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**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 9 OF THE
EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1992**

EDGE END HIGH SCHOOL

Lancashire LEA

Date of Inspection

6 -10 MARCH 1995

**EDGE END HIGH SCHOOL
HIBSON ROAD
NELSON
BB9 0PZ**

School Number : 923/4400

Date of Inspection : 6-10 March 1995

Dr A G Dunn

Registered Inspector : T11116

Date : 13 April 1995

Under OFSTED contract number : 923/S4/0001474E

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1. INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to report on the quality of education provided by the school, the educational standards achieved in the school, whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed efficiently, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school. The findings of the inspection will contribute to the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to the Secretary of State for Education.

1.1 BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1.	Name of School	Edge End High
	Type of School	Comprehensive
	Type of control	County Maintained
	Number of pupils on roll	680
	Age range of pupils	11 to 16
	Name of Headteacher	Mr Martin E Burgess
	School Address, postcode and telephone number	Hibson Road Nelson BB9 0PZ 01282 612872
	Name of appropriate authority	The Governing Body
	Local authority area in which the school is located	Lancashire County Council Local Government Ward - Walverden
	DFE school number	923/4400
	Name of Registered Inspector	Dr A G Dunn
	Date of the inspection	6 - 10 March 1995

1.2 INTAKE OF PUPILS AND THE AREA SERVED BY THE SCHOOL

2. The school predominantly serves parts of the town of Nelson. The majority of the school's pupils were born in England though the majority of their parents were born in Pakistan. Eighty-five per cent of the school population are Asian heritage pupils. The great majority of the pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Approaching 40% of the pupils contribute to the school's eligibility for additional staffing support to take into account the linguistic background of pupils (Section 11 support). The proportion of Asian heritage pupils in each year has risen rapidly over recent years but there are now signs of some stabilisation.

The proportion of pupils in the school from high socio-economic groups is low and one of the two main areas from which pupils come to the school, the Whitefield ward, has a very high level of social disadvantage. In 1993-94 nearly half the pupils at Edge End High School were eligible for a free school meal against 19.6% for the Local Education Authority (LEA) and 17.6% nationally.

The proportion of pupils having non-statemented special needs when they enter the school, measured through tests taken in all high schools in the LEA, is about twice the average for the LEA and is rising. At 1.7%, the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is about average for the LEA.

1.3 SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

3. PUPILS

Number of Pupils in Each Year Group

	Boys	Girls	Total
Year 7	73	45	118
Year 8	79	44	123
Year 9	72	60	132
Year 10	84	71	155
Year 11	86	63	149
Total	394	283	677

Special Educational Needs

Number of pupils having statements of special educational needs 12

Free School Meals

Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals 50.2%

Teachers and Classes

Full-time equivalent teachers	41.7
Pupil:Teacher ratio	16.3:1
Percentage class contact	79.3
Average teaching size	21.4

Teaching time per week

	Hours	Minutes
Key Stage 3	24	30
Key Stage 4	24	30

Pupil Attendance

Percentage attendance figures for each year group for the Governors' Annual Report to parents and for the third week of the term prior to the term of the inspection.

YEAR	ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS	THIRD WEEK IN THE TERM PRIOR TO THE TERM OF THE INSPECTION		
	Unauthorised absence	Actual attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Year 7		91.4	2.7	5.9
Year 8		93.2	6.5	0.3
Year 9		93.1	6.3	0.7
Year 10		92.9	4.9	2.2
Year 11		89.0	8.4	2.6
Overall	0.6	91.9	5.8	2.3

Number of Exclusions in the last 12 months

YEAR	FIXED PERIOD		PERMANENT		NUMBER FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Year 7	2	0	0	0	2	0
Year 8	3	1	0	0	0	0
Year 9	12	1	5	0	16	0
Year 10	7	3	2	0	8	2
Year 11	17	1	2	0	18	1
TOTAL (COLUMNS 1-4)	56					

Public Examination Results

GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS	SCHOOL RESULTS 1993			SCHOOL RESULTS 1994		
	Boys	Girls	All Pupils	Boys	Girls	All Pupils
Number of pupils in Year 11	77	93	170	106	72	178
Percentage of pupils						
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	77.9	82.6	80.6	72.6	76.4	74.2
Achieving 5+ grades A-C	18.2	23.7	21.2	22.6	36.6	25.8
Achieving 5+ grades A-G	71.4	76.3	74.1	67.0	76.4	70.8
Entered for 1+ GCSE	89.6	96.8	93.5	84.0	91.7	87.1
Achieving 1+ grades A-G	87.0	95.7	91.8	83.0	87.5	84.8
Entered for all three subjects EN, MA and SC				54.7	62.5	57.9
Achieving grades A-C				19.8	15.3	18.0
Achieving grades A-G in all of EN, MA and SC				54.7	59.7	56.7

GCSE Examination Results	LEA AREA 1994*			ENGLAND 1994*		
	Boys	Girls	All Pupils	Boys	Girls	All Pupils
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	-	-	-	88.0	90.8	89.3
Achieving 5+ A-C	-	-	42.0	32.0	40.8	36.1
Achieving 5+ A-G	-	-	86.0	83.0	87.1	84.9
Entered for 1+ GCSE	-	-	-	94.7	95.7	95.1
Achieving 1+ grade A-G	-	-	94.0	92.1	93.5	92.8

*These statistics apply to maintained schools

Other qualifications taken by Year 11 students in 1994

Type of Award	Awarding Body	Level	Vocational Area	Entries	Results
DOVE	C & G	Foundation	Mfg and Technical Services	45	42 passes 3 credit
			Health Social Care and Protective Services	45	35 passes 6 credits 3 distinctions

Pupils' routes on leaving the school (secondary stage only)

Percentage of year group:

	School/Further Education	Employment	Training procedure	Other
YEAR 11	67	7	8	18

Financial Information

INCOME (£)	Last full financial year 1993-94 (£)	Current year 1994-95 (£)
Balance brought forward	35,833	40,715
Transitional grant (for GM schools)		
Recurrent income (LMS or AMG, fees)	1,561,056	1,452,567
Specific or special purpose grants for curriculum development	39,133	8,420
TVEI	26,100	17,455
Other income managed by the school; lettings, funds raised etc.	28,142	21,352
TOTAL	<u>1,689,264</u>	<u>1,540,509</u>
EXPENDITURE (£)	Last full financial year	Budget allocation for current year
Teaching staff	1,226,479	1,122,729
Other staff	113,529	118,219
Educational resources	83,093	66,912
Premises costs	153,128	163,345
Curriculum and staff development	7,722	8,420
Other costs	64,598	60,883
TOTAL	<u>1,648,549</u>	<u>1,540,508</u>
Total expenditure per pupil	(£) 2236.84	
Expenditure per pupil on educational resources (£)	12.75	

1.4 RECORD OF THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION

1.The inspection team consisted of 15 inspectors, including a lay inspector without a background in teaching. During the week all or part of 172 lessons were inspected, and a total of over 112 hours was spent in lessons. An appropriate sample of lessons from all National Curriculum subjects and from religious education was visited, with the exception of music, where the absence of a teacher prevented a full view being gained of the standards and quality in the subject. Four assemblies, 24 registration periods and a range of extra-curricular activities were also inspected.

2.All teachers whom it was possible to observe were seen teaching, many several times. Planned discussions were held with 26 members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, some on a number of occasions, and informal discussions took place with many others.

3.Inspectors looked at the work of many pupils. All the available work of a representative sample of three pupils from each year group was inspected. Planned discussions were held with these pupils and also with a group of pupils holding positions of responsibility in the pupil body. Informal discussions were held with many more. The behaviour of pupils was noted before, during and after school time, inside school and in the grounds.

4.A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.

5.Meetings took place with the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and with other representatives of the governing body. Two major contributory primary schools and a receiving tertiary college were visited, as were two local employers who have experience of the school's pupils. Local employers, members of the community and others wrote to the Registered Inspector to offer views on the school.

6.The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 15 parents prior to the Inspection. The team considered 138 responses from parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school.

2. MAIN FINDINGS AND KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

2.1 MAIN FINDINGS

Standards of achievement

7.Pupils achieve broadly in line with their abilities, both in their work in class and in their successes in GCSE examinations. Pupils achieve good GCSE results for their abilities in English. However, the average standards of achievement of pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3 (11 to 14 year olds), are substantially below national expectations and GCSE results are generally below national averages. In 1994, 26% of Year 11 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A-C. This figure was well below national and Lancashire Local Education Authority averages of 41% and 42%, respectively, but represented significant improvement over 1993. Standards of achievement in technology, including information technology, are good, and in some cases are high. In relation to their abilities pupils in general achieve less well at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4 (14 to 16 year olds). There is some underachievement in history at Key Stage 3 and in geography and modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4. In other subjects pupils are broadly achieving appropriately for their abilities, with some good levels of achievement in lessons in science and girls' physical education .

Quality of education provided

8.The great majority of pupils has a very positive attitude to learning and this contributes to the sound and often good progress which they make. There is much sound and good teaching. Sometimes pupils' learning is inhibited by low expectations and lack of challenge and occasionally by lack of motivation. Pupils' standards of achievement are sometimes adversely affected by non-specialist teaching in religious education, geography and history. There is no whole-school marking policy and consequently there is a lack of consistency in practice. Marking does not sufficiently inform future teaching and learning. The school is making strenuous attempts to meet the curriculum needs of pupils after a thorough review. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, though too few pupils experience the creative and expressive arts at Key Stage 4. While some out of school activities are of high quality the provision for such activities is modest. The school has received funding under the Technology

Schools Initiative and has used this to provide accommodation and resources of high quality which are contributing to the high standards achieved by pupils in technology. The school is not yet, however, providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to use information technology across the curriculum. The school's commitment and practices to meet the learning needs of pupils from widely different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are impressive. There is a lack of common practice within and between year groups in the way in which welfare and guidance responsibilities are carried out. Pupils' records are not co-ordinated effectively.

Efficiency

9. In a difficult financial situation, with a falling number of pupils on roll, the quality of financial planning is sound. The headteacher and deputy headteachers provide strong leadership and a clear sense of direction. However, the leadership of faculties and subject areas is of more variable quality and the role of heads of faculties is not yet defined with sufficient precision. Development planning informs the preparation of budgets but sufficient links have not yet been established between priorities and spending, particularly in subject areas. Monitoring and evaluation of provision, standards and quality are not yet sufficiently developed at all levels. Most pupils achieve appropriately and receive a satisfactory quality of education, with expenditure per pupil which is average for a school of this nature. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

10. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. It is an orderly community in which its commitment to recognising the needs of all pupils and its multicultural context are reflected in the positive attitudes and behaviour of the great majority of pupils. Relationships in the school are based on mutual respect and pupils respond well to respect from teachers. The school has been active in developing new strategies to reach out to its communities and the regular community newspaper, produced with the active involvement of pupils, is an initiative of high quality. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory and have a depressing effect on the standards which some pupils achieve. However, the school is aware of the need for improvement in this area and is developing strategies to secure this. The school has made a very positive attempt to secure an act of collective worship which is appropriate for its pupils. Two minutes silence is observed throughout the school each morning and this is an impressive, and in some contexts moving, part of the daily life of the school. Current arrangements have the potential to satisfy legal requirements but more careful planning and professional development are needed if the school is to comply with the requirement to have a daily act of collective worship.

2.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

11. To further raise standards and the quality of education provided, to improve the efficiency with which resources are used and to improve further provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development the school should:-

- raise the expectations of teachers, particularly at Key Stage 3, and provide more challenging learning for pupils;
- develop and implement a school policy for marking;
- improve the co-ordination and effective use of pupil record-keeping;
- review and improve strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of school policies;
- ensure closer links between school development and budgetary planning;
-

improve the quality and effectiveness of middle management;

- increase the levels of attendance and punctuality;
- provide a daily act of collective worship which meets statutory requirements.

3. STANDARDS AND QUALITY

3.1 STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

1. In 1993, 21% of Year 11 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A-C. In 1994, the proportion rose to 26%. These proportions are well below national percentages for maintained schools of 38% in 1993 and 41% for 1994 and are also below Local Education Authority (LEA) figures of 40% and 42% respectively. The improvement in the school's results in 1994 was greater than the national improvement and was made against a trend of declining ability of the intake. Taking into account the abilities of the pupils they achieved appropriately in 1994. The proportion of pupils entered for 5 or more subjects at GCSE fell between 1993 and 1994 and the level of entry for 5 or more GCSEs was very low compared with the national figure (74.2% for the school compared with a national figure of 90.7%, in 1994). The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A*-G also fell in 1994 and is well below the proportion nationally, inevitably, because of the low rate of entry. In English at GCSE pupils have achieved well for their abilities. Results in technology were good for the abilities of the pupils in 1994. Results in European languages have been poor but they have been good in Urdu. In other subjects pupils generally achieve appropriately for their abilities, though the proportion of pupils achieving grades A-C is commonly lower than the national average. Pupils have achieved creditable results in pre-vocational courses offered by the school.

2. Overall, substantially more pupils are achieving below national expectations than above in their classwork and homework. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 3. However, taking into account pupils' abilities, the great majority are achieving appropriately with an appreciable number achieving at higher levels than might be expected. There is some underachievement, particularly at Key Stage 3 and among some less able pupils. Some lower ability pupils achieve well, however.

3. In lessons and in their other work, the great majority of pupils achieve the national expectation, and many achieve above it, in information technology, design and technology, science and girls' physical education. In these subjects the great majority of pupils also achieve appropriately for their abilities and often they achieve levels that are higher than might be expected. Standards of achievement are low, with some underachievement, in history at Key Stage 3, and in geography and in modern foreign languages (except Urdu) at Key Stage 4. There is some low achievement in religious education but pupils are generally achieving appropriately for their abilities. In other subjects and key stages achievement is at or a little below national expectations but on average pupils are achieving appropriately for their abilities.

4. The school is seeking to improve its GCSE results but has not set any specific targets.

5. Pupils' unrehearsed reading aloud is reasonably accurate, fluent and sometimes expressive. The least able pupils and those still insecure in their English read hesitantly. Many pupils do not undertake enough private reading.

6. More able pupils and middle ability pupils are able to write for a range of audiences and purposes at Key Stage 3, though they do not practise drafting and rewriting as much as they should. The range of vocabulary employed is often limited. In some subjects the range of writing required of pupils is narrow and restricts achievement. At Key Stage 4 pupils plan their writing better and the range they employ is wider. The presentation of written work is variable.

7.

The most able pupils are confident and fluent orally at both key stages. Most pupils answer questions satisfactorily and fluently. In groups they contribute ideas and opinions and build on the suggestions of others. Boys have more opportunities than girls to demonstrate competence in speaking as they sometimes dominate discussions. Many pupils are more competent at spoken than written English. The majority of pupils listen well, particularly in listening to a modern foreign language. Some pupils do not listen satisfactorily, either to their peers or the teacher. Some pupils do not fully understand when complex language is employed by some teachers.

8. Pupils' skills in written calculations are satisfactory but their competence in mental calculation is less well developed. Pupils use calculators competently.

9. Most of the pupils have good, and sometimes high, levels of skills in information technology, developed in technology. They have too few opportunities to deploy these skills across the curriculum.

3.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING

10. In over three-quarters of all lessons observed the quality of pupils' learning was sound or better, including over 35% in which there were good features. The situation was similar at both key stages. Almost 25% of lessons had shortcomings in important areas. There were few lessons in which learning was either very good or poor.

11. Good progress in learning was observed in most subjects at both key stages. Good examples seen included in English when pupils negotiated with one another effectively and organised themselves well into groups, with the more able making constructive comments about ways to improve the work. In history, on occasion, pupils willingly volunteered information, contributed to class discussion and were skilful in evaluating and synthesising historical material. In information technology at Key Stage 4 some pupils used sophisticated design and graphics programmes to good effect in refining ideas. Attitudes in design and technology were very positive and there was much interest in the work. There was a good understanding of tasks, which were often initiated by the pupils themselves. Pupils in science were often involved, curious and, at Key Stage 4, worked co-operatively in groups. In modern foreign languages in the more successful lessons pupils were interested, confident and eager to learn.

12. Shortcomings in the quality of learning occurred both within and across subjects. Progress was less than sound when pupils were not sufficiently challenged, where textbook exercises dominated lessons and where teachers failed to provide a range of learning opportunities and materials appropriate to the abilities of individuals or groups. In religious education there were few instances of intellectually challenging exchanges. In modern foreign languages the attitudes of pupils were not always positive. In geography there was some over-dependence upon textbooks. In mathematics there were several lost opportunities to extend pupils fully, especially in the lower sets, and some slowness by pupils to settle down. They were easily distracted in some history lessons.

13. Within information technology lessons pupils are becoming effective learners, are making excellent progress and are developing a high level of competence, both in using hardware and in applying software packages. This expertise is not yet being developed, or pupils' skills enhanced, in other subjects. Only intermittently was information technology seen in use outside the technology area.

14. The school library and its use is currently under review. Recent developments are intended to integrate more fully its use as a resource base for learning.

4. EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

15.The school's financial situation for 1995/96 offers little room for manoeuvre. This is a result of a falling number of pupils on the roll and a reduction in the level of funding delegated by the Local Education Authority (LEA). The school will have to reduce the number of teachers in 1995/96, having already cut it substantially in 1994/95. The school will have expended the balance of about £40,000 which it had at the start of 1994/95 by the end of the financial year though it may have a small surplus. The school is spending a little below national average figures on teaching staff for a school of its size and with its level of special educational needs. This is reflected in teaching loads which are slightly higher than average. The school spends relatively generously on non-teaching staff and this contributes to administrative efficiency and the quality of much of the technician support.

16.The procedures for setting the budget are sound. There is a clear budget cycle and the headteacher produces very clear and detailed briefing documents for governors, which they can readily assimilate. The Governing Body has so far managed a difficult period of contraction generally competently.

17.Priorities in the development plan inform budget setting. However, the urgent need to contract has prevented the creation of a proper development budget. Some development funding is awarded to departments or faculties on the basis of bids which address development priorities but subject plans have not been properly costed in the past. Most of the budget allocations to subjects are made by an appropriate formula, through faculties. Faculty heads do not yet use the range of flexibility available to them in deploying these allocations to subjects and are not aware of the potential of doing so.

18.Resources have been used reasonably efficiently and to good effect. In areas where spending per pupil has been higher than average the result has been good quality provision. The school has received substantial funding through the Technology Schools Initiative and this has been used well to provide excellent accommodation and resources which are contributing to learning of high quality. The school has excellent accommodation for its library but the use made of it by pupils and the quality of the book resources require further development. Time is generally used effectively and is not wasted. There is some non-specialist teaching which is affecting the quality of learning but this is difficult to avoid in the current period of contraction.

19.The latest internal audit report (October 1994) concluded that the governors, headteacher and bursar had demonstrated their commitment to implementing sound financial systems under Local Management of Schools and in operating a local bank account under the LEA scheme. The systems were found to contain many of the controls required for the proper administration of the school budget. Some weaknesses were found in the lack of clear certification of invoices, the lack of separation of responsibilities for billing and the level of financial delegation from the Governing Body to the headteacher. The school is in the process of addressing these issues.

20.Financial control of supply cover costs needs to be improved. The headteacher is reviewing procedures and making it the responsibility of one member of staff.

21.The school has not taken any specific measures to evaluate its cost-effectiveness.

22.Overall, the pupils make sound progress and are generally achieving appropriately for their abilities, the school is providing an adequate quality of education, with some strengths and weaknesses. This is achieved at a cost per pupil which is close to national and LEA average figures for a school with this high, and growing, proportion of pupils with non-statemented special educational needs. Accordingly, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

5. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

5.1 PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

23. The promotion of pupils' personal development is implicit in the aims of the school and in the commitment of governors and senior management. The values and attitudes taught by the school were supported almost without exception by those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspection evidence confirmed the generally high regard in which the school is held and the positive impression made by pupils outside the school. However, the school has not yet made explicit its intentions to foster spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and procedures to ensure progression and continuity across the curriculum are not yet securely in place.

24. The school has attempted to put into place a new collective worship policy that reflects the various faith traditions of its pupils. An act of worship consists of 2 minutes silence at the end of Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons, at the end of the 1 assembly per week per year group or after registration on Friday mornings. It is intended that acts of worship should be consistent with a weekly theme, informed by the PSE content and supported by appropriate teaching materials and resources. The syllabus makes appropriate reference to spiritual and moral concerns and is well planned. Assemblies were generally well-organised; pupils entered and left in an orderly fashion and were well-behaved. In general assemblies offered pupils opportunities to reflect on issues of value and spiritual and moral concerns and to celebrate achievement. They contribute well to the sense of belonging and community which is one of the school's strengths. Conformity to the 2 minute silence is very high and is an impressive feature of the daily life of the school. However, on many occasions the link between PSE content and worship was unclear and pupils were given insufficient guidance on the focus for the worship. The result was a silence which was individual rather than collective. Although the school has made, and is continuing to make, significant efforts to improve its provision in this respect, it is thus currently failing to comply with the requirement to offer a daily Act of Collective Worship to all pupils. Current arrangements have the potential to satisfy statutory requirements but not without a great deal more planning and professional development. There is a need to monitor and evaluate practice and outcomes more closely and to seek specialist advice in developing consistent experiences for pupils.

25. Religious education is taught to all pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 and a growing number are taking the subject to examination level. Religious education makes an important contribution to moral and spiritual development. The courses offer pupils some opportunities to reflect, explore and apply what they learn to their own beliefs, values and practices. However, there is a need to review content and approach in the light of the LEA Agreed Syllabus. Opportunities for moral and spiritual education across the rest of the curriculum are developing. The PSE programme offers pupils a range of experiences to consider and reflect on personal values in a complex and interdependent world and makes explicit the school's aim to promote concern and respect for self and for others. Examples of spiritual and moral development can be found in the English curriculum through, for example, classroom discussion on the care of the elderly, attitudes to divorce and the use of legacies and wills. Aspects of the history and geography curriculum offer pupils opportunities to consider moral issues over time and space.

26. Teachers' concern and respect for their pupils are evident in the generally good quality of relationships throughout the school. The great majority of pupils are polite and respectful. Discussions with pupils confirmed that they understood school rules and general expectations of how they should behave in relation to each other, adults, property and the school environment. Pupils of all ages expressed strong loyalty to the school and support for its rules, procedures and quality of education.

27.

The school provides reasonable opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and exercise initiative. They act as 'receptionists' on a rota basis; there are pupil librarians and group monitors. There is a school council with a representative from each tutor group. Pupils assist at school events and some provide bilingual support for parents and other visitors to the school. Usually they perform these tasks efficiently and enthusiastically. The majority of pupils behave responsibly and maturely and do not abuse the opportunity to stay in school during breaks and at lunch times. A high quality photographic record of the life of the school is produced annually with the support of a team of hard-working pupils. The school newspaper is produced by a group of Year 9 pupils who perform most of the editorial and production tasks - including working with primary school pupils who contribute. A print run of 4000 copies is produced three times a year and the newspaper is self-financing. Quality is very high and the enterprise makes a powerful contribution to community development in the school. Building on these successes, there could be more planned opportunities to increase the level of pupil responsibility.

28. The school's commitment to its local and wider community is demonstrated by a range of activities, many concerned with support for charity. The school raises money for its adopted charity and there are opportunities to discuss issues related to charity and care for others in the PSE programme. Many of the charitable activities arise from the personal initiative of individual or small groups of pupils.

29. The school offers a range of sporting and cultural activities. However, the amount of extra-curricular activity is modest for a school of this size and opportunities in the general area of expressive arts (in particular music and drama) are limited. The school has been successful in acknowledging and valuing the cultural traditions of the communities it serves but more could be done to extend the range of experiences presented to pupils.

30. The school is an orderly community with a strong corporate identity and caring ethos in which pupils' personal development is given a high priority. Building on this strength there is now a need to plan more systematically across the whole curriculum for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

5.2 BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

31. Pupils are generally well mannered and well behaved in both lessons and around the school. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are, in the main, good. Pupils are self-disciplined when using classrooms at lunchtime and are orderly in their movement about the school and when queuing for lunch.

32. In a minority of lessons the level of conversation was not conducive to effective learning and a few pupils were mildly disruptive. This behaviour was most often associated with a lack of pace or challenge in lessons, inappropriate work for some individuals, poor classroom organisation, or sometimes, with teaching by non-specialists. The presence of support staff in a number of lessons made a positive contribution to good order and behaviour through maintaining pupils' motivation and concentration.

33. The school has a policy for rewards and sanctions and pupils understand the clear school rules, code of conduct, classroom expectations and stages in the disciplinary procedure. Generally, classroom teachers are consistent in carrying out their roles of promoting self-discipline and a secure learning environment. At Key Stage 3 a system of commendations and certificates for good work and other achievements is valued by pupils. A detention system operates at classroom teacher and department levels to deal with minor incidents, with a 'headteacher's detention' for persistent offenders. The school should consider reviewing the consistency with which detentions are used by teachers.

34. Bullying has been dealt with as a whole school issue involving all pupils and staff. Incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. The open and supportive environment created by the school encourages pupils to talk about instances of bullying and this has reduced the number of incidents.

35. In 1993/94 the level of permanent exclusions was above the national average. This reflected a period of rigorous application of the school's new code of conduct, as a first step towards the intended goal of reducing the need for permanent exclusions to a very low level, through the creation of a secure, self-disciplined school. The school has had some success in integrating pupils who have been excluded from other schools.

36. Through the considerable efforts of the senior management and many staff, and the co-operation of most pupils, the school functions as an orderly community.

5.3 ATTENDANCE

37. Levels of attendance fluctuate over time and between year groups but are often below 90%, particularly in Year 11. The 1993/94 attendance rate of 87.1% was below LEA and national averages of 91.1 and 90.0% respectively. Unauthorised absence rates also fluctuate, from 0.6% on average during 1993/94 to 4.7% in the first two months of 1995. While it is a core of pupils which contribute significantly towards poor attendance and unauthorised absence, over 40% of all pupils in the first two months of 1995 had less than 90% attendance, with only 10% achieving 100% attendance during this period. There are significant numbers of pupils who are consistently late for the morning session of school. Although poor attendance and poor punctuality are greater at Key Stage 4, they are also very significant at Key Stage 3, particularly in Year 7.

38. Overall attendance figures are adversely affected by the long term unauthorised absence of pupils visiting Pakistan and by the relatively high incidence of authorised absence condoned by parents. This is particularly significant at Key Stage 4, leading to serious difficulties with continuity of learning. In a number of subjects, coursework is not completed because of extended periods of absence and consequently GCSE entry is not possible. The school should continue with the determined efforts it is making to work with parents and the local community so that the adverse affects of poor attendance and punctuality are fully comprehended. There is also room for further development of strategies used within the school, such as competitions between tutor groups and year groups based on good attendance and punctuality.

39. The school has already introduced a number of strategies for improving attendance and punctuality, in keeping with the school policy for attendance. The computerised recording system is efficient and effective and facilitates monitoring through weekly and monthly records. Staff are rigorous in recording attendance at the beginning of each school session and at the beginning of each lesson. Spot checks on attendance are carried out termly. The school is working closely with three local primary schools on a project aimed at improving levels of attendance. Pupils achieving good attendance levels are praised and certificates are awarded for 100% attendance for a full term. Some pupils are encouraged to improve attendance through the Compact initiative.

40. Letters are required from parents to cover the absence of a pupil. Attendance is recorded on the annual report to parents. Persistent offenders are referred to the Education Welfare Officer. During 1993-95 support from the Education Welfare Service has been unsatisfactory and this situation is being reviewed urgently by the Service.

41. The school complies with Circular 11/92. However, the attendance figures given in the school prospectus could be displayed more clearly.

6. SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM AND OTHER CURRICULAR PROVISION

English

42. In 1994, in both English and English Literature, the proportions of pupils who achieved A*-C grades, having been entered for the examinations, were significantly above the national averages for the subjects. This represented an improvement over the results in 1993. However, the school entered a much lower proportion of its Year 11 pupils for the GCSE examinations than most other schools and so the results achieved by the 1993/94 Year 11 as a whole were a little below the national average. All pupils entered for both examinations achieved grades A*-G. It is the school's intention to enter all pupils for GCSE in 1995. Pupils who were entered for GCSE Media Studies achieved creditable results. National Curriculum levels achieved in tests by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 were below national expectations.

43.

Standards of achievement in lessons and in the work examined are wholly satisfactory at Key Stage 4 taking pupils' abilities into account. This is also the case for the great majority of pupils at Key Stage 3. There is some underachievement in a small number of lessons at Key Stage 3, particularly in lower ability sets. This is usually related to lack of challenge. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress.

44. Most pupils contribute well to pair work and to group and class discussions and answer questions satisfactorily and confidently. More able pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to argue a point of view and justify opinions; some make extended contributions to class discussions. Pupils at both key stages plan and participate in presentations for class groups and for wider audiences. Class texts, including non-literary material, are read, on the whole, with understanding. Most pupils read aloud accurately, usually fluently, and sometimes with expression. The range of written tasks which pupils do based on their reading, particularly at Key Stage 4, indicates understanding, enjoyment and a variety of responses to texts, including pre-twentieth century literature. Very little material is used from other cultures. Pupils of all ages, but particularly at Key Stage 4, use close reading skills effectively. There is limited enthusiasm for private reading, particularly amongst lower-attaining pupils; this is an identified area for development. More able pupils write competently in a variety of forms and styles including narrative, letters, poems, play scripts, books for younger children, reviews and reports. The most able at Key Stage 4 produce detailed, mature assignments; these pupils make significant changes to their work during drafting, although information technology is under-used in this context. The least able pupils struggle to write short, coherent pieces. The school newspaper, produced termly, provides a real audience and purpose for pupils' writing.

45. The great majority of pupils are attentive and eager to learn. In the best lessons they are enthusiastic, contribute actively to discussion, produce lively work and make good progress. In some of these lessons pupils are actively involved in self and peer evaluation. There are very occasional signs of disaffection but most pupils make gains in learning as a result of positive attitudes and good relationships.

46. Most lessons are sound, often having good features and are well prepared. The best are characterised by an appropriate range of activities, good pace and timing, warm and purposeful relationships and high expectations. In the few less successful lessons there was an over-dependence on a limited range of tasks and activities and very little opportunity for pupil involvement.

47. The department is well established and hard working. At present it lacks a clearly defined scheme of work at both key stages which would underpin its good classroom practice, support teachers' efforts to provide work appropriate to pupils' different needs according to their ages and abilities and would help to ensure that assessment was used appropriately.

Mathematics

48. In the 1994 GCSE examinations, 41% of pupils entered achieved grades A*-C and 96% achieved grades A*-G. These results were below national and local comparisons since only 68% of last year's Year 11 pupils entered for the examination compared to almost 92% nationally. However, the school's results for 1994 were an improvement over 1993. The school intends to enter a greater proportion of Year 11 pupils for GCSE mathematics in 1995. At both key stages most pupils achieve appropriately for their abilities, although there is some underachievement in lower sets at Key Stage 3.

49. Pupils are usually attentive and go to lessons prepared to work. Too frequently their interest is not engaged and no clear guidance is given to them of the purposes behind the teaching. In only 45% of lessons at Key Stage 3 and 64% of lessons at Key Stage 4 was the quality of teaching sound or good and there were few examples of good and very good lessons. Frequently lessons lacked clear aims. The pace was too slow and there was too little challenge. More could be done to involve pupils in the practical aspects of mathematics and engage pupils in group work. Only when using computers were pupils seen to develop as independent learners. However, there were good relationships between teachers and pupils.

50. The faculty provides smaller sets for less able pupils, but a coherent approach to raising the standards of achievement of such pupils is lacking. Provision is made for pupils who want to receive extra support at lunchtimes and after school.

51. The range of mathematics taught to the pupils complies with National Curriculum requirements. Due emphasis

is given to each of the five attainment targets. Number is taught with adequate attention paid to arithmetical processes. More could be done, however, to raise pupils' competence in mental and pencil and paper calculations. Pupils work quickly and confidently with calculators.

52. The management and administration of the faculty are satisfactory. There is a full range of documentation but it lacks sufficient detail to offer good guidance. The four main teachers of mathematics, each of whom has an appropriate mathematics teaching qualification, co-operate on a daily basis and have a real concern for the welfare and progress of the pupils. There are other teachers who work for some of the time in the faculty who would benefit from having easier access to resources and professional support.

Science

53. The standards of achievement seen in science lessons and in examinations of pupils' work during the inspection were mostly at, and often above, national expectations at both key stages. Nearly all pupils achieved appropriately and often they achieved higher standards than might be expected. These standards have not been reflected in recent GCSE results. In 1993, GCSE results for science (double award) were significantly below the national average with only 23.3% of the pupils entered achieving A-C grades. In 1994, results were again significantly below the national average, with 24.7% of Year 11 pupils achieving grades A*-C. In 1994, some of the more able pupils also took separate sciences at GCSE. Forty-three per cent of the entry to biology gained A*-C passes, 36% achieved A*-C grades in chemistry and 29% gained A*-C grades in physics. Land Surveying is offered as an optional GCSE subject by the Science Faculty. In 1993, 50% of the entry achieved A-C grades. In 1994, 31% gained A*-C grades.

54. The quality of teaching and learning in science subjects show many good features. There is full coverage of science in the National Curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4. The present complement of six full time members of staff ensures that the different areas of biology, chemistry, physics and land surveying are thoroughly supported. Rotation of classes between various members of staff ensures that as different topics are introduced and covered, the content of the lesson matches the specialist subject of the teacher in Year 9 and for most GCSE classes at Key Stage 4. All lessons are well planned. Other good features incorporated in the teaching of science include skilful questioning of pupils, opportunity and encouragement for them to think scientifically and a balance between practical demonstration by the teacher and well managed experimental work by the pupils. Pupils in the upper and middle ability sets co-operate in small groups to complete these experiments and practical tasks. However, some observed lessons lacked sufficient pace and detail to challenge the most able pupils. The quality of marking of pupils' work is variable. There are some very good examples where spelling mistakes and factual inaccuracies are corrected. In other instances, marking is superficial with lack of diagnostic comment.

55. The faculty fully integrates pupils with special educational needs into the mainstream science curriculum. Very effective support is provided by additional staff in some lessons. Pupils benefit from this arrangement.

56. The specialist teaching accommodation of the Science Faculty consists of six laboratories. One of these will benefit from a refurbishment of furniture and fittings in the near future. The majority of the other laboratories are in a poor condition and are not conducive for either effective teaching or learning. The Science Faculty is very efficiently supported by one full-time science technician. Although the Science Faculty is adequately equipped with apparatus and chemicals, suitable text-books to support pupils learning, especially in the GCSE co-ordinated science course, are not available. This lack of published material fails to promote research and original writing skills and does not help revision. Such a poor level of support is a contributory factor to the below average achievement in public examinations.

Technology

Design and Technology

57. At Key Stage 3, pupils' standards of achievement in design and technology (D&T) are mostly satisfactory, with some good standards in work with construction materials. Work in food is generally less good, with some tasks not being sufficiently demanding for the age of the pupils. At Key Stage 4, standards are generally better, with some high-quality work in electronics which is significantly better than the average for pupils of this age. GCSE results have improved over the last two years and are above the national average for A*-C grades.

58. The majority of pupils at both key stages are achieving at least appropriately for their abilities and many are achieving beyond expectation, though some more able pupils at Key Stage 3 could be extended even further. Pupils of lower ability and with special educational needs are achieving particularly well.

59. At both Key Stages, attitudes to learning are positive, pupils are interested in the subject and want to do well. Pupils show confidence in discussing their work. Pupils of both sexes work well together and are willing to share experience and solve problems collectively. Progress is generally good, with few instances of lack of concentration. There is a good balance of work across the attainment targets for design and technology, with particularly good use of modelling to develop ideas, though more emphasis could be given to evaluation to aid learning in food lessons.

60. At both key stages, teaching is at least satisfactory and high standards are set in both design and manufacturing. Lessons are always well planned, with good use of information technology incorporated into the work. Relationships with pupils are excellent and progression is effectively planned throughout the well managed faculty.

61. Following from the successful Technology Schools Initiative bid, the school has made good use of the money to enhance the facilities and resources. It is in a strong position to move forward to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum Orders and has most of the requirements already in place. The faculty now needs a more detailed development plan to enhance resources further, particularly in the business studies and textiles areas.

Information Technology

62. At both Key Stages, the achievement of pupils in information technology is at least satisfactory in relation to their age and sometimes outstandingly good in the field of graphics and computer-aided design. The majority of pupils are achieving standards that match their ability and some are achieving well beyond expectations.

63. Standards of information technology within design and technology lessons are generally good where information technology is often used for information gathering and presentation as well as developing design ideas. Standards of information technology within business studies are not as high as they might be because of limitations of the hardware and software. The application of information technology in subject areas across the curriculum is presently making little contribution to pupils' achievements in information technology.

64. GCSE results in Computer Studies have been very good for A*-C grades and significantly above the national average for the last two years, though the course is no longer offered. Results in business studies are near to the national average.

65.

At Key Stage 3, pupils' learning was variable. It ranged from very good where pupils were concentrating on the task and using modern software and hardware to less than satisfactory when some pupils lost concentration. Learning is better at Key Stage 4 and often outstandingly good, with many pupils making excellent progress and showing maturity and fluency in the use of sophisticated design and graphics programmes. At both Key Stages, pupils show willingness to support each other's learning and the majority of pupils show good understanding of the capabilities of software to perform the actions that they require. There is good use of information technology to support learning within the food and textiles aspects of technology where it is also used to help pupils who have limited capability in English.

66. Overall, pupils are well supported in their learning by teachers who collectively have a wide range of information technology skills. The teaching and learning also benefits from the services of a full-time technician.

67. The school has a large number of computers and peripheral devices. These include computer controlled machines for manufacturing, many of which are a result of funding through the Technology Schools Initiative. The school has made good use of this funding and it is directly contributing to the standards of achievement and quality of learning. To ensure that this strong position is maintained, the school should plan in detail for the progressive replacement of equipment as it becomes outdated and should particularly plan to enhance the facilities within the business studies area.

68. Initiatives by the information technology co-ordinator to develop information technology in subjects across the curriculum have had limited success and the support of senior management is needed for further progress to be made.

History

69. Standards of achievement are variable. At Key Stage 3 some pupils reach standards that are appropriate for their age but many underachieve. Achievement is better at Key Stage 4. When their abilities are taken into account the majority of pupils reach standards that are at least appropriate, and in some cases better than might be expected. Where achievement is good pupils are able to recall previous learning and apply it to new situations. The most able are generally secure in their understanding of historical ideas and language and show an appreciation of the importance of evidence and the differences between primary and secondary sources. However, a minority of pupils do not achieve as well as they might and have a very insecure knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is often associated with lower quality teaching and learning. Most pupils at Key Stage 4 cope well with the demands of the GCSE course and are able to present reasoned accounts of aspects of 18th and 19th century British social and economic history. For a small number of pupils, however, this course is too demanding. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress but there is a need to improve achievement at Key Stage 3, particularly in the lower-attaining groups.

70. Standards of presentation vary but are often good, with some examples of careful and thoughtful work. Opportunities for extended writing are limited. Standards of reading, listening and speaking are usually adequate for the tasks set.

71. Standards of achievement in public examinations have varied over recent years. In 1994, 28% of pupils entered obtained Grades A*-C, which is much lower than the national average. In 1993 45% obtained A-C grades and the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grade was good. In general boys and girls achieve equally well in history.

72.

The quality of teaching and learning was sound or better in the majority of lessons. Teaching and learning were better at Key Stage 4. The best learning was characterised by sustained and well-motivated pupil behaviour. Pupils work independently and co-operatively; they listen to each other and to their teachers and make clear progress in their understanding and in their ability to investigate, analyse and present reasoned accounts. Pupils are willing to ask questions and volunteer information. Older pupils have the confidence to listen, argue, reason and challenge within a secure and supportive environment in which they can learn and practise the skills of the historian. This quality is enhanced by teaching which usually has good features, and is occasionally outstanding, with clear objectives, high expectations and the use of stimulating, varied and challenging activities and resources. However, in a significant number of lessons teaching and learning had important shortcomings. In these lessons pupils were slow to settle and easily distracted, learning tasks were too undemanding and teacher expectations too low. Opportunities to consolidate learning were missed and some teachers were insecure in their subject knowledge.

73. Schemes of work and assessment practices have been developed which meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Resources for learning in history are generally good but there will be a continuing need to increase the range and quantity in response to the revised history National Curriculum, the demands of GCSE and to meet the needs of the full ability range. Provision for information technology in history is under-developed.

74. History is taught by 8 teachers, only two of whom are specialists. Non-specialist teaching occurs at both Key Stages and is a consequence of the recent departure of one teacher and the staffing and financial constraints under which the school currently operates. The Head of Department has worked hard to provide non-specialist teachers with good quality learning resources and detailed lesson guidance. Management of the subject is efficient. In general, however, non-specialist teaching is less effective in generating good standards of achievement and the uncertainties over future staffing of the subject limit the opportunities for collaborative curriculum development and forward planning.

Geography

75. Standards of achievement at both key stages largely reflect the ages and the ability profile of the pupils. In lessons, pupils demonstrated their understanding of concepts such as the factors affecting population growth and land use changes in cities and they developed geographical skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well where appropriate teaching materials were available and support teachers were used effectively. Most pupils expressed their knowledge and understanding to a generally sound level. Number is used in a range of contexts, although there was little evidence of the use of information technology. At Key Stage 4 in particular, the pace and challenge of classroom activities failed to fully engage all abilities, especially the more able. Although the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades at GCSE is below LEA and national averages, there has been an improvement in performance in recent years.

76. The quality of pupils' learning was mostly sound at Key Stage 3 and in half the lessons at Key Stage 4. There were no lessons at either key stage in which learning was more than sound. The learning had shortcomings in important areas in several lessons observed. In the better lessons pupils were responsive, involved and spoke well in discussion. There was a clear appreciation of the geographical knowledge, understanding and skills being developed. Good quality research skills were being developed through GCSE coursework. In the lessons where learning had shortcomings there was a lack of pace and of challenge for the more able, or pupils were too dependent on the teacher.

77. The quality of teaching was variable. Where there were shortcomings, opportunities were lost to extend pupils across the ability range. Serious consideration should be given to the training of teachers of geography in developing strategies which engage the rich resources available to motivate and to provide enjoyable experiences. Greater consistency is also required in the marking of pupils' work and in the use of written comments to promote learning further.

78.

Good planning documents are being developed by the department which promote consistency and provide a sound basis for future planning. These should be further refined to encompass the important contribution that geography makes to economic understanding, to the environment and to multicultural education. The developing use by the department of the local area already provides a rich learning experience for many pupils.

Modern Foreign Languages

79.GCSE results in both French and German were significantly below national averages in 1993 and 1994. Few pupils achieved the highest grades. Results in Urdu have been well above LEA averages, even though some candidates enter a year early. Achievements seen in French and Spanish during this inspection were largely at or below national expectations. At Key Stage 3 most pupils performed at or above their potential; at Key Stage 4 a significant minority underachieved.

80.Listening is the best developed skill. At both key stages most pupils, including those with special educational needs, can follow teacher language or taped material at appropriate speed and difficulty. Other pupils can only respond to basic classroom commands. In speaking some more able pupils at Key Stage 3 can take part in simple exchanges without the support of the written word and occasionally manipulate basic elements of grammar; at Key Stage 4 they are able to converse at some length and with enjoyment on a variety of simple topics. Some less able pupils, not solely those with special educational needs, lack confidence when speaking and achieve little worthwhile. Pupils coped adequately with reading on the few occasions that it was observed. By the end of a topic at Key Stage 3 many can write short individual paragraphs; a few can do so using memorised language. Some pupils at Key Stage 4 can also express likes and dislikes, give simple descriptions and write letters. Work in tenses other than the present was seldom demonstrated at Key Stage 3, in speaking or in writing, but some of the ablest pupils at Key Stage 4 can use a good range of tenses, mainly those relating to the past. Levels of presentation and accuracy are frequently poor.

81.Learning was uneven in quality. In the more successful lessons, especially but not only at Key Stage 3, learners were interested, confident and eager to take part. The work was challenging at a level which ensured they made progress. Written tasks were generally appropriate but rarely provide opportunities for memory work or manipulation. In a minority of weaker lessons, particularly those involving sets at Key Stage 4, there was an excess of copying and labelling with not much opportunity to make progress or to use language skills. Many lower ability pupils, in particular, can do more orally than is often asked of them.

82.The quality of teaching was variable, being better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. Most teachers pitched the foreign language at the right level for the ranges of ability within the class; others made too many demands or too few. Many lessons are well planned and have good variety, pace and challenge, sometimes exploiting text books imaginatively. In others expectations are too low and do little to stretch the more able, especially in writing and speaking.

83.Some objectives and policy statements need to be clearer and more consistently put into practice. National Curriculum assessment is quite well developed but everyday marking is inconsistent. The standard of current accommodation does little to encourage good teaching and learning. The use of a variety of temporary staff has had a significant and harmful effect on the progress of some classes.

Art

84. Some pupils at Key Stage 3 are achieving at the national expectation, some are achieving below and a few are well below. When account is taken of their ability most pupils are achieving appropriate levels though some are underachieving. Well observed, analysed and recorded work is uncommon. Technical skills are reasonable. Colour is often well applied but too frequently it is used without subtlety. At Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils are achieving at the national expectation and most are achieving appropriate levels for their abilities. Though standards vary the best record quite accurately from direct observation and handle two dimensional media quite well. Most pupils are acquiring an understanding of the formal elements of art, craft and design. GCSE results in 1994 were at the national average, with 50% of pupils entered achieving A*-C grades. Pupils with special educational needs are generally achieving appropriately and, on occasion, quite well.

85. In the majority of lessons observed the quality of learning was sound or better though in some at Key Stage 3 there were shortcomings in important areas. Overall gains in learning were better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very positive. Most work with commitment and good levels of concentration. When required to do so they work co-operatively.

86. The majority of teaching was sound and some had good features. Only exceptionally were there shortcomings. All lessons were typified by clear explanations and constructive criticism. Planning is thorough but the overall programme lacks both breadth and balance and tasks undertaken do not always build on previous work or take sufficient account of previous achievement. At present the limited range of media and techniques being explored and the often narrow application of them tends to restrict gains in learning. At Key Stage 3 some pupils were undertaking tasks for which they lacked the basic skills. The department should give more thought to how essential basic skills can be taught more systematically and at an earlier stage and offer a more structured programme which ensures progression. Individual lessons are well paced, feedback is given regularly and, on the whole, relationships are relaxed, caring and based on respect. Expectations of behaviour are high but expectations of performance could be higher.

87. There are a number of important areas of the National Curriculum which are not being addressed through the scheme of work. The department should broaden the range of media to which pupils are given access, ensure that pupils work in both two and three-dimensions and provide opportunities for pupils to apply information technology in art. There is a shortage of materials available to assist pupils to study the arts and crafts of other cultures, particularly non-western cultures.

Music

88. During the inspection the full-time music teacher was absent through illness and only two lessons were observed - both taught by non-specialist teachers. On the available evidence it is not possible to make sound and valid judgements relating to standards of achievement, quality of learning and quality of teaching at Key Stage 3.

89. In recent years no candidates have been entered for GCSE examinations and there is currently no opportunity for pupils to study music at Key Stage 4.

90. At the present time, there are no opportunities for pupils to extend their music-making through instrumental tuition or extra-curricular ensembles.

91. There is some cause for concern in some aspects of the management of the department. The departmental development plan is a scant document lacking details of strategies or of costs involved. There are no written policies or statements relating to Equal Opportunities or Special Educational Needs. Non-specialist teachers in the department receive little support and guidance in planning an appropriate curriculum.

92.

The Scheme of Work is considerably underdeveloped, with no detailed planning for Year 9. Whilst it basically responds to the requirements of the National Curriculum, it does not fully address the needs of pupils within the school. For example, there is no account taken of pupils' musical skills and knowledge which have been developed during their primary years and there is no detailed planning relating to the needs of the less able. The recent acquisition of guitars has extended opportunities to develop further the performing skills of some pupils.

93.The department is adequately resourced to be able to teach the National Curriculum, but an increase in the number of guitars - to allow one per pupil in all teaching groups - would be beneficial. There is no computer available for use in the department.

Physical Education

94.Standards of achievement in physical education are mixed, with girls often achieving higher standards in relation to their abilities than boys. Results at GCSE have been below national averages for the small number of pupils taking the subject in 1993 and 1994.

95.Performance levels are generally sound, both in relation to national expectations and the pupils' own abilities, at both key stages. The responses to the subject depend upon the motivational levels of the pupils and their attitudes, which are more positive among the girls than the boys. High standards of behaviour, involvement and presentation are evident among the girls, whereas the commitment among some of the boys is less secure.

96.All groups of pupils showed confidence in themselves and in their capabilities, and most worked with enthusiasm. All showed an understanding of basic principles and had practical skills which could be applied in challenging situations. When games were being played concepts of fair play were understood and rules obeyed.

97.The quality of teaching varied, the best being excellent, conducted with skill and sensitivity and allowing for individual progress in safe but challenging environments. Where teaching was less successful it lacked organisation and direction, as was the case with some boys' physical education.

98.Although physical education comprises a single department, the activities of the girls and boys within it are conducted mainly separately, with occasional mixed groups occurring for specific activities at Key Stage 4. The organisation, planning, development and delivery of the curriculum is much stronger for the girls than for the boys and commitment to both long and short-term planning needs to be undertaken to redress the balance. There is an absence of specific policies and of a range of documentation which give cause for additional concern about the leadership of the subject.

99.The inside accommodation is poor. A coherent policy and an alternative programme for bad weather provision, should outdoor activity not be possible, are needed to avoid adversely affecting the delivery of programmes of study.

100.A programme of extra-curricular activities does exist but, at present, it does not attract a sufficiently high level of commitment from the pupils. The exceptions to this are cricket, where the school has won honours in the County, and basketball which has also enjoyed a measure of success.

Religious Education

101.GCSE results in religious studies in 1993 and 1994 have been significantly below national average figures for grades A-C but appropriate for pupils' abilities.

102.In the lessons observed through both key stages, pupil achievement is mostly below expectation when measured against the demands of the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education (RE). When achievement is set against measured ability, pupils at both key stages mainly achieve to appropriate levels. At Key Stage 3 some pupils achieve at a level which is high given their ability with others significantly underachieving. At Key Stage 4 achievement is mostly at an appropriate level with a minority underachieving.

103.A positive aspect of lessons at Key Stage 3 is the interest and enthusiasm pupils bring to learning. In the best lessons pupils are committed learners and reveal unfulfilled potential. Planning is needed to ensure that all pupils

are consistently fully challenged. It is also important that progression of learning is secured in the religions which are the focus of study. The programme of religious education required by the Local Education Authority Agreed Syllabus will correct this shortcoming as the school implements it in the near future.

104. Although the quality of pupils' learning is mostly sound in all years, it is never more than sound and there are some significant shortcomings. Where learning was sound it was often so in respect of general learning skills rather than aspects which are specific to religious education. In one Year 8 lesson subject specific learning occurred when pupils investigated the life of a religious leader. They demonstrated an ability to draw on knowledge gained in previous teaching to inform their thinking and were able to handle the concepts of 'temptation' and 'sacrifice'. Lesson and course planning does not at present generally allow pupils to make adequate gains in skills, knowledge and understanding across the full range of religious education.

105. The teaching of religious education is mainly carried out by staff lacking a specialist qualification to do so. This mismatch between qualifications and the subject being taught is having an adverse effect on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

106. The department is sensitive to the presence of pupils with special educational needs and offers them access to the full taught programme. The commitment to learning shown by lower ability pupils on GCSE courses is to be applauded. Further work is necessary in considering how best to support the learning of such pupils with appropriate resources.

107. The school meets statutory requirements by teaching religious education to all pupils.

7. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FINDINGS

7.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING

108. In over 70% of lessons observed the quality of teaching was sound or better, and in nearly 40% it had some or many good features. There were some differences in quality between the key stages and across and within subjects. At Key Stage 4 there were more lessons with good features than at Key Stage 3 and almost 10% of lessons had some outstanding features. At Key Stage 3, where there were sometimes low expectations by teachers, nearly one third of lessons had important shortcomings including nearly 10% which had major shortcomings.

109. The better lessons seen, which were a significant proportion, were characterised by sound planning, efficient organisation of time and materials, the implementation of approaches which catered for all abilities and the use of teaching strategies that involved and motivated pupils. Good examples were seen in art when there were clear explanations and demonstrations of techniques and processes, constructive criticism pitched at the appropriate level. In science, skilful questioning was evident and a good balance achieved between demonstration and well-managed experimental work by pupils. At Key Stage 4, pupils were encouraged to think scientifically and to evaluate their results. Continuity from previous learning was noted in religious education and controversial issues that arose were handled objectively and sensitively. In English and girls' physical education objectives were made clear, enthusiasm was communicated and pupils' contributions were valued. There were instances in modern foreign languages where the use of the foreign language was at a challenging level and oral sessions stretched individuals, whilst in history challenging and skilful teacher exposition and explanation motivated and challenged pupils; teacher expectation was high and humour used to good effect. In design and technology a high standard of design and construction was set and there was excellent use of information technology to support investigation and presentation. This led to some high levels of achievement. In information technology pupils are well supported by teachers who have a wide range of information technology skills.

110.

In the lessons where there were shortcomings, non-specialist teaching by both supply teachers and other members of staff was a significant factor. Some teachers in history, religious education and geography had an insecure grasp of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the subjects. In mathematics the pace of lessons was often too slow and challenge was lacking. Weaker lessons in modern foreign languages suffered from over-dependence upon textbooks and the language being studied was not heard. Too many boys' physical education lessons lacked organisation and direction. All these shortcomings affected pupils' learning and led to their achievement being lower than it might have been.

111.The school has recently undergone dramatic staffing changes. The contraction in the number of teachers following a drop in the number of pupils attending the school has placed a great strain upon the ability to match subject and staff expertise and qualification. This difficulty has been increased by a number of teacher absences. On the whole teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and most classes have teachers with the relevant experience and expertise. However, further contraction and staff reduction will inevitably place constraints upon the ability of senior managers to always deploy teachers with the relevant subject background and knowledge.

7.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

112.There is a school policy for assessment and reporting to parents and clear aims and guidance for staff. Each faculty is required to have a policy for assessment and recording which conforms with the school's published policy. The quality of faculty and department policies, and the effectiveness of their procedures for assessment and recording, vary considerably. While there are examples of good practice by some teachers in some subjects, there is an urgent need for the school to review its policies and procedures. Such a review will ensure that the school is able to comply fully with the requirements for recording pupil progress against the National Curriculum. There is a particular need for all faculties to contribute to the recording of pupils' progress in information technology across the curriculum. An effective monitoring system is needed to ensure consistently high quality in the future.

113.There is no whole school marking policy. Faculties are required to have their own policies but the quality of those policies and the effectiveness of the procedures for implementing them are extremely variable. There is a lack of consistent practice between faculties and departments, and often within departments. Marking is regular and up-to-date and both pupils and teachers are positive about the effectiveness of verbal feedback on student work and achievement. However, in order to help to raise further the standard of pupils' achievements in all subjects, there is a need for the school to achieve consistency in the grading system, in responses to errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation and in the writing of constructive comments which will help pupils improve standards.

114.The school's system for awarding commendations and certificates for good work and achievement works well, particularly at Key Stage 3. Where they are used regularly and to recognise good quality work they are successful in motivating pupils and contributing to improving standards. The school should consider giving further guidance to assist a more consistent use of the system by all teachers.

115.There is an effective and manageable system of half-yearly reports to parents, providing information on effort and progress. An annual, end of year, report includes information on attendance, punctuality, information on the aspects studied in each subject, progress made and the level achieved. These reports are derived from a statement bank and are currently inconsistent across subjects in terms of detail and focus. The school has recognised the need to improve the system further and to make it less impersonal. Where appropriate parents are offered the services of an interpreter to assist them in understanding the report.

116.Each primary school provides information on Year 6 pupils using an LEA primary transfer document. The school uses the personal information to inform provision for welfare and guidance but the information on pupil achievement is not well used. Year 6 pupils are tested in aspects of English and mathematics to inform the school's procedures for setting. The school may wish to consider working with the primary schools to look at how best to use the increasing information on National Curriculum assessment to inform continuity and progression between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

117.The school analyses assessment data and is part of an LEA Value Added Project. However, this information is not yet being used to inform decisions on how to raise levels of achievement either generally or within specific subjects.

7.3 THE CURRICULUM

(i) Quality and range

118. The school generally provides a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a clearly defined three year development plan for the curriculum. It stresses that curriculum planning has at its heart making it possible for each pupil to achieve “the optimum of which each is capable”. Registration and a programme for personal and social education (PSE) take place on the first 30 minutes of the day on 3 days per week followed by two minutes silence which is intended to fulfil the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship. These 30 minute sessions are deemed by the school to be taught time but the registration and worship elements should not be included within this calculation. There are 23 one hour sessions for subject teaching with an additional half hour of PSE at the end of one day. The length of the taught week is thus about 24½ hours at each key stage and is adequate. Pre-vocational (GNVQ) courses are offered to all pupils at Key Stage 4 and build upon the existing strengths in the school, including technology. In this way the school has moved to meet the needs of its changing clientele and to meet the targets in its development plan.

119. At Key Stage 3, all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught and in this respect statutory requirements are met. However, the requirements of the National Curriculum are not being fully met in all subjects. In English, the absence of an overall planning document and detailed units of work fails to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum by all pupils, especially those in the lower sets. In art, pupils use a limited range of media, do not undertake sufficient 3-dimensional work and lack opportunities to use information technology.

120. In Year 7 all pupils learn a modern European foreign language and from Year 8 may choose to study another or Urdu instead.

121. At Key Stage 4, all pupils study an appropriate core of the subjects, including religious education and physical education and the arrangements meet statutory requirements. A substantial proportion of pupils take a pre-vocational course which is appropriate to their needs.

122. The school has a curriculum statement which is linked closely to its aims. These aims are clear and are reflected in policy statements from other subjects and aspects of the curriculum. The curriculum places much emphasis upon the core subjects, and all pupils have 3 hours of each per week, with 4 hours for science at Key Stage 4 and all years have 3 hours for technology. In design and technology the range and balance of activity is excellent and exceptionally good use is made of information technology within the technology faculty. This contributes strongly to standards being achieved. The PSE course, which is new, has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the broader curriculum. The stated wish of the school is to ensure that all pupils have a wide range of experiences. Currently, the expressive arts are under-represented, particularly at Key Stage 4 and through extra-curricular activity. They are not as popular as the school would wish, and no longer play a sufficiently prominent part in the life of the school. In general, extra-curricular activities are of good quality, but the number and range are modest. Homework is set regularly and the school makes efforts to support its completion, including the use of diaries. Homework contributes to the standards pupils achieve but could do so more strongly with more systematic monitoring.

123. The governing body has a curriculum committee which is becoming more active, but needs to take further action to ensure it is as well-informed as it needs to be. A careers education and guidance policy is in place and is seen as an integral element of the curriculum. A draft policy for Sex Education has yet to receive final approval by the Governing Body.

(ii) Equality of opportunity

124. The school's commitment to provide equality of opportunity to all its pupils is explicit in its aims and practice. The Governing Body's policy stresses the importance of maximising individual achievement in a secure environment which promotes respect, understanding and harmony. Useful guidelines offer teaching staff opportunities to reflect on professional practice and analyse teaching and learning. However, detailed targets for implementation, associated professional development and evaluation are not yet in place. The school is aware of the need to identify more precisely how the co-ordination and management of equal opportunity is to be developed. Public and other examination results are analysed by gender and ethnicity and there is close monitoring of the composition of teaching groups. GCSE results show that in general girls out-perform boys and that in some subjects traditional gender choices are still in evidence. Ethnic minority pupils in general make satisfactory progress and the most able achieve good examination results. The grouping practices of some subjects lead to significant gender imbalances in some classes. The school needs to examine carefully the impact of these imbalances on self-esteem, motivation and standards of achievement. In some classes in some subjects boys are allowed to dominate classroom discussion. There is a continuing need to monitor the nature and quality of pupil talk to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to refine and extend their skills.

125. Currently 85% of the school population is from an Asian heritage background; the majority of these pupils are Muslim and many are bilingual. There are about 50% more boys than girls in most years. The school has recognised the need to value and respect the cultural and linguistic heritages of all its pupils and to develop strategies for ensuring functional access to the curriculum and for improving levels of achievement. Much of the provision is of high quality. Support for the English language development of bilingual pupils is generally good. Section 11 teachers provide additional support for newly-arrived pupils and for those experiencing difficulties with the linguistic and conceptual demands of the curriculum. This support is usually of good quality and makes an important contribution to improving standards of achievement. Section 11 staff are able to work in partnership with subject teachers and are beginning to assist in developing resources and strategies to meet the language and learning needs of all pupils. Advisory staff from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Project have provided good quality in-service and support for curriculum development. The school has recognised the central importance of language development for all its pupils and has prioritised language across the curriculum as an initiative for next year.

126. The school functions well as a multicultural institution. Pupils and staff show respect for cultural, religious and ethnic traditions and relationships amongst pupils and between teachers and pupils are normally of good quality. The school is working hard to ensure that the traditions of all its pupils are reflected in its daily life and work and that pupils have a safe and secure learning environment.

127. Provision for teaching about equal opportunities across the curriculum is developing. The taught programme of Personal and Social Education and the themes for assemblies and worship address many of the key issues of equal opportunities in a complex, plural society. This work is complemented by work in, for example, religious education, English, geography and history. However, this provision is uncoordinated. The school has not yet mapped the knowledge, skills and experiences that it regards as important to develop pupils' understanding and awareness.

128. Equal opportunity practice across departments is variable. There are good examples of successful strategies to improve access and enhance achievement in science and technology. However, some departments have not yet made explicit how they intend to monitor pupil groups, achievement and curricular experiences or promote teaching and learning about equal opportunity.

7.4 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

129.The school's documentation on Special Educational Needs (SEN) is being reviewed and developed in response to the Code of Practice. In general this is of good quality and comprehensive. New procedures for Individual Education Plans and pupil referral are being developed and these are based on the guidance offered in the Code of Practice. There is a need for systematic in-service training and professional development for staff to ensure that new procedures are put into place consistently and that best practice is available to all pupils. The new SEN group of faculty representatives has the potential to lead this development. Governors have been given information on the implications of recent legislative changes and there is a governor with specific responsibility for this area who has close and active involvement with pupils with SEN.

130.The budget allocation which the school received in this financial year in recognition of the number of pupils with non-statemented special needs is slightly in excess of £170,000. This reflects the large number of pupils who have difficulties in the basic skills of numeracy and literacy and who are already achieving at the low level on entry to the school. This financial resource is used largely to protect the curriculum and to ensure smaller class sizes than would otherwise be the case. This strategy is only partially successful in that there is some continuing underachievement, mainly at Key Stage 3, often linked to poorer quality teaching and learning. The school is aware of the need to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the support available to SEN pupils across the school. This needs to be accompanied by an examination of whether the current strategy of creating small SEN groups offers the flexibility needed to meet pupils' individual needs. Short-term financial difficulties will, however, impose limitations on the school's flexibility to alter the staffing and support for these pupils.

131.Some 12 pupils currently have statements of Special Educational Need. The Local Education Authority provides additional specialist (outreach) teachers and other staff to help the school meet the requirements of the statements. The technical aspects of the Education Act (1981) are being met. Documentary contributions from outreach teachers are usually informative and of good quality. Internal reporting from departments on pupil progress tends to be more variable and concentrates too much on attitudes and organisational issues. There is only limited evidence of ongoing assessment and diagnosis. More emphasis needs to be given to the development of target-related programmes of study and the introduction of Individual Education Programmes should help in this process.

132.The majority of the teaching time for the SEN co-ordinator and the one other teacher involved in SEN teaching is devoted to the needs of pupils with statements who are withdrawn for additional support. Only 3 hours of in-class support for other SEN pupils are provided from the school's own staffing resources. The role of the SEN co-ordinator in providing advice and support for departments to increase the range of materials and strategies used to support SEN pupils is under-developed.

133.The SEN co-ordinator has regular meetings with outreach staff and those in charge of their deployment. All support staff have timetables indicating target pupils. Section 11 staff have begun to work in partnership with subject colleagues in the revision of resources and teaching and learning strategies. Staffing constraints do not allow outreach staff to work with their target pupils in all lessons or in all lessons in a particular subject area. There is, however, a close match between deployment and the identification of learning need. In general outreach staff are working effectively to promote improved standards.

134.Although the majority of SEN pupils achieve standards at least commensurate with their abilities, in some subjects, particularly in lower sets, standards of achievement and teacher expectations are too low. The quality of departmental policy and practice is variable. Sensitive and appropriate teaching of pupils with special educational needs was seen in most subjects but this was not a feature of all lessons. In some lessons teachers fail to plan adequately for the full range of ability. Practice was well-developed in science and technology and under-developed in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages.

7.5 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

135.The school has a clear set of aims but they do not provide a wholly appropriate direction for the school in its present situation. There is no explicit statement recognising pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum and there is a lack of an adequate technological focus, though technology is, in practice, a strength of the school. The aims would also benefit from a strengthening of the commitment they imply to maximising pupils' potential and to furthering pupils' spiritual development. The school is having considerable success in meeting its aims for the social development of its pupils, helping them to develop a caring attitude for others, encouraging them to develop self control and to behave sensibly and responsibly. The school is currently failing to provide sufficient opportunities through extra-curricular activities for pupils to develop artistic or athletic skills or to develop pupils' creativity in an active, involved way, which are amongst its aims.

136.The Governing Body is fulfilling its legal responsibilities and, through a newly-reorganised committee structure, is beginning to provide strong leadership. The full Governing Body and the Policy and Resources Committee benefit from clearly presented financial information from the headteacher. There is a strong link between the Governing Body and the staff providing support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) through a link governor who works with such pupils in a voluntary capacity on a regular basis. The Curriculum Committee is newly established and has only had a small number of meetings. The Curriculum Committee does not yet have active procedures to ensure that it is sufficiently well-informed to carry out its responsibilities to full effect.

137.The headteacher, ably supported by two deputy headteachers, is providing strong, clear leadership with a positive sense of direction and a clear agenda for improvement. He has taken steps to establish strong links with parents and the community which have produced a positive though limited response. Leadership at middle management level is variable in quality. There are a number of faculties, some comprising a single National Curriculum subject and some containing more than one department. The roles and responsibilities of heads of faculty are not clearly understood and in some respects are not yet defined appropriately. The technology faculty is well-led but the leadership of music and physical education within the humanities faculty give cause for particular concern. Generally, there is not yet sufficient focus by heads of faculty or department on the monitoring of marking and of the setting of homework by teachers and on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Faculties or the subjects within them meet fortnightly and meetings are minuted, though some minutes are not sufficiently informative. The information technology co-ordinator has not yet been effective in establishing sufficient cross-curricular use of information technology and the senior management of the school needs to take a more active role in ensuring that this is implemented. Pastoral leadership has been improved recently with the introduction of regular tutor meetings in each year. These have the potential to contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the pastoral system. However, the roles and responsibilities of year heads and tutors need to be developed further to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

138.A rolling 3-year school development plan, which is a useful tool for improvement, identifies overall priorities and also includes subject plans and priorities. There is a yearly action plan but as yet there have not been action plans for all identified priorities, particularly those for subject departments. Action planning is being fully implemented in 1995-96. Success criteria and monitoring and evaluation procedures in action plans could be made sharper and more easily measurable. Development plans are not fully or consistently costed, though plans do inform spending priorities.

139.The governors and senior management have recently demonstrated the ability to formulate and implement plans very successfully, gaining a large degree of support from staff, pupils and the community. Management is innovative, sensible and balanced.

140.Routine administration, communications and organisation are mostly admirably efficient. Registration is carried out promptly and efficiently. The school prospectus requires redrafting to make it easier for parents to find information.

141.Overall the school is well led by its governing body and senior management. The skills of many middle managers need to be developed further, significantly further in some cases.

7.6 RESOURCES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

(i) Teaching and non-teaching staff

142.The school has 41 full-time teachers, including the headteacher, and two part-time teachers who work the equivalent of 0.7 of a full-time teacher between them. This represents a significant reduction over recent years. In the last 2 years, 10 teachers have left the school, 7.5 of these being in the last year. Only 3 new appointments have been made. This trend is projected to continue for the immediate future as the number of pupils attending the school is estimated to fall from 673 to a projected 630 in August 1995. The school currently has sufficient teachers to deliver its planned curriculum. In January 1994, the pupil-teacher ratio was 14.6:1 and this has now risen to 16.3:1. Larger teaching groups and less preparation time for teachers have been consequences. The contraction is being managed well, however. The school has an experienced staff, virtually all having 10 years or more teaching experience, and it was evident during the inspection that many teachers were coping well with the changes in the school.

143.There is generally a good match of teachers' formal qualifications to the subjects they teach. Some lessons, however, are taught by teachers who have not studied the subject for some years or who lack the required background. A number of long term absences have had discernible effects on quality and standards in certain subjects. There are 10 assistant teachers of religious education, only two of whom have an appropriate qualification; three long absences in modern foreign languages have meant periods of supply cover and this has affected standards, especially at Key Stage 4; in art the range of current expertise will require development; in geography and history non-specialist teaching is affecting quality and standards.

144.Great care will be necessary in the immediate future to ensure quality teaching by teachers with the required subject knowledge, understanding and skills. A well managed staff development and support programme is needed to ensure that where non-specialist teaching cannot be avoided, appropriate updating and re-skilling occurs.

145.A high quality staff handbook has been produced and includes policy statements, essential information about the management and administration of the school and material dealing with the detailed organisation of the school.

146.An appraisal system is in place and the link to staff development is recognised. Emphasis is placed upon both individual and school needs. Funds for INSET have been appropriately allocated, and supplemented by funds set aside for staff cover. A draft pay policy is well documented. A working group on INSET has been established and is the responsibility of a staff development co-ordinator. Its role is important in meeting the challenge of a contracting staff having to deliver an appropriate curriculum.

147.A well-qualified and supportive non-teaching staff provide a high quality of service across the school. A bursar manages the general office and a number of assistants. Three technicians with respective attachments to science, technology and information technology across the school provide excellent support. A site manager, with a full-time assistant, is responsible to the headteacher for the management and administration of the buildings.

148.Despite constraints, deployment of teaching and non-teaching staff is effective and is efficiently managed.

(ii) Resources for learning

149.In general, the school has sufficient, accessible resources to support pupils' learning. There are some areas which are well-resourced but there are a few important shortcomings.

150.

The school has excellent resources for technology, to a large extent as a result of funding received through the Technology Schools Initiative. The school has made good use of this funding and the high quality equipment and advanced software is supporting learning of good quality and some high achievement by pupils. The school has a large number of computers, about twice as many per pupil as the national average. Many are powerful modern systems, but some lack hard disc drives and this inhibits teaching and learning in some lessons in which they are used. The school is establishing a collection of computers with CD-ROM drives in the library and has a growing collection of CD titles. This resource is yet to be brought into effective use. The majority of subjects have access to computers but there is insufficient use made of information technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

151. A large and attractive room houses the library, but the stock of books to support learning is inadequate in many subjects. There is a degree of under-use of the library. The mechanism by which books are selected for purchase for the library requires review.

152. There are adequate supplies of text books and other materials and equipment in most subject areas but there are a small number of important shortages. In science, a lack of suitable books for revision is a contributory factor towards GCSE grades which are lower than they should be. In art there is a shortage of materials to study the arts and crafts of other cultures, particularly non-western cultures and in English there is a lack of literature which reflects cultural diversity.

153. Pupils use dictionaries well in English and calculators well in mathematics.

(iii) Accommodation

154. The quality of accommodation is variable. Significant improvements have been made, especially in technology, where there has been a high standard of refurbishment and where the quality of the accommodation has a positive effect on learning. However, there is significant deterioration in the fabric of parts of the buildings to a point where prompt remedial action is required. Falling rolls are depressing income and this in turn is limiting what can be spent on the maintenance of buildings. There is a well organised system of zoning of accommodation for auditing, repair and decoration purposes, linked to the school development plan.

155. Some areas of the curriculum are satisfactorily accommodated. In English three are adequate rooms grouped together, with access to storage. History, geography and religious education have similar arrangements and are generally adequately accommodated. There is a shortage of suitable display facilities. The quality of teaching and learning of languages is constrained by a high level of noise from adjoining classrooms and movement through the rooms and by poor quality of furnishings. Access to the detached block housing art and modern foreign languages involves crossing an open and windswept area and time is inevitably lost in the movement between lessons. Mathematics rooms are also grouped together, but some rooms with sets of over 30 pupil are overcrowded. In science a Local Education Authority minor works programme will shortly upgrade a preparation room, one laboratory and one storeroom. Some laboratories are not an appropriate environment for teaching and learning and their poor condition is affecting standards. In business studies, some furniture is inappropriate and dampness is apparent on the walls. The toilet areas for both boys and girls are currently receiving much-needed updating. There is a large and attractive library which is not currently used as effectively as it could be to support pupils' learning. The inside accommodation for physical education is poor.

156. The school earned relatively little from letting the premises in the past but has earned a more healthy figure of about £3000 in 1994/95. The building has further potential as a resource for the community. Given the excess capacity in the school caused by the falling rolls and the condition of some of the accommodation there is now scope for some rationalisation with a view to improving what remains and removing the depressing effects which some accommodation is having on learning and achievement.

7.7 PUPILS' WELFARE AND GUIDANCE

157.The school's welfare and guidance system has been reviewed and the new arrangements introduced in 1994 focus on increasing further the effectiveness of the school as a caring community and meeting its aims of developing personal worth and self respect and preparing pupils for the world of work. The senior management team is giving strong leadership and the teachers share in making the purposes of welfare and guidance explicit for pupils.

158.The role of the form tutor is central to the new system. Pupils are in mixed-ability tutor groups and their tutor and Year Head stay with them from Year 7 to 9 and then change for Year 10 and 11. Liaison with primary schools is well established but there are some inconsistencies created by the annual change of Year 7 Head. The school uses the LEA's primary transfer document to inform action to support the welfare of pupils but does not use in any systematic way the information on academic achievement.

159.Year Heads meet fortnightly with their tutors to identify pupils causing concern and to arrange supportive action. However, the flow of information about pupils, between the classroom teacher, department, tutor and Year Head, relies heavily on informal communication. There is considerable value in this system but it can lead to inconsistency in effectiveness.

160.There is a wealth of information relating to individual pupils which is available from classroom teachers, departments, tutors and the central office computer system. However, much of this information is not brought together systematically into the central pupil record system kept by each year head. The school should review its arrangements for holding and using pupil information to ensure the level of coherence and consistency necessary to underpin high quality welfare and guidance.

161.The support for the school provided by the Education Welfare Service has been of poor quality. This situation is being rectified and the school should introduce a system for monitoring the effectiveness of the service in the future, with particular regard to the impact on the behaviour and attendance of pupils. There is good support from the school nurse who contributes to the health elements in the programme of personal and social education (PSE).

162.A new PSE programme has been introduced following the review of welfare and guidance. Its coverage includes health and sex education. A new policy on sex education has yet to be approved by the Governing Body. The PSE programme is managed by the deputy headteacher and year heads and involves all tutors. The rationale and aims for PSE are sound and the scheme of work is good in structure and content. The quality of learning was sound or better in 80% of the PSE lessons seen and the quality of teaching sound or better in 70%. The PSE programme each morning, followed by the two minute silence, generally sets a positive tone for the day. It is already improving the self esteem of some pupils and tutors are increasingly referring to the values and issues raised in PSE in their subject teaching. The PSE programme has the potential to contribute very significantly to achieving the aims of the school as a caring community. Further staff development for teaching and learning methods appropriate to the programme and the introduction of a system for monitoring its effectiveness would further enhance its potential.

163.Careers education and guidance is an integral part of the PSE programme, supported by the work of Careers Officers. There are arrangements for group work and individual interviews. The framework for careers education and guidance is sound and the school and Careers Service work together to improve the quality and consistency of the programme. The development of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programme which the school has introduced will enhance the careers education of the pupils involved.

164.The school generally provides a secure environment for pupils in which relationships are good.

165.Generally, the considerable efforts being made by the school to improve further the effectiveness of welfare and guidance are bearing fruit and the system has the potential to be of high quality.

7.8 LINKS WITH PARENTS, AGENCIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

166.The school has made substantial, and often impressive, efforts to create links with parents, agencies, the community and other educational establishments. These include holding a monthly forum in association with its main contributory primary schools, to inform parents, to solicit their support and to stimulate their involvement in the school. The school has made appropriate efforts to provide home language support where it is needed. However, the success of these initiatives has so far been limited, with attendance at parents' evenings for example, being modest. Pupils' experience of the creative and expressive arts through extra-curricular activities is partly restrained by a lack of parental approval, support and interest. The school communicates well with parents through bulletins and newsletters, issued in English and community language. It maintains contact with local religious communities. The school needs to maintain the momentum of its present efforts to strengthen parental support and to seek further ways in which this can be done.

167.The school has formed sound and, in the context of the area it serves, strong links with industry, commerce and other agencies. There is a good link with the local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). There has been a recent teacher placement to the TEC to build links with training providers. The school's termly newspaper, which is of excellent quality, raises funding from local commerce and other organisations through advertising and raises the profile of the school in the area. All pupils undertake a period of work experience in their last year at school and the pupils make a good impression on local employers. A local building society benefits pupils' learning by acting as an adviser to the school's Young Enterprise team. The school also works closely with the Pendle Education Business Partnership.

168.There are strong links with the main contributory primary schools. There are growing curriculum links, for example in technology, but curriculum continuity is not as strong as it could be. Primary records are under-used as a source of information on pupils' potential and achievement. Links with tertiary institutions are well-established but could be strengthened to ensure that pupils have the maximum understanding of choices and requirements of courses.

169.The work experience programme, charity activities which the school is involved in, the production of the school's newspaper and Young Enterprise activities all contribute very positively to pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils' learning and achievement would be further enhanced if the school's efforts to secure a greater degree of parental support are successful.