the end of Key Stage 3 and average at the end of Key Stage 4, particularly in the core element of the subject, which is taken by all pupils. Examination results in GCSE are below the national average in the higher grades A\*-C but above for A\*-G grades. There was a 100% pass rate in this subject in 1997. There has been a slight variation in attainment in GCSE in recent years with a small decline in A\*-C grades. Pupils' attainment in written work is hindered by poor expression in English and this is a factor contributing to lower than average results in the higher grades. Pupils' oral work is much better than their written answers, which are often short and lack depth. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding. In Key Stage 3 they can consider deep questions about the nature of religion, loving our neighbour, forgiveness and equality. They can relate the ideas explored to situations in daily life. At Key Stage 4 pupils have a knowledge of a range of types of prayer in relation to major world faiths. They can consider the supportive aspects of family life and can make analytical reflections on the nature of poverty, war, destruction and evil. Many pupils have a secure faith which helps them to see the significance of this subject.
186. All pupils make good progress. Their thinking about the important questions in life develops well from Year 7 onwards. They learn to apply knowledge to familiar situations and make links between the major world religions. In Key Stage 4 they start to think critically about issues such as the use of power. The subject is approached from a philosophical viewpoint in most cases, often in good depth. Pupils with special educational needs get very good personal attention and make good progress.
187. Pupils have good attitudes to learning in this subject. They show interest in their work seeing it as relevant to

their own lives for the most part. Pupils who have a faith are confident and courageous in contributing to discussion. Relationships are very good. Pupils show respect for the religious commitment of others.

188. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and good class management skills and discipline. A wide variety of teaching styles is used which engage pupils in learning. There is an ethos of lively, open enquiry in all lessons. The subject is taught with warmth and commitment and good use is made of pupils' own affiliations to the major world faiths. Assessment is good, attainment grades being given twice per half term in order for progress to be monitored effectively. Teachers drive lessons at a good pace and make effective use of a range of resources. Homework is appropriately set and usually comprises the consolidation or extension of classwork.
189. Religious education is offered to all pupils. A non- examination course is offered in Key Stage 4, which is accredited by the Northern Partnership Records of Achievement. The department is run efficiently and good links are maintained with the local community. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
190. The department has maintained all the good features reported in the last inspection and has made the necessary adjustments to comply with the local authority Agreed Syllabus.

### **Business Studies**

191. Examination results for last years GCSE: business studies are well below the national average for both boys and girls. There is no difference in standards between girls and boys, 20% of each gaining A\*-C grades.
192. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and whilst pupils' attainment is below average, their progress during the lesson was good. They were able to define a range of companies and identify basic company needs - for example; water, electricity, food, clothing - and link these to the needs of different types of companies, such as retail food or clothing. Teaching during this lesson was very good and the use of questioning to test pupils' understanding was a strong feature of the lesson. Clear deadlines are set, along with objectives that are carefully explained to the pupils. A strength of the lesson was the very good relationship between teacher and class. During this lesson, pupils with special educational needs were very well supported by a special support assistant.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

194. The team consisted of 12 inspectors who spent a combined total of 45 days, over a 5 day period, in the school. During the inspection all teachers were observed in the classroom, the great majority on two or more occasions. Lessons were observed across the curriculum including personal and social education sessions. Form groups were seen during registration with their tutors, as were a number of school assemblies. Extra-curricular activities were observed - for example, in music and physical education. Information about other extra-curricular events was gathered from other sources such as displays and interviews. Interviews were conducted with governors, the headteacher, other staff with senior and middle management responsibilities, subject co-ordinators, staff involved with the special educational needs department and support staff. A number of representatives from linked organisations gave good support to the school by making themselves available to the team for interview during a working lunch. Primary school headteachers, representatives from local colleges and managers from industry were also present. The work that pupils had completed was studied carefully. Pupils were interviewed informally throughout the week whilst there was a more formal interview for some pupils in each year group. Prior to the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching staff, governors and 9 parents. 178 replies were received from the questionnaire sent to parents. A number of parents made detailed written comments on the questionnaires, which were helpful to the inspection team. The school provided a good deal of documentary material which formed the basis of the pre-inspection analysis.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	448	49	110	261

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	34.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.1:1

#### Education support staff (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	125

[Secondary schools]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	74
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	18.7
	KS4	16.2

### Financial data

Financial year:	1997/8
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	£
Total Income	1,240,615
Total Expenditure	1,217,943
Expenditure per pupil	2,793
Balance brought forward from previous year	-49,331
Balance carried forward to next year	-26,659

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

470

Number of questionnaires returned:

178

**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	33	58	8	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	41	51	5	2	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	27	56	13	3	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	32	51	10	6	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	43	46	7	3	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	37	50	8	3	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	44	48	4	4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	37	54	5	4	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	29	58	10	3	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	34	54	8	3	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	45	49	6	1	1

**Other issues raised by parents**

All of these are covered in the main body of the report.