

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Our Lady's RC High School**

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique Reference Number: 119779

Headteacher: Mr A. J. Greenall

Reporting inspector: D. Morton  
T12332

Dates of inspection: 27 April to 1 May 1998

Under OFSTED contract number: 0700655

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	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	11yrs. - 16 yrs.
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	St. Anthony's Drive Fulwood Preston PR2 3SQ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father B. Woods
Date of the previous inspection:	November 1993

## Information about the inspection team

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Mr R Carvell	Art Design & technology	
Mr R Crawford	Information technology	
Mrs L Hindley		Special educational needs
Mr D Howarth	Geography	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Mr B Leek	Science	
Mrs A Lees	Music	Key Stage 4
Mr J Paddick	Mathematics	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr G Parry		Attendance Efficiency Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and resources
Mr L Robarts	English	
Mrs E Rushton	History	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Equal opportunities
Mrs G Salter-Smith	Physical education	Curriculum and assessment
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## **Main findings**

1. Our Lady's RC High School is a good school. It has a number of significant strengths and is setting in place strategies to ensure that it is a steadily improving school.
2. Strengths of the school are:
  - good teaching
  - pupils' success in examinations to levels which are above national averages
  - the positive attitudes and behaviour of pupils
  - the pastoral system
  - range of extra-curricular activities
  - effective management
  - good value for money
3. Key areas for improvement are:
  - increasing the rates of progress of pupils capable of high attainment
  - using a greater variety of teaching styles that challenge more able pupils
  - overcoming variations in the performance of boys and girls
  - monitoring and evaluation of teaching
  - developing pupils' skills of independent study
  - further improving the provision and use of the learning resource centre
  - giving greater purpose to the use of available teaching time
  - raising attainment in information technology in Years 10 and 11

### **Educational standards achieved by the school**

4. Levels of attainment generally are above national averages at the time pupils are 14 and when they leave school at 16. At the age of 14 levels of attainment are well above average in English and above average in design & technology, drama, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and science. In the remaining subjects of art, geography, information technology and physical education levels of attainment are average and in keeping with expectations for pupils of this age. At the age of 16 levels of attainment are above average in business studies, design & technology, English, German, geography, mathematics and music. By the age of 16 attainment levels are average in art, drama, French, history, physical education, science and the vocational courses but below average in information technology. There is, therefore, some uneven attainment across subjects and this is reflected in examination results at 16.
5. The National Curriculum tests and assessment results at the age of 14 in 1996 were above the national averages in English, mathematics and science. The same pattern of attainment in these tests is evident in 1997. The results confirm the judgements made of attainment in these subjects during the inspection.
6. The results in GCSE examinations in recent years have been above national averages. The difference between the school performance and the national average has remained constant. In 1997 the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at Grade A\* to C (55 per cent), the higher grades, and five or more passes at Grade A\* to G (93 per cent) was above the national average. However, the percentage of pupils gaining the highest grades of A\* and A was not as high as suggested by the ability profile of the year group, being just in line with national averages for higher attaining pupils.

7. The overall performance of boys and girls is inconsistent. Girls generally perform better than boys at the age of 16. Although tests on entry to the school in the last two years indicate that boys show less potential for success than girls, actual achievement across subjects does not always follow such a prediction. For example, in geography, history and science boys perform better than girls. Although some work has been undertaken to address differences in performance of boys and girls it has been unsuccessful in overcoming them.

8. Many pupils who undertake vocational courses in school and at the local college are successful and achieve commendable results which are generally in keeping with national expectations. Results in GCSE business studies are significantly above national averages.

9. When given the opportunity pupils speak confidently in a variety of situations and are generally good listeners. Pupils are competent readers and can read fluently and expressively when asked to read aloud. Levels of attainment in writing are above average and they can use language appropriately in a range of situations. However, in most subjects they get too few opportunities to write extended pieces. Accuracy of spelling is inconsistent.

10. Levels of numeracy are generally good. Younger pupils can handle data with confidence and can apply scale and proportion in drawings. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are adept at giving digital answers to two decimal places when timing activities in physical education and can use statistical and graphical techniques in those subjects requiring them.

11. Levels of competency and use of information technology to support learning in Years 7 to 9 are adequate but not sufficiently developed across some subjects. In Years 10 and 11 many pupils are not receiving the full entitlement of the National Curriculum and levels of attainment are below average.

12. In relation to their attainment on entry to the school rates of progress are generally satisfactory in all subjects during Years 7 to 9, and in drama, English, history, modern foreign languages, music and science are good. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher target levels in National Curriculum tests at the age of 14 in English, mathematics and science indicates an improving trend since similar tests were taken at the age of 11. In Years 10 and 11 rates of progress are unsatisfactory in information technology but satisfactory in all other subjects and good in art, drama, geography, history, modern foreign languages and music. Overall, rates of progress, especially of pupils capable of high attainment, are not as rapid as can be expected. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress and those with statements make good progress.

13. The quality of relationships within the school are very good. There are high levels of mutual respect between pupils and all adults in the school. The values and beliefs of a Catholic environment are central to the philosophy of the school and this can be witnessed in action on a day-to-day basis. Pupils respond well to the spiritual life of the school and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are welcoming and courteous to visitors. There are generally relaxed and friendly relationships between pupils across the ages. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and show pleasure and satisfaction when they succeed. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils take pride in their appearance and in wearing the school uniform. They show increasing levels of responsibility, especially in the good levels of participation in extra-curricular activities. They applaud warmly the achievements of others, for example in musical performance and in a presentation for Young Enterprise. They have strong views on social and moral issues and express them with feeling in formal and informal situations, notably in drama, English, geography, history and religious education. There is a general cultural

awareness amongst pupils which is fostered by some of the schemes of work planned by departments.

14. Attendance rates are above the national average. However, a small number of pupils, mostly in Year 11, arrive late for sessions. There is also too little urgency in ensuring efficient changeover between lessons. This has led to some lack of urgency in approaching tasks, especially in the early parts of lessons. There is a tendency to undervalue the effective use of time. This sometimes results in progress being less than good.

### **Quality of education provided**

15. The quality of teaching is virtually always satisfactory and is predominantly good. Teaching in the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The best teaching occurs in geography and history and there is good teaching in art, business education, design & technology, drama, music, physical education and science. The weakest teaching is in information technology in Years 10 and 11. The overall quality of teaching is a strength of the school and accounts for the satisfactory progress made by most pupils and the maintenance of levels of attainment through the school which are above average.

16. The majority of teaching is good, being committed, competent and well planned. The very good teaching has flair, a variety of approaches, sense of challenge and high expectations. Objectives are shared with pupils and evaluated by them. Whilst most good teaching works hard to achieve success in examinations there is too little very good teaching which inspires in pupils a desire for excellence. Consequently, rates of progress are slower than they might otherwise be, especially amongst pupils capable of high attainment. Pupils are rarely encouraged to question and challenge and have insufficient opportunities for independent research and the development of study skills. These factors have an impact which results on the percentage of pupils achieving the higher A\* and A grades in GCSE examinations only being in line with national averages, whereas the lower B and C grades are above national averages. The school is not achieving the expected percentage of higher grades in GCSE examinations.

17. However, teaching is seen to show skilful classroom management and good levels of behaviour are developed. Pupils' positive response in lessons has been developed through this good teaching. Teachers have high expectations of the way in which pupils conduct themselves and they provide a consistent, firm, but nevertheless friendly and supportive framework for learning. Homework is generally set purposefully although not always consistently. Parents are justified in expressing concern that such inconsistencies make it harder for them to support their children in the processes of good habits in approaching working at home. Teachers often mark pupils' work thoroughly and marking is usually supportive and indicates how a pupil might improve. However, the overall quality of marking is inconsistent. Other forms of assessment and record-keeping are in place and the school is beginning to take effective steps designed to ensure that pupils meet those expectations which diagnostic testing suggests should be realised. There is insufficient focus, however, placed on ensuring that this includes pupils seen to be capable of high attainment.

18. The curriculum is generally balanced and provides a broad education for pupils. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum except for the application of information technology in Years 10 and 11. However, the allocation of time to a number of subjects, notably design & technology, geography, history and art, does not meet recommendations and the length of the taught week is less than in the majority of comprehensive schools. This leads to unevenness of provision and, in a number of subjects, limits the opportunities for variety in approaches to

learning and teaching. For some teachers an unnecessarily tight time schedule causes them to place over-emphasis on the examination syllabus in order to be sure of covering what is required. There are subjects in which teaching is narrow even when the allocation of time matches national averages. Some subjects make good use of information technology, but in Years 10 and 11 this is under-developed and pupils are not receiving their entitlement in the subject. In consequence attainment is below average. Those pupils who follow courses in the three separate sciences in Years 10 and 11 may experience an unbalanced curriculum.

19. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. There is, however, an issue of pupils being withdrawn from the same lesson each week for support in reading, for example modern foreign languages. Understandably the result of this is that these pupils have difficulty in keeping pace with the requirements of the subject they have missed. However, the extra help with literacy for pupils with special needs is carefully assessed and pupils receive effective support, especially those with statements.

20. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which is well supported by pupils. These include sport, music, drama and exchange visits, but also many activities that take place away from the spotlight and are enjoyed regularly by smaller groups of pupils. The achievement of the Young Enterprise team in winning local and regional awards several years running adds significantly to pupils' personal development and their contribution to the local community.

21. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, although assemblies do not always contribute to this significantly. There is rarely music to heighten the spiritual atmosphere and pupils are rarely able to take a lead in these acts of worship. However, pupils do take initiatives in the weekly Mass and at important religious festivals. Work in subject areas often contributes to the spiritual life of pupils. There are notable examples of this in history, music and personal and social education. The school contributes very effectively to the pupils' moral development, promoting it within its aims. There are good adult role models, clear expectations regarding behaviour and pupils are expected to develop an understanding of right and wrong. Moral issues form part of the curriculum in a number of subjects. In geography, for example, pupils consider environmental issues. Pupils' social development is encouraged through opportunities to take responsibility about the school and in extra-curricular activities. The Catholic community of the school, especially valued and supported by governors, is a central aspect of the school's ethos and provides many opportunities for social interaction. The cultural development of pupils is also good: their own culture is respected and celebrated and contributes to cultural awareness and understanding of others. The school ensures that pupils experience other cultures and faiths in lessons in art, English, geography, history, music and religious education.

22. The support and guidance provided for pupils is very effective. Pupils are secure knowing there is a sympathetic adult to whom they can turn if they have problems. Parents and pupils are confident that when rare bullying occurs, the school deals with it quickly and effectively.

23. The school's arrangements for communicating with parents, for example through UPDATE, are good and valued by parents. There are clear and detailed annual reports and a series of consultation evenings which are also valued by parents. Parents' responses in the parents' meeting and in the questionnaires returned indicated their unmistakable appreciation of most aspects of the school.

## **The efficiency of the school**

24. The headteacher provides the school with effective leadership. He works closely with the two deputy headteachers in quietly setting the ethos, demanding success and making clear the vision for the future to which the school aspires. This is fundamental, down-to-earth and achievable. The headteacher has been successful in establishing a commitment to achievement throughout the school. This is reflected in an efficient management structure in which heads of year play a key part in establishing and maintaining the school's positive ethos. Heads of department equally transfer this ethos to the achievement of success in subjects. These senior and middle managers bring to their tasks a wide range of useful and appropriate skills. Plans to use these skills in monitoring the teaching and curriculum development are in place but not yet happening fully in practice.

25. The governing body shares the aims of the senior management of the school and provides the school with valuable support. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and work in critical collaboration with the headteacher and senior management. The governing body relies on management to keep it informed and thereafter plays a demanding role in the consideration of possible or alternative courses of action. For example, it responds fully to the preparation of a good and effective school development plan and through this participation has an impact in setting its priorities and implementation.

26. The school has an income per pupil which is below the national average for a school of this type. The school makes very careful and appropriate use of its limited budget. It runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis and all financial arrangements are secure. School administration and site management are effective. Since the previous inspection development planning and budget setting have come together and there is careful matching of expenditure to educational priorities. There is prudent planning for future spending. Given the socio-economic background of the pupils and their levels of attainment on entry to the school, the progress made by them, their behaviour and good personal development, educational planning that is linked to the budget and the quality of the teaching, the school gives good value for money.

## **School improvement**

*Issues raised in the inspection of 1993:*

27. Key Issue 1                      *extend more widely existing good practice in teaching and learning.*  
The school has taken steps to respond to this issue and the quality of teaching overall has improved since the last inspection. The senior management team has a teaching commitment designed to demonstrate good practice. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of school-based courses which have attempted to raise expectations and broaden the range of teaching strategies used by teachers. Plans are in place in the next school year to begin to monitor the teaching in the school more systematically. However, the extension sought in the previous inspection's findings has not been as widespread as intended. This inspection, too, has found teaching generally to be good, but it has also found that it still rarely challenges sufficiently. Teaching does not encourage independent learning and those capable of higher attainment are not sufficiently extended. In Years 10 and 11, opportunities are still not being taken to use information technology to enrich learning. Whilst acknowledging that the budget has been tight and led to constraints of staffing, the efforts made by the school have succeeded in maintaining rather than raising the levels of attainment achieved by pupils since 1993.

28. Key Issue 2 *further develop the library as a learning resource.* Budget constraints have limited the progress made in improving the resources of the library within the overall priorities the school has established. Nonetheless, the school has made efforts to obtain sponsorship and raise funds through efforts and these have led to significant improvements in recent times. The library is now linked with information technology resources as a learning resources centre. There is also some librarian support. More needs to be done as funds allow and older pupils need to be given more opportunities to use the centre for independent research and study. However, there is greater use of the library than was evident at the time of the previous inspection.

29. Key Issue 3 *improve strategic planning at school and departmental level and link it more closely to the setting of budgets and to the allocation of resources.* School and departmental planning are now a more central part of the working practices of the school and effective in setting priorities. The concerns of the last inspection have been met and the management and strategic planning of the school are now sound. Procedures are in place which are designed to raise further the levels of attainment of all pupils, including the efficient use of resources for this purpose.

30. Since the last inspection the school has begun to develop an ethos of improvement. There has been a review of policies, including those for behaviour and rewarding achievement in an attempt to raise standards. The relative performance of girls and boys has been addressed in part, although there remain further anomalies to explain. Departments review their results in GCSE examinations and as a result set challenging targets. However, this has yet to lead to significant improvements in the levels of attainment achieved compared to previous years. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades is just over twelve per cent above the national figure for 1997, a similar achievement to that in 1994. There are now closer and more effective curricular links with associated primary schools. There has been a more considered process of staff development which has led to the school being recognised as an Investor in People.

## **Key Issues for action**

31. In order to improve rates of progress, especially amongst those pupils capable of higher attainment, governors, the headteacher and staff should focus on :

\* improving satisfactory and good teaching to that of the very best by:

ensuring that progress is not slowed down by conscientious yet unimaginative teaching that lacks energy, variety and flair,

making more rigorous challenges and raising the expectations teachers have of those pupils capable of higher attainment,

seeking to overcome differences in the performance of boys and girls through the planning of suitable teaching approaches,

giving pupils more opportunity to work and study independently so that they take more responsibility for their own learning,

sharing clear learning objectives more readily with pupils,

implementing fully a programme for monitoring teaching, levels of pupils' attainment and sharing good practice;

- \* improving the resources of the learning resources centre, especially as a place where pupils can carry out independent research and study;
- \* giving greater purpose to the use of time by :
  - insisting on being punctual at the start of lessons,
  - agreeing procedures for efficient changeover between lessons,
  - increasing the length of the taught week to its recommended level,
  - ensuring that appropriate allocations of time are given to all subjects;
- \* improving levels of attainment in information technology in Years 10 and 11.

## **Introduction**

### **Characteristics of the school**

32. Our Lady's RC High School is an 11 to 16 co-educational comprehensive school of 915 pupils and is deemed to be a school of broadly average size. The school is situated in the Fulwood area of Preston but serves a wider area. Pupils come from a broad spread of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Pupils have a wide range of attainment on entry to the school but the overall attainment at the start of Year 7 is above the national average. There are 136 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, 21 of whom have statements.

33. The mission statement of the school makes explicit that the governors and staff seek to establish a community based on love and care for the individual, in which the faith of the Church gives explicit and ultimate meaning to all the school community's activities. It is important to the school to reflect in its ethos the messages proclaimed by Christ in the Gospel, in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of the Catholic Church. The Church's beliefs and values are seen by the school as the foundation of the educational process and unify every aspect of school life.

34. Within this context the school continually strives to raise expectations and attainment. It plans a range of strategies in an attempt to ensure that each individual pupil achieves the fullest potential and good examination results. It provides a range of extra-curricular activities designed to enhance the learning and experience of pupils. The school works closely with its partner primary schools and with the Catholic sixth form and local further education colleges.

## Key indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1997	93	96	189

<b>National Curriculum</b>	<b>Test Results</b>	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	54	70	69
	Girls	71	62	55
	Total	125	132	124
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	67 (73)	70 (75)	66 (69)
	National	56 (57)	59 (57)	60 (57)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	34 (33)	50 (48)	33 (37)
	National	22 (26)	36 (34)	29 (22)

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	73	63	67
	Girls	72	67	51
	Total	145	120	118
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	77 (80)	68 (77)	62 (63)
	National	60 (61)	64 (62)	61 (60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	40 (41)	38 (43)	29 (35)
	National	28 (30)	37 (35)	29 (28)

### 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
1997	94	80	174

<b>GCSE Results</b>		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 the standard specified	Boys	42	84	89
	Girls	54	78	79
	Total	96	162	168
Percentage standard specified	School	55 (52)	93 (93)	97 (99)
	National	43 (43)	88 (88)	94 (94)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.3
	National comparative data	8.6
Unauthorised absence	School	0.2
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	48
Permanent	4

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	15
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

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

### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

#### **Attainment and progress**

35. Pupils' attainment is above average at the end of both key stages. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire feel that the school achieves good standards of work.

36. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. National Curriculum tests and assessments in 1997 confirm these judgements. In addition, attainment at the end of this key stage is above average in design & technology, drama, history, modern foreign languages and music and average in all other subjects.

37. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is above average in design & technology, English, German, geography, mathematics and music and average in art, drama, French, history, physical education, science and the vocational courses. At the end of this key stage attainment in information technology is below average.

38. The results in GCSE examinations in recent years have been consistently above the national average for pupils achieving five or more A\* to C and A\* to G passes, the difference between the school and national performances being practically constant. In 1997, 55 per cent of pupils achieved passes in five or more subjects at grades A\* to C and 93 per cent at the wider range of A\* to G. These results are above the national average. The school is not as successful with those pupils deemed to be capable of higher attainment. The number of pupils gaining A\* and A grades is in line with, rather than above, the national average. On the other hand, a good number of pupils on the borderline of average ability in diagnostic tests are successful in obtaining C and sometimes B grades in the examination. The percentage of pupils in these categories is above the national average.

39. There are anomalies in the performances of boys and girls. Generally girls perform better than boys. However, in geography, history and science boys perform better than girls. The school has been unable to account for or overcome these differences. Tests on entry to the school in the last two years indicate that boys' potential seems not to be as promising as that of girls but actual attainment across subjects does not always match such predictions. Parents descriptions of homework habits indicate that many boys tend to make less demand of themselves than girls. There are also differences in grades achieved between subjects which have some similarities in the understanding and skills required in their successful study. For example, whilst pupils perform well in English language and literature, performances in geography and history examinations are not as good.

40. In individual subjects, GCSE results were above the national averages in 1996 in art, business studies, dual science, craft, English language and literature, information systems, mathematics, religious studies and sport/physical education. Results were not too different to national averages in all other subjects. In 1997 results were better than those in 1996 in business studies, English literature, French, geography, German, history, religious education and sport/physical education. Results were not as good in 1997 in art, dual science, information systems and mathematics. In other subjects results were similar or comparisons cannot be made due to the design of the syllabus being different.

41. Across both key stages pupils' skills in speaking and listening are generally good, especially when concerned with areas for which they have special interest. Pupils can use the spoken word appropriately in formal and informal situations. They are usually sensitive and responsive when listening to others.

42. Pupils' skills in reading at both key stages are average and the school is taking steps to support the minority of pupils who experience difficulties in reading. As pupils get older they are able to use more advanced reading skills, although they could be better if given more opportunities to use such skills in independent study.

43. The quality of pupils' writing at both key stages is above average. At Key Stage 3 pupils have an increasing facility to write accurately and at Key Stage 4 are developing an understanding of language and how the written word can be fashioned for a variety of needs and purposes. However, the accuracy of spelling is inconsistent.

44. Levels of numeracy are generally good at both key stages. Pupils can draw and interpret graphs in science and make measurements with a good level of accuracy in design & technology, physical education and science. Pupils can generate and analyse patterns and perspective in art and most can use spreadsheets when required.

45. Levels of competency and use of information technology, whilst adequate in Key Stage 3, are below average at Key Stage 4. Pupils do not have access to the full National Curriculum requirements in the subject at this key stage. Additionally, in mathematics and music, for example, the National Curriculum requirements of the subjects in respect of information technology are not met.

46. Overall levels of attainment on entry to the school are above average. During Key Stage 3 pupils make satisfactory progress and attainment levels generally remain above average. Similar satisfactory progress is made during Key Stage 4, with the result that levels of attainment in GCSE examinations remain overall above average.

47. In individual lessons progress is always satisfactory and at Key Stage 3 in just over half of lessons is good. Progress is satisfactory in almost all other lessons, being unsatisfactory in six out of 90 lessons. Rates of progress over time are good in drama, English, history, modern languages, music and science at Key Stage 3. In all other subjects progress over the key stage is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4 progress in almost half of all lessons is good and is satisfactory in nearly all other lessons. Progress is unsatisfactory in just six of 68 lessons at Key Stage 4.

48. Younger pupils gain confidence in speaking through role play and drama. They develop presentation skills when talking, for example, about hunting, allowing their strong viewpoints to find clarity of expression. Older pupils show that progress has been made in the understanding of text as they are able to delve for meanings beyond the literal when studying, for example, Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible'. Pupils in drama working on the same play are able to layer their characterisation to take account of fear of witchcraft whilst showing appreciation of the culture of the period of the play. In mathematics and science pupils develop the skills of investigation. In mathematics in Year 9 pupils have become able to interpret quite complex tables and in science are able to draw conclusions which are consistent with the evidence presented in experiments. Year 9 pupils come to understand the differences between solids, liquids and gases and the effect of heat. In history, pupils make excellent progress in their understanding of why and how teenage culture emerged in the 1950s. Pupils in Year 9 achieve this through a high level of analysis of sources. Sketchbooks in art indicate progress in

observational drawing of simple objects at Key Stage 3 to interpretative drawing transforming observation into personalised and expressive work at Key Stage 4. In design & technology rapid and good progress is evident in designing and in the relationship between initial design, mock-ups and making. Year 9 pupils in geography have developed sufficiently to be able to distinguish the effects of constructing a reservoir on the environment and lives of different groups of people. Pupils studying modern foreign languages are increasingly able to use the language in response to stimuli. They can recognise patterns in sentence structure. Pupils in music by the end of Year 9 have developed the skills necessary to listen to binary and ternary form and compare its use in music of different styles and periods. Pupils in a GCSE physical education group understand the part drugs can play in enhancing performance in sport yet are also able to appreciate the health hazards involved. They also have a developed moral sense of fair play. Pupils on vocational courses come to be able to transfer significant skills to different situations, for example designing for effect and persuasion. Younger pupils in a personal and social education lesson made good progress in using vocabulary to show their understanding of the nature of people who bully and how language might be used to respond to difficult circumstances, thus defusing the situation.

49. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Some exceed expectations and perform well in GCSE examinations. Good supportive work in reading plays a significant part in raising their attainment.

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

50. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to their learning. Most listen well to their teachers' instructions and work willingly, maintaining good levels of concentration and taking pride in the quality of their completed work. When they are given the opportunity to work together in pairs or groups, for example in geography, pupils share ideas positively in a group investigation of the Bhopal disaster and the Kobe earthquake, and in history pupils pool ideas effectively prior to class discussions. However, in many of their lessons opportunities for independent learning are rare. In English, physical education, design & technology, art and modern foreign languages pupils remain over-dependent on the teacher and do not sufficiently learn to take initiatives. They are sensible in the use of resources and equipment, although in science there has been some minor theft of school property. The majority of pupils with special educational needs learn with enthusiasm and are willing to persevere.

51. Pupils' behaviour is very good, apart from a small number at Key Stage 3 whose disruptive behaviour in some lessons has caused the school to monitor them and introduce more stringent disciplinary measures during the past year. Exclusions are average for a school of this size. As at the time of the last inspection, the school operates within a happy and orderly environment. Pupils behave well both in class and around the school, moving around congested corridors sensibly and without undue noise. They are not generally aggressive towards one another either in language or behaviour, and there is little evidence of bullying. Pupils are pleasant and polite towards adults, and relationships between them and their teachers are good.

52. There is enthusiastic involvement in the extra-curricular activities offered by the school, and in initiatives which enhance personal development where older pupils act as good role models for the younger ones. An effective prefect system encourages a responsible and caring attitude, with Year 10 and 11 pupils assisting staff and also acting as buddies to the Year 7 intake. The charities supported by the school and its other proactive Christian initiatives receive very wide support from the pupil body. Large numbers participate in the week away and the 'Day with a Difference' organised in conjunction with the school chaplain. Some pursue opportunities

throughout the school year to grow in spirituality and good citizenship through their involvement with the chaplaincy group and contacts made at lunch time in the Brew Room with youth workers from the social services, for example in spending part of their Easter holiday paper stripping in a house set up by the L'Arche project for adults with learning difficulties. Reports written on Year 11 pupils by their employers in work experience placements endorse the very good record of behaviour of pupils. They provide many examples of appropriate attitudes, not only in their polite and pleasant manner, but also in the care and enthusiasm put into whatever tasks they were asked to do.

## **Attendance**

53. Attendance is above the national average for similar schools and shows further improvement in the termly statistics so far available for the current year. The overall level of unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

54. The school staff and governors emphasise the importance of the impact of attendance and punctuality on pupils' attainment and progress in the prospectus and governors' reports. The majority of pupils enjoy school and are well motivated towards good attendance. Manual methods of attendance recording are employed. Irregular attendance is mostly confined to a small number of pupils in Year 10. Pastoral staff monitor attendance regularly and consult weekly with the education welfare officer on the few pupils causing concern.

55. There is some lateness for form registration in the morning and afternoon and a number of lessons start late.

## **Quality of education provided**

### **Teaching**

56. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school in most subjects. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. At Key Stage 3 teaching is very good in history. At this key stage teaching is good in half of all lessons and better than this in a further 15 per cent of lessons. Teaching is deemed to be unsatisfactory in three out of 92 lessons. At Key Stage 4 teaching is very good in geography and history, but the teaching of information technology is unsatisfactory. At this key stage teaching overall is good in two out of every five lessons. This good teaching overall is responsible for maintaining satisfactory progress as pupils move through the school.

57. However, only a relatively small percentage of teaching is judged to be very good or excellent. This high quality of teaching exists in a minority of lessons and accounts for good and very good progress being made. It is characterised by teachers having a good knowledge of their subject, enthusiasm about it and the ability to spread their enthusiasm amongst pupils. Pupils are inspired to do well and high expectations are held of them through challenging tasks and energetic engagement in the demands of the lesson. In history, for example, where most of the teaching is of this high quality, assessment is used to help pitch the demands being made of pupils. Excellent resources are prepared and presented with care and a sense of timing. Demands are made of pupils to use historical language appropriate to the area of study. Pupils are required to analyse the evidence before them and draw conclusions. Lessons run at a demanding pace and outcomes produced by pupils are effectively marked and displayed. The focus is consistently on

excellence, imagination, quality and flair not just in the teaching but in pupils' responses. Objectives for lessons are shared with pupils and their realisation evaluated by them. Pupils take pride in their well presented exercise books and the consolidation of learning is excellent through use of the notion of 'the double-page spread'. The quality of learning in such lessons is excellent.

58. The inspection in 1993 criticised teaching for lacking such qualities, despite the underlying standard of teaching being good. There are examples of improvement since 1993, but generally the school has been unable to raise a higher proportion of teaching to that of the best. Even though examination results have remained above average, and the school successfully ensures that these are good, progress could be more rapid and widespread as some of the teaching has objectives which are too narrow.

59. The setting of homework is not consistent across subjects and sometimes, within particular subjects, teachers do not follow a coherent pattern for giving homework. However, the homework that is set is purposeful and an extension of classwork.

60. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the quality of marking is inconsistent across the different departments and often within individual departments. There are examples of good, helpful marking where it is made clear to pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work and they are set targets in relation to these improvements. However, marking is not always sufficiently thorough and there are examples of cursory marking.

61. In both key stages the quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers have a clear knowledge and understanding of pupils' particular needs and are able to identify their teaching objectives with precision. There is flexibility of approach in well-paced sessions resulting in sound progress being maintained. This results in pupils being positive in their response and they develop a trust and confidence which leads to a strong desire to achieve success.

62. Teachers do not always feel comfortable in using information technology to enhance learning. It is especially lacking impact at Key Stage 4. Where it is used successfully, for example in Key Stage 3, it is seen to motivate pupils and increase their pride in their work. Word-processing in English, for example, linked to drafting and re-drafting of written work, has raised the levels of attainment of a number of pupils.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

63. The school has clearly stated curricular aims set out in the prospectus and the curriculum is kept under review by a staff committee and a committee of the governing body. The curriculum offered to the majority of pupils in the school has breadth and balance and reflects the Catholic nature of the school. All pupils take an accredited course in religious education in Key Stage 4 and above average time is given to teaching religious education across the school.

64. The length of school day is less than recommendations and further time is lost when pupils move across the school between lessons and at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. There are difficulties in covering the programmes of study in the required depth in Key Stage 3 science and design and technology and in Key Stage 4 in physical education. Drama is not a part of the curriculum in Year 9. This causes a break in continuity which has a negative impact on the attainment possible by some pupils at Key Stage 4.

65. The Key Stage 3 curriculum meets statutory requirements and in most respects has breadth and balance. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and the majority of pupils experience a second modern foreign language from Year 8. The curriculum is enhanced by the teaching of drama to pupils in Years 7 and 8 and a personal and social education programme of good quality is taught in all years. Information technology is taught as a discrete subject in Year 7 and then through subjects across the curriculum in Years 8 and 9. However the coverage of the controlling and measuring part of the programme of study is very limited.

66. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 4 have a broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils take English language and literature, mathematics, science, modern languages, religious education, design & technology, physical education and personal and social education. Although around half of the pupils will gain an external qualification in information technology the provision in the subject in Key Stage 4 does not meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

67. The vocational courses which are taught at the local college of further education and in school are valued by pupils. There are many opportunities to take responsibility and initiative. Pupils gain transferable skills which prepare them well for the adult world. Many pupils build upon the accreditation they gain and progress to relevant courses in further education post-16. However, the curriculum in Key Stage 4 is narrow for pupils who take three separate sciences. A high proportion of pupils, around twice the national average, follow a course in single science and this could lead to a restriction on career opportunities.

68. The curriculum taught in a number of subjects across the key stages lacks breadth. In design & technology a deliberate decision was taken by the school to narrow the curriculum in order to focus energies and raise examination results. This approach has succeeded and the school now intends to introduce food technology and textiles back into the curriculum as new accommodation and staffing are available. Enriching elements in art such as print-making, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and photography are not included and pupils have a limited experience of 3-dimensional work. The curriculum for boys in physical education is dominated by games activities and very little time is given to gymnastics and outdoor adventurous activities.

69. In English, mathematics and modern foreign languages the range of learning experiences offered in lessons is narrow. Debate, discussion and personal writing are missing from many English lessons. Lessons are dominated by the teacher in mathematics and in modern foreign languages communication for real purposes, reading for pleasure and the creative and imaginative use of language are limited. The distribution of lessons for the lowest sets in modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory and has an adverse effect on standards. During alternate weeks pupils have only one lesson and this gives insufficient contact with the language to support progress.

70. The effectiveness of setting arrangements is variable. Setting is effective where pupils are grouped on the basis of their attainment in the subject. In mathematics in Year 7 pupils benefit from working with pupils of similar attainment especially in the small set for pupils with special educational needs. The setting arrangements do not match individual needs where pupils are placed in common sets across a wide range of subjects. For example, in modern foreign languages in Year 7 pupils are placed in sets based on criteria other than their attainment in languages. This leads to re-enforcement of sex stereotyping in languages where lower sets are dominated by boys and expectations of achievement are established early. However, in Years 8 and 9 setting systems are effective.

71. Although an experienced team of pastoral teachers ensures that the quality of the personal and social education lessons is high the time allocated to the subject is limited in both key stages. Schemes of work for personal and social education are minimal and currently give inadequate guidance to staff. The school has a clear policy on sex education and it is taught sensitively through religious education, science and personal and social education. Drugs and health education are included in the programme and the school has a suitable policy for the management of drug related incidents.

72. The majority of pupils with special educational needs are taught in a small set with specialist teaching. They have equal access to all parts of the curriculum except where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra support, for example in Year 9 languages. The curriculum is directed and delivered through the specified individual learning targets ensuring continuity and progression in line with expectations. For some pupils on the special needs register who are not in the small set, provision is inadequate. There is insufficient in-class support for these pupils.

73. With the exception of information technology in Key Stage 4 all subjects have schemes of work in place which support teachers in their systematic planning for continuity and progression. In some subjects planning includes work to match groups of pupils of differing attainment. The school recognises the need to extend this good practice. Arrangements are in place to develop curricular continuity between primary feeder schools and the secondary school. Good curricular links are established between the colleges of further education and the Catholic sixth form college. These are developed further through the initial teacher training scheme.

74. A good programme of extra-curricular activities is organised. Lunchtime recitals where pupils perform their own compositions are held regularly and are very popular. Rehearsals for the school production of 'Bugsy Malone' are well attended. School teams and competitions are organised in a wide range of sports and levels of participation in these are high. Clubs and practices are well attended and open to all pupils. Considerable success in athletics and major sports has been achieved in local competitions.

75. The programme of careers education and guidance is well planned and the quality of the advice given is very good and is appreciated by pupils. The careers education programme is taught as part of the personal and social education programme in Years 9, 10 and 11. The limited time available restricts the breadth of the programme. The local careers service is very supportive of the work of the school in providing careers information, education and guidance. The new careers library is well organised, accessible and used frequently by many pupils.

76. The school's assessment and marking policies clearly set out principles which have guided departments in establishing many effective procedures. Assessment and recording is carried out regularly by all departments. There are examples of good practice in moderating and standardising assessments in information technology, history, geography and English and portfolios of pupils' work support the process in some subjects. The quality of day-to-day assessment through the marking of pupils' work varies and lacks consistency. Some marking is very thorough, supportive and helpful to pupils in planning how to improve their work. Other marking is mechanistic and correction and completeness are not always required. Written comments to pupils are not as helpful as they might be in supporting improvements. Pupils assess their own work through the annual review but their comments are seldom followed up by subject teachers. Self assessment and formative marking remain areas for development.

77. The school gathers and makes effective use of a range of assessment information. The results of National Curriculum tests, teacher assessments and cognitive ability tests carried out in Key

Stage 3 are collated, analysed and passed on to departments at regular intervals. The information is used from an early stage to inform setting arrangements and at a later stage to identify potential underachievers in Year 11 and provide additional support. Not enough teaching, although that in science is an exception, makes good use of the information provided to identify higher attaining pupils and plan further challenging work.

78. The assessment and recording procedures of pupils with special educational needs are well monitored providing a consistent and coherent framework for individual curricular planning. All records are kept centrally and are accessible to all staff and good use is generally made of them.

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

79. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is strong. It underpins the entire curriculum of the school and pupils have every opportunity to achieve academic success in an ethos of mutual respect in a caring, safe environment.

80. The spiritual dimension of the school's work is firmly embedded in its mission statement and strong visual messages relating to the Catholic Faith are given both by the prospectus and at several locations in the buildings, particularly the entrance foyer. The prospectus makes it clear that teachers will demonstrate Gospel values in their work and this is borne out in reality through very good role modelling.

81. The chaplaincy team is involved with pupils in a range of activities which develop spiritual, moral and social values. There are weekly masses in the school chapel prepared by the pupils. These are particularly well attended and the service is often full to capacity. There are week and weekend courses for school leavers which offer a time for reflection and consideration of personal values. Pupils also have the opportunity to experience Christianity in action through interactions with visitors from Bangladesh and Peru. Equally importantly, they consider problems of profound handicap and homelessness in the locality.

82. The school meets the requirement of the law in terms of a daily corporate act of worship which is provided in registration groups and assemblies. On these occasions prayers are sometimes rushed and there is little provision for associated discussion or reflection. The Year assemblies are sometimes of unsatisfactory quality and consequently good opportunities for enhancing the spiritual life of the school are missed.

83. Several subjects of the curriculum provide a vibrant contribution to the spiritual dimension of the school. History deals thoroughly with the impact of religious beliefs and in the arts subjects many pupils experience spirituality through bringing inspiration and imagination to the creative process. This is sometimes the result, in the visual arts, of working with natural forms. Religious education places emphasis on the precious nature and value of a person as an individual. However, several subjects in the curriculum do not make a significant contribution to the spiritual dimension of the life of the school and opportunities are missed particularly in science.

84. Pupils know that the school expects behaviour to adhere to a strong moral code and they respond to this requirement through the way in which they conduct themselves in lessons and outside the classroom. There are many planned opportunities for the consideration of moral issues through the study of topics such as the slave trade, working conditions, child employment, global warming and the destruction of rain forests. In religious education there is a significant emphasis

on respect for others, forgiveness and the promotion of an understanding of the causes of prejudice, bullying, discrimination and divorce.

85. There are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively particularly in history, geography, music, art, languages and science. Pupils with special needs are well integrated into the life of the school and their social skills are carefully nurtured by the staff who work closely with them. When pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs and groups they handle the responsibility well and achieve the tasks set as a result of the good social development which takes place through the school. Pupils relate well to each other and to their teachers and visitors. They are relaxed and friendly in their relationships and go out of their way to be of assistance. Adults in the school are good role models for pupils. When pupils are given planned opportunities to take responsibility as prefects and receptionists, preparing chapel services, carrying out community service, preparing for senior citizens at Christmas or collecting for charity, their personal development is enhanced.

86. Cultural provision is particularly strong. There is a wide range of well attended extra-curricular activities encompassing team games in sport, musical ensembles, choir, concerts and regular drama productions. Theatre groups, authors, poets artists and playwrights visit the school and there are visits to the theatre and art galleries. Pupils have the opportunity to go to France for canoeing, Spain for water sports and the Lakes for camping. There is also a French exchange in Paris, and Year 7 has a weekend in Bologne. In the subjects of the taught curriculum there is a valuable contribution from history with studies of the Incas and Romans and in art the connection is drawn between the work of Lowry and scenes from the locality. An understanding of the beliefs and customs of people of many cultures is promoted by the religious education programme. Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam are studied in some depth to widen the experience of the pupils in a planned manner. English teachers add significantly to this provision through their choice of a variety of good quality texts.

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

87. The pastoral curriculum and its provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare are very good. They make important contributions to the educational standards achieved by providing a caring and secure environment and regularly informing pupils how well they are progressing.

88. Liaison with primary schools is good. During the first term pupils' attainment and potential are assessed and thereafter academic progress is closely monitored. Pupils and their parents are informed of progress by a report in the spring term, followed by a parents' evening, and a record of achievement at the end of the year. Pupils who are under-achieving are quickly identified and receive additional support. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans which are effectively used. Those with statements are supported by the specialist agencies whose excellent work is valued by the school.

89. Pastoral care is based on the ethos of encouragement, persuasion and promoting the positive with constant demands on high standards of work, behaviour and attendance. The pastoral team is efficiently and effectively managed by a deputy headteacher, heads and assistant heads of year and form tutors. Although registers are marked accurately, lateness is not consistently challenged. Morning registration time is not always constructively used. The school has not yet completed the review of the role of the tutor. The chaplaincy provides additional support and guidance.

90. The school has effective procedures to promote discipline and good behaviour and it deals

quickly with occurrences of bullying and other forms of harassment. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is generally very good. Staff are noticeable for their presence around the school at times of movement. Some staff are not sufficiently vigilant when on duty near the girls' toilets and a small but persistent problem of smoking has not yet been solved. All pupils have been involved in a recent review of the code of conduct. A system of assertive discipline has been introduced with some classes. It has been very successful and it is planned to extend this gradually across the whole school.

91. The work of the school and the support of parents result in good attendance and low unauthorised absence. Attendance is systematically and rigorously monitored each week by heads of year and their assistants. Liaison with the education welfare officer is very good and his effective work is acknowledged by the school.

92. High attainment, good attendance and good behaviour are encouraged by recognition and reward. The school uses merits, commendations and certificates to praise and reinforce success which is celebrated at the end of each term and in special annual assemblies. Pupils recognise the need for sanctions and are confident that they are used fairly by most teachers.

93. Personal and social education includes drugs and sex education. These make a valuable contribution to guidance and welfare. The written scheme lacks detail. However, the teaching of the programme is consistently good and frequently very good. The skills of reviewing, target setting and action planning are taught and promote pupils' personal development. In Years 10 and 11 the programme includes careers guidance, preparation for work experience and the completion of the National Record of Achievement.

94. The school has effective child protection procedures which reflect those of the county. Three staff have received training and all are aware of what to do should an incident arise.

95. There is limited accommodation for dining and pupils spend a considerable time queuing. Towards the end of the serving period there is a restricted choice and some pupils have insufficient time in which to enjoy their food.

96. Procedures to promote pupils' health and safety are very good and the school does all it reasonably can to protect them from harm. The detailed school policy is reviewed annually.

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

97. Parents receive information of good quality from the school. The prospectus provides helpful information, and the quarterly newsletter, which is attractively presented, is very readable and informative. Other written information includes the governors' annual report, homework diary, a calendar of events and individual letters. The two reports to parents on their children's progress each year are well received. They provide statutory information and are particularly effective in reporting effort and attainment. Parents are encouraged to comment on reports.

98. There is good attendance at the annual evening which follows issue of the shorter progress report. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in reviews of progress and target setting. Many attend the meetings. The governors' annual meeting is less well attended. It is not linked to one of the 'topics' evenings, however, such as curriculum, bullying, drugs awareness, or records of achievement. The parent teacher association is active both in fund-raising and in drawing attention to issues of concern to parents. Parents assist with drama productions

and have been instrumental in promoting financial support for the newly established learning support centre.

99. Visits are made to the feeder primary schools to talk to staff and pupils. Reciprocal visits such as a 'taster' day and a pupil/parent evening help to ease the primary-secondary transition. There are good curricular links in design & technology and science.

100. Pupils' learning and development are considerably enriched by the school's links with the community. Years 10 and 11 pupils assist each week in primary and nursery schools, senior citizens' homes, and with the disabled. Parties are held at Christmas for disabled children and senior citizens. Curricular activities include drama presentations in local primary schools, museum visits, visits by theatre groups, design competitions and links with local sports clubs. 'Sportsmark' recognition has been awarded.

101. Good links are established with the two local post-16 colleges. Pupils are interviewed at school by college staff and attend 'taster' days and open evenings. Years 10 and 11 pupils take vocational education link courses at college. Year 11 work experience placements cover a wide cross-section of the business and services community. Guest speakers are involved in assemblies, personal health and social education lessons, careers events and industry days.

102. The school has been involved with local agencies over its recent national record of achievement and careers education accreditation and, even more recently, over the achievement of the Investor in People recognition. The achievements of the Young Enterprise team in winning local and regional awards several years running add significantly to some pupils' personal development and contribution to the local community.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

103. The headteacher provides the school with efficient, courteous yet rigorous leadership. He has a clear vision of the direction and priorities the school should take and hold. He has a rational view of how the school might develop in the longer term. He has encouraged in staff the ethos of the improving school and the development planning is designed to achieve this prime goal. He knows that even a school deemed to be good can become better. He has been in post for four years and has reached a point where he sees that more rapid improvement can be made. Members of staff are beginning to see they have a role in such improvement and have been encouraged by the implications of the school achieving Investor in People status. An example of this is the almost complete willingness of staff to embark on a programme of monitoring of teaching in order to raise the quality to an even higher point through the sharing of good practice. Raising the levels of attainment of all pupils is a realistic goal of this initiative.

104. The headteacher is well supported by two deputy headteachers in the effective management of the school. They work together well, one having served the school for a number of years whilst the other is in his first year in the school. As a senior management team the three complement each other well. They distinguish between business to be completed quickly and efficiently and important whole-school developments which require greater time spent which will include the participation of all staff. Underpinning this approach to management and development is a positive ethos arising from a commitment to the Catholic Faith. Each individual in the school community is valued.

105. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and provides the school with good support. Through keen processes of critical collaboration it challenges proposals made by management. This sometimes leads to management appreciating the need to consider alternatives. The committee structure of the governing body is effective and is mirrored by the school's staff committees. Whilst the effectiveness of the governing body would benefit from a more informed participation by governors in the life of the school, there is related expertise that sometimes leads to imaginative approaches to school development.

106. Nonetheless, despite improvements made in response to the last inspection, these have not led to any significant rise in the attainment of pupils in tests and examinations since 1993. Two of the key issues at that inspection have been addressed : some progress has been made in making the library more effective as a learning resource and a percentage of the teaching has improved and sets out to challenge pupils with the potential for high attainment. However, despite a short programme of staff development, strategies used have not been sufficiently based in the classroom to bring about significant improvement. Information technology is still not being used significantly to extend learning. Plans during the next school year to monitor and share good classroom practice are designed to accelerate progress in these issues. During his four years in post the headteacher has created a climate that makes this more possible. In this respect, the third issue from the last inspection, concerned to link development planning more closely to the setting of budgets and allocation of resources, has been successful. More effective planning is beginning to have an impact on standards and the quality of education experienced by pupils.

107. Management of subject departments is generally good. Departments meet on a regular basis to discuss matters related to attainment and progress and, for example, the use of assessment. Colleagues work together within departments, often through joint planning and the moderating of outcomes. Heads of year are a potent force in maintaining an effective pastoral system which is highly regarded by parents. This middle tier of management contributes effectively to the development of the school.

108. Learning support is efficiently managed and good use is made of available resources. It has some success in ensuring that pupils and teachers across the school have the necessary support to meet the needs of pupils on the register.

109. Good relationships are a strength of the leadership at senior and middle management levels. Staff generally cooperate well and pupils are aware that there is a coherence of approach in the day-to-day life of the school. This unity of purpose creates a secure and orderly daily environment. Non-teaching, administrative, budgetary and site supervision contribute significantly to the efficient ethos of the school.

110. The school does not comply with statutory requirements : in information technology provision at Key Stage 4; the reporting of attainment and progress in information technology to parents; legal requirements for staff appraisal even though there is good staff development and the school has met the stringent requirements necessary to obtain Investor in People status.

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

111. The numbers, qualifications and experience of staff generally match the needs of the curriculum. There is a good balance in the numbers of female and male teachers. The pupil to teacher ratio and staff contact time are high compared with the national average for similar schools. Higher class sizes have a small effect on the quality of learning in science, particularly

when practical group activities are involved. Shortage of staffing prevents the library being accessible to pupils during lessons.

112. Arrangements for the induction of teaching staff have recently been up-dated. Newly qualified teachers are given appropriate help and support through mentoring. There is effective integration of department and school development plans in relation to staff development. Although systems of appraisal are not in place and statutory requirements in this respect are not being met, the school's staff development programme, linked to its development planning, is set to raise the quality of education provided by the school to an even higher level. A detailed staff development policy is in place. Staff needs are reviewed each year, and any training is given priority in line with availability of funding and the focus of the development plan.

113. The adequacy of accommodation across the curriculum varies from good to less than satisfactory. Whilst many subject bases are centralised, the necessity for use of a number of non-specialist rooms and the effect on standards of attainment, range of learning and morale is especially evident in the provision for modern foreign languages. The need to use dining areas as teaching spaces, for example in geography and physical education, makes a good learning environment difficult to establish. Sports fields and the all weather area are poorly drained and frequently muddy, limiting their use.

114. The school has sought to tackle priorities in relation to funds available. A new design and technology area is expected to be available for the start of the next academic year. Work is in hand to improve the ventilation in the mathematics suite and refurbish a number of lavatories.

115. Forecasts of expenditure on books, materials and equipment are average compared to similar schools nationally. In most subjects the availability of books is adequate, although worksheets and photocopies are often used in place of textbooks. The school library benefited from additional funding for books last year. However, the number of books remains below the recommended level for the size of school. This limits the effectiveness of the library as part of the newly created learning resource centre and inhibits the development of literacy and research. Shortages of equipment restrict progress in both science and art.

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

116. The level of funding per pupil available to the school is lower than the average for similar schools nationally. The school continues to have large teaching classes and a contact ratio which is amongst the highest nationally. Through effective planning, expenditure almost matched available income last year. A small deficit, covered by reserves, is predicted for the current year.

117. Financial planning is good. The school's budget setting and resource allocation are closely linked to the school and department development plans. A finance committee of staff provides the breakdown of capitation allocation. Staff support these arrangements. Income for staff development and training is spent in line with priorities identified in the development plan and the professional development review.

118. Allocation of teaching staff is generally efficient in all curriculum areas. Staff make good use of available lesson time. However, many lessons in English, science, modern languages and physical education are fore-shortened by the time taken for pupil movement at lesson change. The delay may be 4-5 minutes per lesson which, over time, adds up to a significant loss of teaching time.

119. Refinement of the responsibilities of special educational needs coordinators is under consideration. However, the departmental development plan does not inform how new responsibilities will be established. Whilst provision is generally satisfactory, in-class support is not always deployed effectively.

120. Despite budget restrictions, departments use available accommodation and learning resources efficiently. Relocation, upgrading, and provision of additional funds last year for books has improved the potential of the library as a learning resource centre, but it remains under-utilised for lessons, research and independent learning.

121. Financial control is efficient. Expenditure and commitments are monitored regularly, and department heads are kept informed. Procedures for financial delegation are in place. The governing body, through its finance/premises committee which meets at least termly, plays a key role in financial oversight and budget approval. Regular reports on progress against budget are received. The school fund is independently audited. The recommendations of the latest local authority audit have been addressed. stock is registered through an electronic system.

122. School administration and site management are effective. Significant savings on services have been achieved over the years. Maintenance costs have been minimised by the school undertaking its own repairs and refurbishment.

123. In relation to the standards achieved by its pupils, the quality of education provided for them and the very low unit costs, the school provides good value for money.

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

### **English, mathematics and science**

#### **English**

124. The levels of attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above average. Pupils listen carefully and answer questions, though few are seen to read for enjoyment and as a habit. There are insufficient numbers of suitable books in either English or the library to encourage pupils to read widely. All pupils write for different purposes and across a range of styles, but not all receive sufficient opportunities to write reflectively or from a personal point of view. As a result of specific attention to spelling and punctuation their writing improves in accuracy. The quality of their writing also benefits from drafting practice and from using the school's information technology resources. However, pupils' command of a wide vocabulary is weaker than their accuracy in writing. Girls attain at a rate well above that of boys, a marked difference which is evident on entry to the school and which continues throughout both key stages.

125. The levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are above average. Those who attained at the highest levels in Key Stage 3 do not achieve as well as expected in the later key stage. Nearly all pupils are prepared for the two English examinations in GCSE, and results across the higher A\* to C grades in GCSE English and English Literature have been well above national average in recent years. However, few pupils gained A\* or A grades, which does not reflect prior attainment. The percentage of pupils achieving B and C grades within this higher band is above the national average. Though some of the formal writing of these pupils is impressively thoughtful, they do not learn extensively through speaking, and their reading is mainly confined to examination texts. There are no formal lessons in information technology in English in this key stage, and the school relies on pupils' own access to word processors to satisfy national expectations.

126. Pupils' level of attainment on entry to the school are above average. Rates of progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 are good. Good progress is ensured in Year 7 through attention to basic literacy skills, and pupils are encouraged to write extensively. The accuracy of writing is usually very good but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write reflectively and from a personal point of view. Instead, pupils gain competent note-taking skills and learn how to write summaries. They are developing skills of self-assessment which are beginning to improve progress further. Lack of discussion in class prevents pupils, especially the boys, from shaping their thinking through speaking. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their special English group.

127. Rates of progress of pupils at Key Stage 4 are satisfactory. An emphasis in lessons on knowledge of examination texts and writing short but accurate responses enables most pupils to attain sufficiently well. Not all pupils are encouraged to speak to exchange their ideas or to modify their feelings, but they learn quickly how to read for meaning, which ensures good results overall. However, the writing lacks flair, and personal viewpoints are not always expressed with maturity.

128. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils generally behave well in English, and they learn as instructed. They are cooperative with their teachers, even in those

lessons which are not very interesting. When asked to defend their ideas and explain them to the rest of the class, they are respectful listeners to each other. Their positive attitudes to work, however, are not often matched by active learning. Few demands are made of their research skills or opinions. The number of dictionaries is insufficient to support individual learning.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. At Key Stage 3, a third of all lessons are good, while almost all of the rest are satisfactory. A small proportion of lessons is unsatisfactory. In the good lessons, teaching methods ensure that pupils are active learners, making sure that their speaking and thinking helps their reading and enriches their writing. At Key Stage 4, more than half of all lessons are satisfactory, a quarter are good in quality, and a small number are very good. The best teaching makes pupils lively, practical learners who have to think for themselves. It makes the learning exciting and enjoyable. An example of this was seen in a lesson on a modern play. The class was grouped in a circle for the reading of a scene, with pupils acting in the centre. Discussion then followed, led but not dominated by the teacher, and pupils exchanged their first thoughts. The teacher then extended their ideas without directing them. By contrast, the weaker teaching is dull. In these lessons, pupils read short extracts of a book or play, make notes and then are told what to think.

130. Statutory requirements for English are met. English teachers work hard and their assessment of pupils' work is generally detailed and helpful. However, planning of lessons and the teaching itself are not well coordinated. Schemes of work in English are not sufficiently based on programmes of study. This is why a significant number of pupils, particularly boys, do not make good progress through a full range of learning activities. At present, the good teaching in English is not available to all pupils.

131. Since the previous report, speaking and listening still lacks challenge. The overall condition of reading books in English remains poor. Despite the growing number of good quality fiction books in the school's new library, a welcoming place in which pupils may study, the range of readers available to pupils in English and the library is narrow and does not support the development of a regular reading habit. While the marking of pupils' work is of better quality than previously reported, the judgement that the management of English needs greater focus still applies.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

132. Pupils' good listening skills are not matched by their fluency in speaking. In nearly all lessons pupils are expected to respond to teachers' questions with short answers. Low attaining pupils are given few opportunities to improve the fluency of their thinking through speaking. In lessons which encourage pupils to speak, such as in history lessons which explore English kings' responsibility for murder, they show that they can speak with confidence. Role play enlivens learning in geography, such as when investigating blame for the Bhopal disaster.

133. Standards of reading in the school are sound, and pupils are competent at reading aloud. However, in most subjects they read books only for information and not to extend their imagination and range of expression. The library has an insufficient range of books to support independent reading and research. It is not used well in lesson time by subjects other than English. Very few pupils have acquired a reading habit. For example, most pupils do not use the daily form tutor time to read privately.

134. Standards of writing are good. Pupils enter the school with many basic literacy skills in place. The thorough grounding in written accuracy that pupils gain in English enables them to

write appropriately in other subjects. However, in many subjects the writing is restricted to records of information and making notes. There are few opportunities for extended or imaginative, lively writing of the kind which occurs occasionally in science in Year 8. Pupils are sometimes asked to write about the life of a famous scientist or what it is like to be a weightless astronaut. In mathematics, pupils write down their explanations for patterns and data, which enhances their investigation work. However, not all subjects insist on correct spelling. Only in English do pupils re-draft their work to improve the quality of expression and accuracy. In classrooms there are few dictionaries and other key works of reference with which to support independent study.

## **Mathematics**

135. Levels of attainment in mathematics by the end of both key stages are above average. By the end of Key Stage 3 the highest attaining pupils can successfully calculate areas of sectors of circles and volumes of cylinders and prisms. They can use the Theorem of Pythagoras to calculate distances and relate line gradients to equations. Average pupils can draw angles and nets of solids accurately and calculate percentages of quantities with some certainty whilst the lowest attainers are still developing skills with the four rules of whole numbers. By the end of Key Stage 4 the more advanced pupils can solve quadratic equations by factorisation and by formula. They can identify regions bounded by inequalities. The lowest attainers are reasonably numerate being able to calculate journey times from timetables and work with co-ordinates in the first quadrant with confidence.

136. Key Stage 3 test results for 1996 and 1997 were well above the national average at the significant levels. GCSE results were considerably above average in 1996 and 1997 for the proportion of pupils achieving grades in the range A\*-C. There were, however, fewer of the highest grades A\* and A than normal. Almost all pupils were entered for GCSE in 1996 and 1997 which is above average for schools of the same type and results in the range A\*-G exceeded the national average.

137. Rates of progress throughout both key stages are satisfactory. Progress over five years is sound for pupils of all levels of attainment and is good for many but not all average and higher attainers. Progress in individual lessons is sound and in the few lessons where progress is unsatisfactory work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of the pupils, day to day assessment is inadequate and there is a lack of urgency leading to low levels of output. The progress made by pupils with special needs is generally sound especially when they are helped in class by designated assistants.

138. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are normally cooperative and polite in lessons using their time well and producing neat extensive written work. Many are keen to correct their work showing model solutions at the side of their initial efforts. Pupils normally listen intently to their teachers and are capable of extended concentration. In the small minority of lessons where attitudes are less than satisfactory too many pupils are restless and display a lack of urgency. There are also instances of poor presentation and incomplete work.

139. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. The quality of teaching in almost all lessons is at least satisfactory and in a third is good. Normally teaching is typified by clarity of expression, enthusiasm, clear explanation and a good knowledge of the subject and the requirements of examinations. The good teaching in the subject is particularly evident in classes with high and average attaining pupils at Key Stage 4. The 1993 inspection highlighted weaknesses connected with limited teaching style, use of time in lessons and inconsistency of

marking. The same weaknesses are still evident on occasions.

140. The department is well organised and energetically led. All statutory requirements in the curriculum are met except for part of the information technology entitlement which would normally be taught at Key Stage 4. The staff work hard outside timetabled, lessons at lunchtimes and after school, to provide the pupils with opportunities to extend their mathematical knowledge and understanding. The sessions provided are well attended and in addition to their subject value make a valuable addition to the social development of the pupils.

### **Numeracy across the school**

141. The good levels of numeracy exhibited by pupils of all ages support their work in other subjects apart from mathematics. In Key Stage 3 data handling techniques are confidently transferred to both history and geography. In art scale and proportion are used effectively and there is good application of nets in the design of packages. In Key Stage 4 timing of performances in physical education generates digital answers to two decimal places and in geography pupils' skills are extended to statistical techniques usually taught to older students. In science pupils use their algebraic skills competently in the use of formulae connected with Ohm's Law, electrical power and pressure. In a high attaining group pupils are able to plot graphs relating to radioactive decay and calculate the material's half life.

### **Science**

142. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average; a judgement confirmed by the 1997 National tests. In Year 9 revision lessons, pupils displayed a good knowledge of the particle model of matter and the high attainers were able to use the model to explain how solids changed to liquids and then to gases. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment is average. An above average proportion of pupils reach levels equivalent to GCSE grades C and D but a below average proportion reach the higher grades A\* and A. The 1997 GCSE examination results were below the national average although the results in previous years have been above. Pupils generally have a sound knowledge of the main scientific concepts that underpin biology, chemistry and physics. However, their understanding does not quite match their knowledge. In both key stages, boys attain higher standards than girls, significantly so in the 1997 GCSE examination.

143. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels in science which match the national average. All pupils, including those with special needs make good progress throughout Key Stage 3. For many pupils this good progress continues throughout Key Stage 4 although a significant number of pupils, particularly the potential high attainers and girls, could make greater progress. Overall, however, progress is satisfactory. Throughout both key stages pupils develop their experimental skills well. In the early years they learn to use the equipment correctly and safely. In one Year 7 lesson, pupils developed good skills in dissecting a flower and understanding the purpose of its different parts. As pupils progress through the school they develop and refine their investigative skills and in their Year 11 GCSE course these are applied to a very good standard.

144. The quality of teaching throughout both key stages is good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons but neither were there any very good lessons. Teachers have a good command of their subject and are deployed effectively to make best use of their specialist expertise. Lessons are well planned and classroom organisation is good. A particularly strong feature is the use teachers make of their regular assessments to monitor pupils' progress and set them appropriate targets.

Homework is also used effectively to extend pupils' learning. However, few lessons fully challenged the highest attaining pupils. Lessons generally lacked the flair to inspire and capture the excitement and potential of science needed to motivate pupils to extend their studies by personal research. Teaching is often directed at the majority of pupils in the class and the work set does not always meet the needs of those pupils at the ends of the ability range.

145. Pupils generally respond well to the teaching; they are attentive and willing to learn. They work well together and their relationships with teachers are good. A very small number of lessons are disturbed by anti-social behaviour and in a similar number pupils appear tired and unwilling to think for themselves.

146. The department is effectively led and knowledgeable technicians make a significant contribution to its smooth running. Teachers give their time generously to after-school revision sessions which help raise standards. However, the time of support assistants is not fully utilised. Since the last inspection the department has maintained the good attainment levels at Key Stage 3 but has been unable to do so at Key Stage 4 where attainment levels have fallen slightly.

## **Other subjects or courses**

### **Expressive arts**

147. The disciplines of art, drama and music are managed independently within the school's curriculum structure. However, teachers are having discussions around those aspects of learning in the arts which are common to each discipline. This is leading to pupils having a more complete understanding of the relationship between investigating, making, composing and performing in each of the arts. There is evidence that pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, develop an understanding of how the world around them can be expressed through their imaginative use of sound, representation and visual imagery. Pupils show a clear enjoyment of the active participation each of the arts demands of them. They appreciate that the arts are often a means of celebrating the diversity of backgrounds of people living locally and further afield. However, the school understands that if teaching is to lead to the highest levels of attainment, each art form has its own discrete areas of learning. Nonetheless, taken together, provision for the arts in the school is good and leads to learning outcomes which are average in art and above average in drama and music.

### **Art**

148. The levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are average. Pupils show good abilities in their art-making in drawing and painting although their knowledge of painters is less well developed and is below national expectations for age. They show good abilities in drawing from secondary sources and manipulating images but their drawing from direct observation of prime sources is not practised to the same degree. The levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 were significantly below national averages in the 1997 examination results but the work in school of the present Year 11 pupils indicates a standard equal to the national average. The attainment of girls is better than that of boys.

149. Rates of progress during Key Stage 3 are now satisfactory but have been badly affected over the past two years by frequent changes of teachers. Rates of progress in Key Stage 4 are good now that pupils are experiencing a period of stability. Portfolios show a good progression in two-dimensional work and towards the end of the key stage work of good quality is produced.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages and pupils show an interest in art and considerable enjoyment in art lessons. At both key stages pupils exhibit some over-dependency on the teacher. Very few are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning and many lack confidence. Study skills are being developed well now that pupils can relate to supportive teachers, but the previous period of instability has resulted in some loss of both confidence and interest in the subject.

150. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and an enthusiasm for it. They use praise well in their dealings with pupils. They set appropriate and challenging tasks. They have high expectations and a good knowledge of pupils' abilities.

151. The art curriculum is at present very narrow. Enriching elements such as print-making, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and photography are not included. Pupils receive only a limited experience of three-dimensional work. The head of department has a good vision for the future development of art in the school. She exhibits good leadership qualities and has the ability and the drive to make a successful department. There has not been a recent review of accommodation, resources, staffing and time provision for art. These features are inadequate if the vision of the department is to be realised.

152. Since the last inspection pupils' expressive attainment has improved but their recording from observation is not as good as that described in 1993. Pupils' use of self-evaluation and assessment are now well in evidence. Departmental planning is now formalised, comprehensive and effective. However, knowledge of the work of other artists remains under-developed, and three-dimensional work is still under-represented.

## **Drama**

153. Levels of attainment in drama are above average at the end of Year 8 and by the end of Key Stage 4 are average. Pupils are unable to follow a course in drama in Year 9 and this break in continuity is one reason for attainment remaining at an average level to the end of Key Stage 4. By the end of Year 8 pupils can use an increasing range of dramatic conventions which help in the exploration of their thoughts and feelings in response to the content of their drama. They are able to use some of the technical language of drama. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results in 1997 continued to be below the national average. However, the work of the current Year 11 is closer to the national average and in practical work pupils are interpreting demanding texts with imagination linked to the authors' intentions. For example, work on 'The Crucible' showed a fine balance between the emotions evoked by fear of witchcraft and the need for control in their portrayal to an audience. Another group working on Willy Russell's 'Blood Brothers' matched humour with adolescent energy. This was also seen in a Year 10 group's work on scenes from 'Grease'. Pupils in a lower set in Year 7 worked to levels which were above average when building characterisation around a community undertaking an expedition to outer space. This large class showed control and maturity that brought coherence to a complex dramatic structure. A challenging Year 8 class were able to manage the potential for dramatic tension in working in pairs as young people making demands upon the patience and house rules of parents.

154. Rates of progress of pupils, including those with special needs, are good at both key stages. On entering the school pupils have a varied experience of drama and their overall level of attainment is average in the subject. By the end of Year 8 they have acquired an understanding

of the nature of drama and its main conventions and forms. They are achieving levels of attainment which are above average. Further progress is limited as pupils do not have the opportunity to put their understanding to further practical expression during Year 9. Good progress is made during Key Stage 4 and pupils become more confident in their knowledge and understanding of a wider range of dramatic contexts. Some are able to apply these successfully in public performance in 'Bugsey Malone'. Pupils are able to draw on conventions learned in earlier years in order to interpret complex texts or tackle demanding improvisations. In GCSE course work pupils show a good understanding of the principles of costume design.

155. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good at both key stages. They are enthusiastic and enjoy drama lessons. They work well together in groups and as a whole class. They are respectful of the work of their classmates and support each other. They combine a naivety of excitement at doing things well with a maturity of understanding of how drama can sometimes be complex and difficult to get right.

156. The quality of teaching is usually good and sometimes very good at both key stages. Drama teaching is confident, energetic and enthusiastic. Teaching employs a variety of methods, flair in presentation and demands concentration throughout lessons which are conducted at a challenging pace. Pupils are given responsibility for developing their own work yet a key strength of the teaching is the skilful intervention designed to extend and challenge their learning. This leads to demanding and successful work. Pupils understand the objectives of lessons and are generally adept at evaluating how successfully these have been achieved.

## **Music**

157. The levels of attainment at the end of both key stages are above average. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can play a variety of instruments, including keyboards and some percussion. A few play a variety of orchestral instruments well. Year 7 successfully compose mood music in groups and are conscious of how to create atmospheric effects using percussion instruments. Year 8 using ideas from African music compose pieces for drums and percussion, which have a good feel for the rhythm and culture. Year 9 compose music in binary form in which their initial ideas are promising. Their competition for composing Christmas Carols shows that they can refine their work as time proceeds. All listen to music, and some are beginning to use musical vocabulary with confidence. When musical terms are not known, they demonstrate understanding by using their own words. They can recognise instrumental sounds easily, and match mood to music with confidence. They follow staff notation well and readily answer questions correctly on the structure of the music. However, very few pupils can recall the names of pieces or composers that they have listened to. Compositions from Year 10 pupils, including pieces for piano and a 'Theme and Variations', are of good quality showing style and imagination. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are performing music confidently, some on more than one instrument. Year 11 can use musical terminology correctly and confidently, but find musical transcription difficult. GCSE results for 1997 were above average in the percentage of passes at grades A\*-C, and at the broader grades A\*-G.

158. Rates of progress for pupils at both key stages are good. In both attainment targets of the National Curriculum, 'Performing and Composing' and 'Listening and Appraising', their knowledge and skills are developing at a good pace. New projects in a broad and interesting curriculum allow them to consolidate and develop these skills regularly, as shown in their ready answers and use of musical terminology. Pupils in Year 8 with special educational needs make good progress in the development of listening skills. They are building a good repertoire of

knowledge and of musical elements and moods. Year 10 pupils have made good progress with discriminating listening skills, comparing and contrasting different performances and versions of the same piece of music. Year 11, although with difficulty, make some progress with musical dictation of rhythm and melody.

159. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They enjoy making music, using keyboards and other instruments. Many can maintain concentration throughout the lesson and although a few find this difficult, they manage to restore their attention as time goes along. Concentration during performances however is quite intense, not only from the performers but also from the listeners. The large audience at the lunch-time recital were on occasions quite spellbound by what they heard. Less able pupils persevere with tasks in lessons. Pupils behave well and very well in extra-curricular activities. They behave responsibly when moving round the room, and when collecting and carrying keyboards and other instruments. Relationships between teacher and pupils, and between the pupils themselves are very good. They work together collaboratively in rehearsals and performances of music, accommodating each other to achieve a good ensemble. A few show good initiative in leading composition and performance groups, particularly in Year 7.

160. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good and sometimes very good, and it is never less than satisfactory. The teachers are well qualified for the demands of their job, and have a very secure knowledge of their subjects. They direct lessons with enthusiasm and humour. They plan their lessons well. The pace is usually good, and a range of resources is used confidently in the classroom. They manage pupils well and a relaxed, but effective atmosphere is created during lessons. A variety of teaching methods is used with good effect. The department and the music curriculum are well organised. The teachers have a good policy for formal assessment. However day to day assessment, with clear criteria on how pupils might improve in the short term, is underdeveloped.

161. The music department's accommodation is at present of variable quality. The classrooms are set at some distance from each other, making the transfer of equipment difficult. There are insufficient small practice rooms for small group work and instrumental lessons, and the sound transfer from one to another is often intrusive. At present there is no computer to aid composition and arranging.

162. The school has a good range of extra musical activities for pupils. The choir and band are now well established, and an orchestra is planned for the near future. These and other groups provide good links with the community by performing outside school. Good links have also been created with the local primary schools through the Thursday evening music school held on site. This enables younger children to come to the secondary school, learn an instrument and gain familiarity with the surroundings. It is well supported. The performance of musicals is a regular annual feature. 'Yanomamo', an ecological musical, was performed ably last year. The standard of all these activities is good and the enthusiasm generated is impressive. The lunchtime recitals are a very worthwhile innovation, attracting large audiences and raising the cultural profile of music in the school, as well as enriching the experiences of the pupils involved.

## **Design & technology**

163. The levels of attainment at the end of both key stages are above average. The GCSE results have improved significantly since the last inspection. In 1996 they were significantly higher than the national average and in 1997 they matched it. All pupils at Key Stage 4 are entered for a

technology subject at GCSE. It is a strength of the teaching that a very high percentage of candidates attain passes at GCSE although the same teaching does not challenge the most able, as very few A\* - C grades are obtained. At the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments indicate that 56 per cent of the pupils attain at or above the national expectation level. At both key stages the standards and quality of both graphical and manufactured products are high. Less well developed is pupils' ability to research from original contexts and to extend existing design solutions. The attainment of girls is higher than that of boys. The department is successful in several local community initiatives. For the last four consecutive years the school has gained first prize in the local and regional Young Enterprise Scheme.

164. Rates of progress during both key stages are satisfactory but within a limited range of design and technological experience. Food technology and textiles technology is missing from the curriculum, thus limiting the transfer of skills between different materials. Progress is also limited by the lack of study-skills and their development.

165. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages. They are interested, show responsibility and a good awareness of work-shop rules and health and safety. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are good. Independent learning that would give pupils more autonomy and responsibility for their own learning is not well developed, resulting in some teacher-dependency and a reluctance to take the initiative.

166. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have complementary skills in different specialisms. Some make a more effective link between teaching and learning than others. The best links are made when the context and the brief for the design is supported by good primary source material to analyse or to disassemble. Poorer lessons result when the teacher relies on description and the use of pictures of products to convey the teaching objective.

167. The department is well managed and the head of department has a good vision for the direction of future developments. With the completion of the building works, which will contain a new food technology facility, a fuller curriculum can be offered. It is intended that a teacher of food technology should be appointed in the near future. This is a good department and has the potential to be a very good department.

168. Since the last inspection levels of attainment have improved and GCSE results have been better. However, pupils are still insufficiently challenged, especially those capable of high attainment, most lessons give insufficient opportunity for independent research and the range and style of teaching is still narrow.

## **Geography**

169. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are average. In the teacher assessment the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above is a little higher than the national expectation. The attainment of boys is slightly above that of girls, contrary to the national pattern. Pupils can describe simple land use zones and are beginning to apply these to Preston. They are competent at using atlases to identify areas of dense and sparse population and are able to explain these patterns in terms of positive and negative factors. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are good. Results in the 1997 GCSE examination are in line with the national average and the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*- C has continued to improve. However, the number of pupils obtaining the highest grades is small. The attainment of boys is well above that of the girls who are under-achieving in geography. Pupils understand the role of multi-national

companies in the development of industry in the third world. They can identify and evaluate the issues of exploitation and compensation as in a case study of the Bhopal disaster.

170. Rates of progress in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory. Pupils acquire knowledge and develop their understanding and skills relative to their prior attainment. Higher attainers describe and explain the exploitation of the Amazon rain forest and move on to relate this to the international issue of global warming. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress which is shown in their work on the cause and effects of the earthquake on Los Angeles. Rates of progress in Key Stage 4 are good. A firm foundation is provided by the repetition of topics at both key stages which ensures that earlier work is consolidated and extended. Fieldwork shows that pupils not only collect and illustrate data from the local area but analyse the data using statistical techniques from which they make valid conclusions.

171. Pupils' attitudes to learning are almost uniformly good or better. Lessons have a pleasant atmosphere in which good relationships prevail. Interest and enthusiasm are greatest when pupils are working in pairs or groups to discuss and record their ideas. This is evident in lessons on the earthquake in Kobe and in lessons on conflict in the countryside in which pupils consider the effects of the construction of a reservoir.

172. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. The management and control of pupils is always very good and lessons are well planned. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and use a range of teaching strategies and resources. These match both the lesson objectives and the needs of the pupils. In the best lessons high expectations encourage pupils to develop their skills of independent research through project work using secondary sources. Pupils use information technology to obtain information and desktop publishing to produce work of high quality in the form of leaflets on the Niagara falls and booklets on acid rain. The department has yet to implement fieldwork using primary sources in Key Stage 3. Marking is regular, consistent and frequently informs pupils how to improve their work. Homework is set to complete, reinforce and extend pupils' work.

173. Both leadership and management of the department are very good. There are new procedures for marking and assessment and teaching is monitored. These are enabling progress and raising attainment. Accommodation is adequate and improved by very good displays of pupils' work. Limited resources are effectively and efficiently used. All issues in the previous report have been implemented.

## **History**

174. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average, but the past two years' GCSE examination results were below national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The girls achieved significantly less well than the boys. Teaching had suffered from long term absences which have since been resolved, and those pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 4 are now on the whole attaining standards in their lessons and written work which, although mainly average, are often above average. At both key stages the range and depth of pupils' historical knowledge and understanding are very good, as also is their ability to organise and communicate information. They are less skilled in critical evaluation of evidence, and in applying their knowledge to interpretations of the past.

175. Rates of progress of pupils are good at both key stages, especially by the end of Key Stage 3 where their written presentations of work show better than expected consolidation of knowledge

and understanding for their age. This is particularly so in the high attaining sets where pupils take advantage of the freedom given to choose ways of organising and communicating their findings with increasing skill and flair across the key stage. At both key stages there is a strong line of continuity in their written work across the programmes of study, and in class discussions pupils make good progress in grasping key concepts and seeing connections with what they have already learned. A good example of this was a Year 9 lesson on 'The Birth of the Teenager' in the 1950s where pupils by the end of the lesson were able to make perceptive links between political, social and economic factors in post-war Britain and link them with the emergence of a rebellious youth culture. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 3 following the same National Curriculum programme of study as the other classes. However, some of them have difficulty coping with the demands of the large scale presentations of work done at the end of each topic, and progress is sometimes unsatisfactory because of a lack of alternative teaching resources and strategies. Low attaining pupils choosing the history option in Key Stage 4 make satisfactory or better progress.

176. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in a large majority of lessons are very good, in keeping with the school's high expectations. They enter and leave the classroom in good order, are pleasant and cooperative with their teachers and each other, and settle quickly and intently to whatever task is set. They work well together in groups to investigate questions and reach conclusions, and also take responsibility for their own learning, making independent notes and redrafting finished work with a great deal of pride and effort at both key stages. There is poor behaviour from only a small minority in Key Stage 3 who lack self-control and motivation. There is a very good take-up rate each year among Year 9 pupils for GCSE history, which shows their enjoyment of the subject.

177. The overall quality of teaching is very good at both key stages, with some that is excellent at Key Stage 3. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, requiring them to think, give detailed explanations, and present their work well. They provide a stimulating variety of class activity across both key stages, enabling pupils to use artefacts, film, role play, museum visits and theatre workshops, CD Rom, and group investigations as well as individual presentations to research and display their conclusions. They maintain a vibrant learning environment which celebrates pupils' achievement and inspires their further effort, as for example with Year 10's imaginative collage of ideas creating a circular time zone on their classroom ceiling as an investigation of 'What is history?'. Lessons are well planned and controlled, and pupils' work is regularly and helpfully marked. There is some over-use of lengthy work presentations by pupils at Key Stage 3 which do not include sufficient evidence and sometimes absorb the class for too long on one topic. There is also an over-dependence on information booklets which lack the colour and stimulus of good text books. While the political, social and cultural aspects of history are well covered in the schemes of work, there is insufficient focus given to economic factors. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching of history, especially at Key Stage 3, is exceptionally good. At Key Stage 4 the examination syllabus is rigorously covered and its central themes thoroughly explored by reading and discussion. However, there is an imbalance between consolidating knowledge and developing the skills of applying it in an examination context. Pupils' work is well monitored so that they build a secure knowledge base and complete course work on time.

178. The department is well led and operates efficiently. The teachers plan well together and share good practice, though the distance between their teaching rooms makes it difficult for the head of department to monitor and support her colleagues. Assessment of the National Curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned to ensure even progression in all the skills across the year group, and there is no collection of work samples to act as a yardstick. The department is sufficiently resourced with good quality text books and TV/video facilities in each of its teaching bases, but there are no suitable textbooks and few other resources for low attaining pupils which

slows down their learning. The department hosted a history conference on the use of information technology but has not yet developed ideas arising from it.

### **Information technology**

179. The levels of attainment in information technology at the end of Key Stage 3 are average, and at the end of Key Stage 4 are below average. Information technology is not taught as a separate subject, except in Year 7, and pupils are expected to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of information technology through using it in other subjects. This approach is often unsuccessful. There are, however, exceptions. In Key Stage 3, there is some specific teaching of information technology and in history, for example, pupils are taught how to use a multimedia CD-ROM. At Key Stage 4, those pupils who were entered for the Royal Society of Arts vocational courses in information technology and GCSE business studies achieved above average results in 1997.

180. However, in many lessons in both key stages, there is a lack of teaching of specific information technology skills and knowledge, and this affects levels of attainment. At the end of Key Stage 4, not all pupils are entered for external examinations in information technology or a closely related subject, and of those that are significantly more are girls than boys.

181. Rates of progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 are satisfactory, and at Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory. In both key stages, where pupils are taught to use information technology in the relevant context of a particular subject, they make better progress. For example, in mathematics in Key Stage 3, pupils are taught about mathematical transformations and how to use dynamic geometry software, and make good progress modelling the effects of changing scale factors and other variables. In Key Stage 4, in design technology pupils are taught to use a scanner and a digital camera, and make satisfactory progress in manipulating text and graphics. However, in some lessons in both key stages, pupils mainly consolidate rather than extend their information technology skills, and the rate of progress in the development of their information technology capability is at best satisfactory. Reporting of pupils progress in information technology in reports to parents does not meet statutory requirements. Although pupils' attainment in information technology is reported to parents at the end of Key Stage 3, in other years their progress is not reported.

182. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in both key stages. Pupils are well motivated, and show enthusiasm and concentration when using information technology. Their standard of behaviour is generally above average. When pupils are asked to use computers in small groups, they co-operate and help each other. Those pupils who have their own computers at home sometimes use them to do their homework and otherwise support their school work. For example, special educational needs pupils improve the presentation, spelling and grammar of their written work using wordprocessors.

183. The quality of teachers' classroom management is good in both key stages. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good, and teachers show concern for their pupils' welfare whilst maintaining good discipline. However, information technology is often less well taught than the other subject of which it is a part in a lesson. For example, in Key Stage 3 English, pupils use information technology to improve the presentation of their work but make little progress in developing their information technology capability. Similarly, in Key Stage 4 pupils use information technology to produce GCSE coursework in business studies but make little progress in developing their information technology skills. Therefore, the quality of teaching of

information technology at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and at key Stage 4 unsatisfactory.

184. The information technology curriculum is well coordinated in Key Stage 3 and meets statutory requirements. However, it is not well coordinated in Key Stage 4 and does not meet statutory requirements. As a result, many pupils in Key Stage 4 do not experience sufficient breadth and depth in their coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study, especially in controlling and measuring. There is good technical support, and although most teachers lack formal training and advanced qualifications in information technology, the school has taken steps to develop their information technology skills so that they are sufficiently knowledgeable to teach those aspects that are relevant to them. The number of computers used in the school curriculum is in line with national expectations. However, a high proportion of these are old.

### **Modern foreign languages**

185. Levels of attainment in French and German are above average overall by the end of Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 4 levels of attainment are average in French and above average in German. By the end of Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils achieve levels above expectations in French and German, being able to respond appropriately and with little hesitation to the language being learned. They use a variety of structures and vocabulary, can describe events in the past, present and future express simple opinions and justify their views. They have a good understanding of the way the languages work and are beginning to adapt them to suit their own needs. Listening and reading skills are well developed, pupils identifying the main points and specific detail from texts and from extracts of speech at near normal speed with little need for repetition. However many pupils of average and lower ability, particularly in French, are too dependent upon written prompts to be able to function effectively or independently in dialogues or deal with the unexpected in conversation. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils achieve in line with national averages in French and above in German. Higher attaining pupils in both languages are confident in all four skills : writing is accurate and contains a variety of structures and a wide range of vocabulary and pupils are able to present their views and respond with little hesitation to close questioning in both languages; all pupils are able to identify the main points from extracts of speech at normal speed, average and lower attainers requiring some repetition and higher attainers identifying detail; speaking and writing skills are less secure for pupils of average and lower ability, many being dependent upon written models, substituting words in set phrases to change meaning to take part in dialogues or complete written tasks. In 1997 the percentage of pupils attaining Grade C or better at GCSE was above national averages for French and German; a marked improvement on previous years. but numbers entered for German were much lower than in previous years. Girls achieved better than boys in both languages The percentage attaining Grade G or better in French and German was in line with national averages in 1997, an improvement on previous years in French.

186. Rates of progress are good during both key stages, increasing their understanding and range of vocabulary and structures and developing the skills of writing and listening. During Key Stage 4 middle and lower attainers make satisfactory progress in developing skills, consolidating vocabulary and structures but progress is slower in both key stages for speaking for all pupils because they are not always given sufficient opportunity to practise informally or put their skills to the test in real situations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress gaining in confidence, especially in speaking and listening.

187. Pupils' attitudes are good. They are well behaved, co-operative and concerned to do well. They listen attentively, concentrate on tasks set and, when given the opportunity, pupils work well

in pairs and small groups and are usually mutually supportive. Most are able to use reference materials and bilingual dictionaries effectively.

188. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory or better at both key stages. In almost half of lessons it is good. Teachers have a good command of the languages they teach and the majority of lessons are conducted effectively and often exclusively in French or German; this is effective in developing pupils' listening skills. Control and discipline are good in all classes. Lessons are usually well planned to ensure continuity and progression with appropriate resources and activities and clear presentations of new material. However, the range and variety of activities provided are sometimes limited. In the more effective lessons pupils are given the opportunity to practise new language and structures informally in pairs and small groups but this is usually for rehearsal only, there being little evidence of pupils being given the opportunity to put their skills to the test in real situations, use more than one skill to complete tasks or to use the language creatively in groups. Many activities are teacher led for lengthy periods decreasing the opportunity for individual pupils to participate fully in speaking and listening. Activities are broadly matched to the general ability level within groups but there is little evidence of the needs of most and least able within these groups being sufficiently addressed. Reading resources used with pupils who have special needs are not always adequately adapted to be easily accessible to them. However, teachers monitor individual progress in lessons, giving help and encouragement where necessary. This is effective in achieving high standards and overcoming difficulties.

189. Setting arrangements in Year 7 are inappropriate for modern languages since they presuppose ability in language learning based only on pupils' performance in other subjects. In addition these arrangements reinforce gender stereotyping in the subject which could be difficult to redress later. Several classes are dispersed around the school away from the specialist area. The difficulty in moving appropriate resources restricts the range and variety of learning experiences for the pupils and adversely affects the standards they attain. It makes consistency in teaching strategies as well as monitoring and communication within the department difficult. There are insufficient text books and this results in time being spent by pupils copying lists of vocabulary and structures and in the production of worksheets and photocopies by teachers so that pupils can complete homework tasks. Equipment, including access to information technology facilities, is inadequate for the development of effective groupwork or independent learning strategies. This limits the range and variety of learning experiences which can be provided.

190. Since the last report the department has improved and good progress has been made in implementing a department assessment policy although as yet pupils' target setting is limited and is not directly linked to National Curriculum levels in Key Stage 3. Although the department has excellent information about what pupils understand, know and can do in the four skill areas, this is not explained in sufficient detail in reports to parents. Standards have risen in reading and writing but the range of writing is still limited. The implementation of schemes of work focusing on developing structure has been successful in achieving consistency in teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress is effective in raising standards. However, the progress made has been too slow in implementing the full range of learning experiences recommended by the National Curriculum and in increasing the range and variety of teaching and learning styles. The department's documentation describes the principles by which work should match the needs of pupils of differing ability within teaching groups but this has not yet been implemented and should be developed in order to raise standards further. The department is well led with clear vision and an awareness of departmental needs.

## Physical education

191. Levels of attainment at the end of both key stages are in line with the national average. The attainment of pupils following GCSE physical education examinations are well above average and this reflects the 1997 GCSE examination results. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils perform athletic events with correct technique and many pupils understand the mechanical principles underlying performance. Pupils know the rules and basic tactics of rounders and cricket and play with competence in the basic skills. Pupils know how to warm up but rarely take responsibility for this part of the lesson. In many activities pupils reflect on their own performance and work out how to improve but skills in observing and evaluating the performances of others are weak. At the end of Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils perform the summer games with confidence and a knowledge of the rules and tactics. Most pupils have some experience of planning health related activity as a result of visiting and using fitness training facilities in a local leisure centre. Pupils are less skilled in taking on the role of coach or official and their evaluation skills remain weak. Across both key stages pupils have a good awareness of the need for safety especially when taking part in athletic activities. Pupils taking part in a wide variety of extra-curricular sports perform at a high level and are successful in local competitions.

192. Rates of progress of pupils across both key stages are satisfactory. In around a third of lessons in both key stages pupils make good progress in establishing the correct skills and techniques required for athletics and games. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into physical education lessons and make good progress. Lack of curriculum time in Key Stage 4 restricts progress in improving pupils' ability to adopt the role of coach and official.

193. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in both key stages. Pupils maintain their interest in physical education throughout the school and come to lessons safely prepared in smart school kit. They listen very carefully to instructions and concentrate hard. The majority of pupils enjoy lessons and maintain good levels of physical activity. Many pupils are committed to extra-curricular activities and team sports. Behaviour is good in all lessons and relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good. Pupils co-operate well in practices and in teams but they rarely discuss their work with each other or take responsibility for their learning. Pupils recognise rules in team games and are prepared to play fairly and show good sporting attitudes.

194. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is good and in Key Stage 4 satisfactory. There is no teaching that is unsatisfactory nor is there any that is very good or excellent. All teachers have a good knowledge of the activities which helps them to give useful advice to pupils on how to improve. Lessons are well organised and run smoothly and prompt starts are usually made. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort, performance and behaviour but expectations of observation and evaluation skills are lower. Planning is based on schemes of work which have not recently been reviewed. Learning objectives for lessons are not set out clearly and the full breadth of National Curriculum requirements are not included. Many effective teaching methods are used. Demonstrations are clear and often accompanied by searching questions which not only review knowledge but also develop understanding of skills and techniques in both athletics and games. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own performance and work out improvements but they are rarely asked to observe each other and discuss their performance independently of the teacher. Few opportunities are given to develop personal study in GCSE theory classes. Non-participating pupils often remain uninvolved in the lesson and make little progress. In most lessons resources and time are used well to ensure plenty of practice. Occasionally lesson organisation restricts opportunities for practice. GCSE work is marked regularly but some spellings of important technical terms remain uncorrected.

195. Sound leadership and good organisation help to maintain an ethos seeking high attainment. Although there is sufficient accommodation much of it is in poor condition. The fields are poorly drained and out of use for much of the year and the all-weather area is in poor condition in both very dry and wet weather. Changing areas are in need of refurbishment and many parts of the indoor areas, especially storage rooms, need cleaning. The lack of a specific classroom for GCSE theory work restricts the use that can be made of displays and resources.

196. Since the previous inspection there has been no significant improvement in the attainment of pupils. Teaching standards have been maintained but issues such as the dominance of games in the curriculum remain for the boys and there are still gaps in the variety of teaching approaches used.

### **Vocational courses**

197. The school offers three of the mandatory units of GNVQ Foundation Level in Leisure and Tourism in school and a range of courses for years 10 and 11 at the local college of further education. The school also offers a GCSE in business studies.

198. The leisure and tourism course provides a wide range of different and well constructed assignments, creating a realistic environment for the pupils to work in. These are modestly pitched at first, allowing students to take small steps to accustom themselves to a different style of working. At the conclusion of the two years the students work through large scale assignments, such as the excellent organisation of a Charity Ball held in school last summer. The key skills are thoroughly integrated into the assignments allowing the pupils to see the relevance of being numerate and computer literate and being able to communicate. All the assignments are thoroughly assessed by the teachers, with useful written feedback. However, pupils do not evaluate their own work nor are they involved in self-assessment.

199. The teaching on this course is always good and in many aspects very good. Teachers are very enthusiastic about their course and this is clearly demonstrated in the classroom. Questioning is clear and thorough. Many different strategies are used, all of which are appropriate to a course of this kind. Pupils enjoy working individually and in small groups but feel they are well supported by teachers if this is needed. They answer questions readily, and behaviour and relationships are good. All pupils are achieving a satisfactory pass in the assignments, and the 'hands-on' practical approach is allowing progress to be made.

200. The college of further education is providing a good range of courses, including construction, engineering, and service industries, responding to demand from the school. These are providing experiences beyond the school in a more realistic work-place environment Pupils are learning new and responsible attitudes to work through contact with practitioners in the trades and service industries.

201. The quality of all these courses is good. All have a clear framework to work to and all courses lead to a certificate, whether this is from the college, as in the beauty therapy, or an actual NVQ as in areas of construction. Pupils are learning transferable skills such as having to be responsible near to and while using equipment at high temperatures. The self esteem of many of these pupils is being raised by a realisation that they are succeeding well in the college environment.

202. Grades achieved by pupils in GCSE business studies examinations are well above average. Results in 1997 were well above average for Grades A\* to C and average for A\* to G. The quality of teaching is good and never less than satisfactory. It is supportive and the lessons are clearly structured and planned. Pupils enjoy this subject and concentrate well throughout the lessons, remaining thoughtful and focused. Their behaviour is good, and they enjoy good relationships with the teacher and with each other. Some work in Information Technology is of unsatisfactory quality when pupils are working at Levels 4 or 5, which is below the national expectations. In these circumstances progress is also unsatisfactory.

## PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### Summary of inspection evidence

203. The inspection team consisted of 13 inspectors. During the five days of the inspection 164 hours were spent inspecting 160 lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and talking formally to pupils. There were also observations of assemblies, registrations and tutor periods and a range of extra-curricular activities. All teachers were seen teaching at least once, and most several times. A wide and fully representative range of meetings was held with members of staff and the governing body. Further informal discussions were held with many pupils and staff.

204. A significant and relevant amount of documentation from the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 29 parents prior to the inspection and 265 parents completed a questionnaire ( a 29 percent response) indicating their views of the school.

### 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	915	21	136	110

#### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

##### Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	48.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.87

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	247

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	79.6
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Average teaching group size	KS3	25
	KS4	22

## FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:

1997/1998
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	£
Total income	1,797,955
Total expenditure	1,800,921
Expenditure per pupils	1,961.79
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,689
Balance carried forward to next year	17,723

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

915
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Number of questionnaires returned:

265
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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	14.9	67.9	11.8	5.4	0.0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	28.9	60.5	7.1	2.3	1.2
The school handles complaints from parents well	16.7	55.8	20.7	4.8	2.0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	12.2	62.0	16.3	9.5	0.0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23.4	62.1	6.1	7.6	0.8
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24.2	63.4	7.5	4.5	0.4
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	22.6	60.1	9.8	7.1	0.4
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	15.0	63.9	7.9	10.9	2.3
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	22.2	59.2	14.0	4.2	0.4
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	19.3	52.7	18.5	8.0	1.5
My child(ren) like(s) school	22.6	55.8	12.9	7.2	1.5