

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

**BRIERFIELD MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL**

**Lancashire LEA**

**Date of Inspection**

**4 - 8 DECEMBER 1995**

**BRIERFIELD MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL  
ELLAND ROAD  
BRIERFIELD, NELSON BB9 5RX**

**School Number : 923/4017**

**Date of Inspection : 4 - 8 December 1995**

**Mr W S Deller**

**Registered Inspector : T11310**

**Date : 12 January 1995**

**Under OFSTED contract number : 923/S5/002184**

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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

Name of School	Brierfield Mansfield High
Type of School	Comprehensive All Through
Type of control	County
Number of pupils on roll	1136
Age range of pupils	11 - 16
Name of Headteacher	Ernest Pickup
School Address, postcode and telephone number	Elland Road Brierfield, Nelson BB9 5RX
Name of appropriate authority (governing body, LEA or proprietor)	01282 614640 Governing Body
Local authority area in which the school is located	Lancashire County Council
DFE school number	923/4017
Name of Registered Inspector	Mr W S Deller
Date of the inspection	4 - 8 December 1995

## 1.2 INTAKE OF PUPILS AND THE AREA SERVED BY THE SCHOOL

1. The school serves the small East Lancashire township of Brierfield and an extensive surrounding area; Brierfield is a socially and economically deprived urban area of nineteenth century foundation based on traditional heavy industries which have since declined. The school also admits pupils from business and professional families in the neighbouring Reedley parish, suburbs of Burnley and from surrounding semi-rural villages. Many pupils travel to the school by bus and the school is over-subscribed. The ability profile of the intake is broadly comprehensive but with fewer pupils of high ability and more of lower ability than would be expected in a normal distribution. In recent years the school has attracted a greater proportion of more able pupils. About 19% of the intake are from ethnic minority backgrounds mainly Punjabi speaking. About 1.8% of the pupils have statements of special educational need, which is about average for the LEA. 20% are eligible for free school meals compared with a national average of 17.6%. In 1994 70% stayed in full-time education after the age of 16 which is in line with national averages.

## 1.3 SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### PUPILS

#### Number of Pupils in Each Year Group

	Boys	Girls	Total
<b>Year 7</b>	121	126	247
<b>Year 8</b>	145	112	257
<b>Year 9</b>	139	102	241
<b>Year 10</b>	113	86	199
<b>Year 11</b>	106	86	192
<b>Total</b>	624	512	1136

#### Special Educational Needs

Number of pupils having statements of special educational needs 21

#### Free School Meals

Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals 20%

#### Teachers and Classes

Full-time equivalent teachers 62.6

Pupil : Teacher ratio 18.1

Percentage class contact 80.5

**Teaching time per week**

	Hours	Minutes
Key Stage 3	25	00
Key Stage 4	25	00
Post-16		

**Pupil Attendance**

Percentage attendance figures for each year group from 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		97.0	3.0	0
Year 8		96.5	3.2	0.3
Year 9	Note reported in this form	93.0	6.98	0.02
Year 10		89.3	9.0	1.7
Year 11		74.0	25.4	0.6
Overall		91.0	8.5	0.5

**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	0	0	0	0	0	0
Year 8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Year 9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Year 10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Year 11	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL (COLUMNS 1-4)	0	0	0	0	0	0

## National Curriculum Assessments

### Public Examination Results

GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS	SCHOOL RESULTS 1995			SCHOOL RESULTS 1994		
	Boys	Girls	All Pupils	Boys	Girls	All Pupils
Number of pupils in Year 11 <sup>1</sup>	79	92	171	82	76	158
<b>Percentage of pupils</b>						
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	76.0	92.0	85.0	69.1	81.6	75.2
Achieving 5+ grades A*-C	28.0	43.0	36.0	33.3	43.4	38.2
Achieving 5+ grades A*-G	72.0	88.0	81.0	67.9	78.9	73.2
Entered for 1+ GCSE	93.0	98.0	86.0	88.9	89.5	89.2
Achieving 1+ grades A*-C						
Achieving 1+ grades A*-G	88.0	90.0	89.0	88.9	88.2	88.5
Entered for all three subjects EN, MA and SC	80.3					
		92.1	86.6			
Achieving grades A*-C	18.4	24.7	21.8			
Achieving grades A*-G in all of EN, MA and SC	75.0	87.6	81.8			

GCSE Examination Results	LEA AREA <sup>2</sup>			ENGLAND <sup>2+</sup>		
	Boys	Girls	All Pupils	Boys	1994 Girls	All Pupils
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	-	-	- <sup>3</sup>	89.6	91.8	90.7
Achieving 5+ A*-C	-	-	42.0	36.0	45.0	40.5
Achieving 5+ A*-G	-	-	86.0	85.1	88.6	86.8
Entered for 1+ GCSE	-	-	-	95.5	96.2	95.8
Achieving 1+ grade A*-C						
Achieving 1+ grade A*-G	-	-	94.0	93.2	94.4	93.8

Note 1: Number of pupils in Year 11 in January in each of the examination years.

Note 2: These national statistics apply to all maintained schools in the LEA area and in England.

Note 3: Dashes indicate where data may not be available in the PCSI reports.

## What pupils do on leaving school

Percentage of the year group:

	School/Further Education	Employment	Training procedure	Other
<b>YEAR 11</b>	70	9	10	11

	School/Further Education	Employment	Training procedure	Other
<b>End of 1st Year 6th</b>				

	Further Education	Higher Education	Employment	Other
<b>End of 6th Form</b>				

**Financial Information**

<b>INCOME (£)</b>	<b>Last full financial year 1994-95</b>	<b>Current year 1995-96</b>
Balance brought forward	457,517	225,035
Transitional grant (for GM schools)	000	000
Recurrent income (LMS or AMG, fees)	2,036,350	2,058,271
Specific or special purpose grants for curriculum staff development	10,905	18,481
TVEI	18,205	2,191
Other income managed by the school; lettings, funds raised etc.	30,338	17,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>2,553,315</u></b>	<b><u>2,321,478</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURE (£)</b>	<b>Last full financial year</b>	<b>Budget allocation for current year</b>
Teaching staff	1,418,861	1,568,879
Other staff	123,492	156,768
Educational resources	158,833	169,476
Premises costs	568,493	293,229
Curriculum and staff development	10,571	18,481
Other costs	48,031	84,160
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>2,328,281</u></b>	<b><u>2,290,993</u></b>
<b>Total expenditure per pupil</b>	<b>2,169.88</b>	<b>2,065.82</b>
	(£)	
<b>Expenditure per pupil on educational resources</b>	<b>148.03</b>	<b>152.82</b>
	(£)	



## **1.4 RECORD OF THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION**

1.The inspection team consisted of 16 inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week 182 lessons were observed as well as a range of registration periods, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. All full-time teachers who were present during the inspection week were seen teaching at least once and many several times. Some supply and support teachers were also seen. Meetings took place with most staff who have major responsibilities in the school as well as many more informal discussions. The registered inspector met the full governing body. A parents' meeting attended by 24 parents was held and a note was taken of comments made by parents. The collated responses of a questionnaire associated with the inspection were also noted. A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. All the available written work of a representative sample of pupils from each of Years 7 to 10 was inspected in addition to work seen during lessons. Planned discussions were held with some of these and other pupils. The behaviour of pupils was observed before, during and after school hours. Further meetings took place with associated primary schools, tertiary colleges and representatives of various institutions which have connections with the school. The registered inspector also received a large number of letters from local industry, commerce, organisations and members of the community.

## **2. MAIN FINDINGS AND KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

### **2.1 MAIN FINDINGS**

#### **Standards of achievement**

1.The majority of pupils achieve levels broadly in line with national standards. In 1994 the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades (38%) was not significantly different from national figures (40.5%) and was a marked improvement on the 1993 results (25%). In 1995 the proportion gaining A - C grades declined slightly (36.0%) and fell below national figures (41.7%). Most pupils reach levels appropriate for their abilities and many achieve beyond what might be expected. Standards at Key Stage 3 (eleven to fourteen year olds) are better than those at Key Stage 4 (fourteen to sixteen year olds). A minority of pupils, notably boys at Key Stage 4 (and boys from the ethnic minority in particular) fail to achieve their potential and the gap between the performance of boys and that of girls is wider than national averages. Entry rates for GCSE are also lower than national norms, though a number of pupils gain vocational or other qualifications. Some non-entry for exams is associated with poor attendance at Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress over time, but do less well at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3.

2.Standards of achievement vary between subjects. In English, standards are better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3; most pupils achieve at levels in line with their age and abilities, but at Key Stage 4 in particular, less able pupils make only slow progress. GCSE results in English and English literature in 1995 were below the national average but the literature results were above it in 1994. Girls do much better than boys. In mathematics, the majority of younger pupils do as well as they should for their abilities but some of the older ones underachieve. GCSE results in 1994 were below the national average, but there was a slight improvement in 1995. In science, the great majority of pupils of all ages achieve standards in line with their age and abilities and many achieve beyond this. GCSE results are above the national average.

3.In technology, standards are high in business studies and information technology; they are sound for most pupils in design and technology. GCSE results are at about the national average in food technology but below it in other areas. GCSE results in business studies are above national norms as are those for information studies. In history pupils of all ages achieve standards at least in line with their abilities and many achieve beyond this. GCSE results are close to the national average though boys do less well than girls. In geography, most pupils reach standards appropriate for their age and abilities but a significant minority underachieve. GCSE results were below the national average in 1995 but above it in 1994. In foreign languages, most pupils achieve at or above national standards. Beginners do well for their abilities and so do abler pupils, but many middle and lower ability learners underachieve, particularly older pupils. GCSE results overall were above national averages in 1994 and below them in 1995. In art, achievement is always sound and very often good. GCSE results are well above national figures. Pupils do not do as well as they should in music and GCSE results are significantly below the national

standard. In physical education, most pupils display appropriate levels of skill but standards at Key Stage 3 are higher than at Key Stage 4. Achievement in hockey and swimming is particularly good. GCSE results are above the national average. In religious education, most pupils do well for their age and abilities but some do not. GCSE courses have only recently been introduced and no results are yet available.

### **Quality of education provided**

4.The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to pupils of all ages which fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Time allocations are appropriate except for religious education and physical education at Key Stage 4. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities provides rich opportunities for pupils and is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching and learning was sound or better in almost eight out of ten lessons observed and in just under half it had good or outstanding features. Teaching is often lively, challenging and well planned and specialist teachers show good subject knowledge. Pupils respond enthusiastically to well paced lessons and in the best they make significant progress in understanding and in the skills of learning. In almost a quarter of the lessons seen, however, the teaching had shortcomings and pupils lacked the motivation to succeed. This weaker teaching was sometimes associated with temporary, non-specialist, or inexperienced teachers and was characterised by low expectations, slow pace and poor match of work to pupils' abilities. The school has devised successful policies and practices for assessment, recording and reporting.

### **Efficiency**

5.The governing body, through its well established committees, provides an active and well-informed structure for decision-making. The headteacher offers strong and purposeful leadership. A newly constituted senior management team is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in the classroom through, for example, the collection and analysis of examination results and other data, but at present lacks the time and clarity of role fully to accomplish its wide range of tasks. In particular its success in monitoring and evaluating the quality of classroom effectiveness and curriculum delivery at department level is uneven. The school has plans to remedy this. Clear objectives and targets are set at every level: both school and department development plans have performance indicators which are regularly reviewed. Overall management of resources and financial control are effective; the school offers good value for money. At middle management level effectiveness varies: there are some examples of overload where progress is hindered by multiple responsibilities or lack of time; some valuable initiatives have been taken by departments and better integration between the work at departmental and senior management level would improve quality still further.

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

6.Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through daily acts of collective worship, including assemblies, religious education and other subjects of the curriculum. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is met. The school places a high priority on moral and social values in its mission and values statements. The taught PSE programme and assemblies provide good opportunities to consider moral values and other subjects contribute to their exploration. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally good: the school largely enacts its commitment to being an institution which promotes co-operation and pride in belonging. On the whole the school is an orderly and friendly place where pupils feel secure. Considerable energy is invested in the pastoral system to support pupils' work. Many staff also give very generously of their time to help pupils benefit from extra-curricular opportunities, where they can respond to personal challenge, work in the immediate community and participate in a range of educational and recreational activities. From this strong base the school is in a good position to consider how its aim of caring for all its pupils and preparing them for active, caring and informed citizenship should continue to be accomplished in a rapidly changing, volatile society which is ethnically and culturally diverse.

## **2.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

7.To consolidate and extend its strengths after a period of rapid expansion and development, the school should:

- raise standards of achievement, particularly among boys, especially those of Asian heritage;

- improve attendance in Years 10 and 11;
- develop further the use of existing GCSE, Key Stage 3 tests and other data analyses to establish more detailed action plans to improve quality and standards in the classroom
- develop, co-ordinate and monitor more effectively the work of staff with responsibility for curriculum areas to enable them to improve standards and quality;

### **3. STANDARDS AND QUALITY**

#### **3.1 STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT**

1. Pupils achieve levels in line with national expectations at Key Stage 3, slightly better than at Key Stage 4

2. In 1995 36% of pupils obtained five or more A\*- C grades which was below the national average of 41.7% for maintained secondary schools in England and the 40% average for the Lancashire LEA area. The proportion of pupils in 1995 obtaining five or more A\*- G grades at 81% was below the national average of 87% for maintained secondary schools in England. There was a significant improvement in the performance of pupils obtaining five or more A\*- C grades between 1993 and 1994, the proportion increasing from 25% to 38%. In 1995, 87% of both girls and boys were entered for all three of English, mathematics and science; 21.8% of these pupils obtained A\*- C passes in all three subjects. This figure is significantly lower than the 1994 figure for all comprehensive schools of 32.8%. The 18% of boys passing all three subjects was a lower proportion than the 25% of girls who passed all three. Girls have performed significantly better than boys at GCSE for the last two years, 43% of girls and 28% of boys obtained 5 or more A\*- C grades in 1995; the difference was not so significant in 1994 where 43% of girls and 33% of boys gained 5 or more A - C grades. Under-performance of boys is greater than at national levels. A particular concern is the underachievement of Asian boys.

3. Measures of pupils' ability on joining the school show an intake which is broadly comprehensive but with more pupils below average ability than above. 1995 GCSE results in 5 A\*- C grades were broadly in line with what could be expected given the abilities of pupils when they entered the school and this was the case in the previous two years as well. Pupils of higher ability often achieve better than would be expected while pupils of lower ability make less progress.

4. From lesson observations at Key Stage 3, a substantial majority of pupils achieve the national expectation and many pupils achieve better than this. Standards overall are higher at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 a substantial majority of pupils achieve the national expectation in fewer of the lessons seen and fewer pupils achieve higher standards. Achievement at the highest level is comparatively rare at both key stages.

5. When pupils' abilities are taken into account most pupils at Key Stage 3 achieve appropriate levels and many pupils achieve standards that are high for their abilities. At Key Stage 4 a majority of pupils achieve appropriate levels for their abilities and some achieve standards that are high for their abilities. There is some underachievement at Key Stage 3 but underachievement at Key Stage 4 is greater. Able pupils make greater progress than those of lower ability in relation to their abilities at both key stages but it was particularly noticeable at Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate or good progress at Key Stage 3, but do less well at Key Stage 4.

6. When pupils achieve the national expectation or beyond it or pupils' achievements are high for their abilities a range of factors is involved. Achievement is often linked to good quality of teaching and learning where lessons are well prepared and have clearly set objectives shared with the pupils; teaching methods are carefully selected for the learning activities taking place. Tasks are suitably challenging with strategies to involve all pupils; there are high expectations. Where pupils are underachieving and lessons are less successful, pupils are not provided with sufficient support or appropriate tasks and there is less clarity of purpose; the poor attitude towards learning of some older boys leads to low achievement.

7. In general, speaking and listening skills are well developed. Most pupils participate willingly in oral work and they speak confidently and listen attentively to teachers and have the confidence to discuss their work. In art, they respond well when given the opportunity to comment critically on their own and others' work. In geography, religious education, science and history, pupils are confident in group and paired work. In English, most pupils use appropriate register and breadth of vocabulary for various activities but not all pupils adjust their speech appropriately to different circumstances.

8. The majority of pupils read accurately with understanding and are able to discuss their reading. In a number of subjects reading aloud is used to good effect. In English the majority of pupils use reading skills to identify evidence, to support their views and tackle textbooks and other sources effectively. Reading opportunities in modern languages are limited but pupils, including some special educational needs pupils, are comfortable with dictionaries.

9. Most pupils write with a reasonable level of accuracy, though some of the least able pupils have difficulty in developing ideas coherently and fluently. Written work is mainly well presented. Overall standards of written work are in line with the national expectation and some good work was seen from the more able. At both key stages in English pupils write for a very wide range of audiences and purposes. Opportunity for extended writing was limited in geography, science and religious education. A range of writing of sound quality was seen in history.

10. Pupils are generally confident in the handling of number and many are secure in the interpretation and use of data. There are exceptions in that a small number of pupils are over-reliant upon the calculator to carry out simple computations. Opportunities are not always provided to apply mathematics. Statistical analysis and graph work is underdeveloped in geography though some good work with graphs was seen in science and technology. In mathematics many pupils are able to handle number and measurement appropriately.

11. Pupils show competent skills in information technology lessons. However, these skills are underdeveloped across other subjects of the curriculum where their use is very much in the early stages, though the school has a good supply of computers.

12. The school participates in the LEA Value Added Project. The figures suggest that the school is generally performing as expected given the backgrounds of the pupils in the GCSE results for 1993, 1994 and 1995. The figures suggest that more able pupils achieve better standards in relation to their ability than lower ability pupils and that boys significantly under-perform. The school has set appropriate school targets to be attained in future GCSE examinations and has also agreed shared targets in relation to National Training and Education Targets with neighbouring schools and the local Training and Enterprise Council. The school recognises under-performance of boys and has gathered a great deal of data and established a working group of staff to look at the problem.

### **3.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING**

13. In almost 8 out of 10 lessons observed the quality of learning was sound or better. In almost half it had good features with no major shortcomings. There were more good lessons at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. Sound or good learning was observed in all subjects but was more commonly seen in art, physical education, history, German, technology, science and mathematics. Learning in music was particularly poor. Overall the majority of pupils are making appropriate gains in knowledge, understanding and skills.

14. In English most pupils listen well, make notes for learning and planning purposes and ask relevant questions. Pupils of different abilities use dictionaries and spell checkers. Much written work is re-drafted and some by able pupils shows originality and strong personal response. In mathematics, pupils concentrate on the tasks set and show positive attitudes. They make progress in the development of mathematical knowledge and skills, though their understanding is often less secure. In science, skills developed include recording results in tables, constructing graphs and working co-operatively in small groups. In technology, pupils show an increasing confidence in the use of hardware and software in information technology and the application of information technology knowledge is good. Levels of graphic and presentation skills are high. Food technology contributes significantly to pupils' ability to evaluate their own and their peers' work. In business studies, pupils are given

opportunity to show initiative and independent thinking. Some abler pupils in foreign languages show a growing capacity to initiate and enter freely into exchanges. In history, there are clear gains in pupils' grasp of factual details, their understanding of issues and of causation. In geography, pupils mainly tackle work with interest and enthusiasm, listen attentively and contribute to whole class discussion. In art, by the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are familiar with a range of resources and materials which they employ using appropriate techniques. These include graphic, paint and print media, collage and some, albeit limited, three-dimensional media. At Key Stage 4 the range is broadened to include textiles and photography. In physical education, pupils work hard during periods of physical activity and sustain their practice to raise performance levels. In religious education, written work is well presented with many pupils taking a pride in their work. Classroom interchange is lively and occasionally rigorous.

15. In the smaller proportion of lessons where learning had shortcomings, poor learning was frequently related to deficiencies in teaching. These in turn were often associated with temporary, non-specialist or inexperienced teachers.

16. In English, for example, particularly at Key Stage 4, instances of poor motivation and some disaffected behaviour was observed. In mathematics, the desire to evaluate and question the result of what had been achieved only rarely emerged; occasions when pupils could work co-operatively were not common in all classes. In science, shortcomings in learning were often related to poor levels of concentration. In technology, evidence of pupils extending their knowledge and understanding of a design process was limited. Many middle and lower ability pupils in foreign languages were withdrawn or chattery and only intermittently involved in the task in hand. Research and enquiry skills in geography are comparatively less well developed. In music conceptual development and progress was minimal. In physical education, in some lessons high levels of non-participation detracted from overall progress. In religious education writing requiring the skill of empathy or the framing of an opinion on a matter of value and belief was only occasionally observed.

17. The school has a clear homework policy generally well supported by parents and monitored by the use of a homework diary. In many subjects homework is used purposefully to consolidate work or promote independent learning.

18. Attitudes to learning are generally good, particularly at Key Stage 3 but at Key Stage 4 a minority of pupils are disaffected and their own and others' progress is sometimes hindered by their poor attitude and disruption of lessons. This is particularly the case with boys and pupils of lower ability. Relationships between teachers and pupils however are generally productive and caring: pupils are made to feel that their efforts matter and that progress is attainable.

#### **4. EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

19. The school provides good value for money in that pupils generally achieve standards in line with their abilities at a unit cost per pupil which is in line with the average figure for Lancashire secondary schools. The governors' finance committee is well informed and operates a clear cycle of budget setting related to overall budget targets and priorities. The committee has terms of reference and has clearly defined the level of delegation to the headteacher. The whole area of financial management has been enhanced by the appointment of a business and finance manager who is a member of the senior management team. The budget is managed very effectively by the governors, the senior management team and the bursar.

20. The school has a three-year development plan which is informed by an evaluation of a previous three-year plan. The present plan has six key targets with outline strategies and performance indicators related to growth and maintenance, constituency, staff development, resourcing and curriculum development. The plan is reviewed annually and there are consequent financial adjustments which are reflected in departmental plans. The annual review process influences budget adjustment at an appropriate time in the cycle. This budgeting process and cycle is clearly understood by the governors' finance committee. Departments have three year development plans in place which are linked to the school plan. The school and departmental plans are efficient, functional planning tools.

21. The school operates a well planned budget which is set against a historical spending pattern with reference

to county guidelines and informed by a clear three year expenditure plan. There is an operating excess of about £30,000 in the current year which is appropriate given the size of the school, its stable position and flexibility in financial terms. Good budget management has enabled the school to use its own resources to finance a number of major projects to enhance the accommodation.

22. Day to day management of the budget is good and internal management improvements suggested by the most recent audit reports have been put in place. Clear procedures for spending are established and the school can monitor and implement changes as appropriate. A clear statement on how the school stands financially at any time is readily available and such statements are issued regularly to the governors' finance committee.

23. The allocation of resources to departments is based on an annual bidding process against development plan priorities though not all departments understand and take advantage of the process. 15% of departmental budget has to be allocated to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, but this is insufficiently monitored in practice. Amounts and priorities are decided by the headteacher and business and finance manager against historical patterns and knowledge of the department and school development plan. The school should consider identifying more clearly budget provision to particular curriculum need. Evidence suggests that funding levels in most cases are adequate for departments' needs, though there is under-resourcing in the humanities area and there is a shortage of text books in science. Computers are not used efficiently across the curriculum.

24. The school is beginning to measure its cost-effectiveness by the monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators related to financial targets.

25. At 25 hours for both key stages, the length of the teaching week is more than the minimum time recommended by DFE circular 7/90 and with very few exceptions time is allocated appropriately to the various curriculum areas.

## **5. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR**

### **5.1 PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

26. The work of the school is founded on clearly articulated and commonly understood statements of aims and values and a mission statement which indicates that the school strives to help pupils to become 'caring, confident and informed citizens'. In general, pupils know what is expected of them and understand and share the values for which the school stands. On the whole, the school is both a friendly and orderly community. Most pupils benefit from an ethos where individuals are valued, interests developed and talents encouraged through a good range of opportunities and experiences. Pupils' social consciences are promoted and most pupils gain in self-confidence. Relationships between pupils and with staff are generally good.

27. The school's arrangements meet the statutory requirements in respect of a daily act of collective worship. Assemblies are well-planned. Prayer is a feature of all school assemblies: pupils are respectful and these occasions give opportunities for reflection, moral teaching and the celebration of human achievement, including the achievements of many members of the school community. Younger pupils take an active part in assemblies on a regular basis. 'Thoughts for the Day' are used in tutor periods when pupils do not attend assemblies and these include a period of reflection; although form tutors vary considerably in their abilities to use these 'thoughts' to promote discussion, some are clearly skilled at helping pupils to respond to personal, social and moral issues. A number of subjects make contributions to spiritual development. In some religious education lessons, pupils engage in reflective thinking about issues of belief and values as well as gaining an understanding of Christianity and other world religions. In English, pupils discuss and write about texts which explore human motivation and some write well about personal experiences; the good quality art work, well displayed around the school, is expressive and imaginative. In history, pupils' investigation of the First World War, the trial of Charles 1 and the impact of technology on the weaving communities in Lancashire showed an understanding of the human spirit in adversity; in a geography lesson, pupils explored through role play a range of views related to the deforestation of the Amazon rain forest. Pupils write perceptive and mature personal statements for their national records of achievement.

28. The focus on moral development in assemblies is reinforced in religious education, English, history and drama lessons and the PSE programme; key elements of the science and geography curriculum offer opportunities to consider environmental issues. Work in the taught programmes of personal and social education encourages a sense of personal responsibilities and deepens the understanding of moral behaviour. Pupils make good contributions to charity support. The code of conduct encourages co-operation and respect for others; rewards and sanctions are carefully balanced and the pastoral system largely supports and encourages pupils to achieve. Although some older boys and especially those of Asian heritage underachieve, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to work and personal achievement.

29. Many subjects offer good opportunities for pupils to develop effective interpersonal skills through co-operation in group work. Elements within the PSE programme, participation in fund raising, charity work, running the school bank, work experience, community placements for the majority of pupils at Key Stage 4, residential opportunities and links with the local community, its primary schools, commerce and industry allow pupils to appreciate the way society works at levels appropriate to their ages and development. Pupils have been particularly successful in their participation in the Young Enterprise scheme for a number of years and benefited from the team work and group responsibility which this encourages.

30. Many important opportunities are provided for cultural experience, especially in the extensive and varied programme of extra-curricular activities, some of which are related to fund-raising for charities. Many staff give generously of their time to organise these activities. Pupils participate in concerts for the elderly, fun runs, camping, caving, hill walking and visits to the theatre as well as to Grasmere and Haworth. The foreign language curriculum makes a valued contribution to enlarging pupils' understanding of European heritages and pupils visit both France and Germany. Many pupils participate readily and with success in the school's sports teams. Many departments also offer additional support for pupils by organising clubs which provide additional time and help for individuals with their work. During the inspection, Year 7 pupils thoroughly enjoyed an entertaining demonstration lecture provided by a team from a local university which introduced them to some key concepts of science related to musical instruments. In addition, the school makes some provision in the curriculum, particularly in religious education, English, history and geography to prepare pupils for the ethnically and culturally diverse society in which pupils will live and work. Overall, however, this is not a major strength of the school's curricular provision: the development plans in English, music and art recognise the need to broaden the base of cultures studied as part of the curriculum.

31. Pupils are helped to develop progressively as mature, responsible adults and citizens through key elements of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Concern for others is strongly expressed in an imaginative and varied programme of community involvement and service. These are major strengths. However, in order that the school can fully realise and enact its own mission statement and avowed aims and values, some elements of its day to day life are worth reconsideration. The school should seriously consider the implications of its own recent gender and ethnicity analysis of the composition of teaching groups in order to determine the effect these have on opportunities for teaching and learning for all pupils. In addition, it should consider whether the domination of the playgrounds by boys and the poor toilet facilities for girls contravene its aim to provide a 'supportive and caring environment' for all pupils. In order that pupils can become 'informed citizens' the school may wish to consider the provision of a forum in which pupils can express their views about school life. This would supplement existing opportunities for involvement.

## **5.2 BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE**

32. The school aims stress the importance of tolerant attitudes, good relationships between staff and pupils, and the maintenance of a caring community. The behaviour of the majority of pupils in the school indicates that these aims are realised in practice.

33. The school operates in an orderly manner. Behaviour displayed by pupils in classrooms and around the school is largely satisfactory and often good. They demonstrate respect for each other and towards teaching and non-teaching staff; visitors are greeted with politeness. On a small number of occasions the poor behaviour of some lower ability pupils at Key Stage 4 detracted from the learning in lessons.

34. Pupils display a clear understanding and acceptance of the Code of Conduct which is displayed in classrooms.

A number of incentives such as pupil of the month and awards for the whole class positively endorse the Code and encourage pupils towards a sense of collective responsibility.

35. Parents are generally satisfied that acceptable standards of behaviour operate within the school. A small minority report some intolerance amongst pupils emanating from the mixed community which the school serves. With a view to addressing these concerns the school should review its decision not to adopt all the recommendations of the Local Education Authority relating to the procedures for dealing with and reporting racial incidents. Governors effectively exercise their duty relating to discipline through an appropriate committee structure.

36. Systematic recording procedures enable heads of year to identify and monitor the behaviour of any pupil judged to be giving concern and assist the school in consistently applying sanctions and involving parents when necessary. The school adopts an unofficial policy of no exclusion and is to be commended for seeking to apply alternative strategies to exclusion when dealing with the rare cases of serious misdemeanour.

37. The school has no formal anti-bullying policy although there is reference to bullying within the Code of Conduct. Modules on bullying are also included in the taught programme of Personal and Social Education which effectively raise pupil awareness of the issue. Pupils express satisfaction with existing school procedures for dealing with any reported incidents of bullying in a rapid and effective manner.

### **5.3 ATTENDANCE**

38. In 1993/94 the school's annual overall attendance figure was 97.9% which compared favourably with an LEA figure of 91.1%. The level of unauthorised absence at 0.2% was also lower than LEA norms. In a selected week in 1995 actual attendance was 91% but the rates for Years 10 and 11 both fell below 90% (89.3% and 74% respectively). The school recognises the problem of a small hard core of persistent truants and co-operates well with the Education Welfare Officer in investigating truancy; a system for improving the attendance of targeted low achieving pupils has been established and most pupils have responded well to it. The Head of Year 10 is currently introducing a new system for identifying potential truants through a tracking procedure. This initiative should be combined with a closer scrutiny of the registers taken at the start of all subject lessons and cross-checking with attendance registers taken by form tutors, to minimise possible internal truanting. The school also has many good strategies within its reward systems to improve attendance and children are conversant with these and generally eager to compete for success.

39. Authorised absences are accounted for by some extended holidays in Pakistan and some hospitalisations but a large portion of Year 10 and 11 absences are accounted for by education off-site, work experience and community involvement programmes. 196 pupils are educated off-site in any one week and a total of 6,076 authorised absence half day sessions are accounted for by a combination of work experience and community involvement.

40. The school's policy on attendance monitoring is carefully interpreted by most tutors and registers are correctly completed in the vast majority of cases. Staff are still adjusting to the recently introduced SIMS system which will enable greater speed and precision in detecting patterns of absence. The school does not comply with DFEE circular 11/91 as it does not publish attendance figures in an appropriate form in the school prospectus and publishes no figure for attendance in the Governors' Report to Parents.

## **6. SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM AND OTHER CURRICULAR PROVISION**

### **English**

41. GCSE results at A\*- C in English were below national and LEA averages in 1994 and 1995. English Literature results were above the national average in 1994, but below it in 1995. In these examinations, in line with national trends, girls achieved markedly better results than boys. In half of the lessons seen at both key stages the majority of pupils achieved standards appropriate or better according to their ages. When their ability



is taken into account, pupils achieved well overall at Key Stage 3; however, at Key Stage 4, although more able pupils read, talk and write well, lower attainers make only slow progress. Pupils with special educational needs make progress, albeit slowly, particularly at Key Stage 3. Standards of talk are good and pupils participate willingly in oral work. Most offer clear, sensible responses to teachers' questions. When given opportunities in English, media studies and drama lessons, they work collaboratively in a variety of groupings to share and extend ideas and use talk effectively for learning. Some able and middle ability pupils can explain and justify their ideas in detail, argue a point of view with fluency and refine their ideas in the light of discussion with others. Most, but not all, pupils adjust their speech appropriately to different circumstances. In English and drama lessons pupils plan and evaluate their work effectively. Most pupils at both key stages write competently in a wide range of forms and variety of styles, for example, stories, poems, letters, diaries, news articles, booklets, pamphlets, reviews and essays. They understand the drafting process and many make important changes in revising their first attempts. The most able at Key Stage 4 produce sustained, well argued pieces for GCSE which show originality and strong personal response. Standards of spelling and punctuation are appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities. Class texts, mainly fiction, are read with understanding. The majority of pupils of all ages and abilities use close reading skills to identify evidence and to support their views. Their written work shows some evidence of research work and information retrieval from a range of sources. Many pupils at Key Stage 3, encouraged by regular time for private reading, read silently for pleasure. Most are able to discuss their reading and some are quite keen readers.

42. The quality of learning is sound and often good at Key Stage 3. The majority of pupils in most lessons are attentive and responsive. When the teaching is good, they apply themselves to tasks with some commitment and make progress. In a minority of lessons at Key Stage 4, where the teaching had shortcomings, there was little enthusiasm or motivation and only modest gains were made. Most lessons are characterised by good working relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst pupils.

43. Teaching is sound or better in the majority of lessons at Key Stage 3; it is more variable but basically sound at Key Stage 4. Where teaching is good the lessons are led by confident, well informed teachers who use varied tasks and strategies to involve pupils and to encourage them to work co-operatively. In a quarter of lessons, however, the learning objectives lacked clarity. As a result pupils did not receive enough guidance or support or the tasks set were not matched to their stage of development.

44. The young, largely inexperienced team of teachers has worked with considerable effort and commitment to devise policies, schemes of work for Key Stage 3 and sound systems of assessment and to cope with the effects of the long term-absence of a key postholder. Given sufficient time and support, the department is in a good position to build on these developments and to capitalise on the opportunities such work would provide to share good practice and to enhance professional development.

## **Mathematics**

45. GCSE results at A\*- C in 1994 were below national and LEA averages. A small number of pupils were not entered for GCSE and nine of these pupils were successful in the City and Guilds Numeracy examination. The 1995 GCSE results showed a slight improvement. In relation to achievement on entry to the school, there is evidence that value is added in mathematics. In most of the lessons observed, the majority of pupils achieved the national expectation for their age, but they rarely achieved beyond it. However, at Key Stage 3 achievement in relation to their abilities was usually appropriate. At Key Stage 4, some of the more able pupils sometimes achieved high standards, but there are other pupils, especially lower ability pupils, whose achievement should be higher. Efforts are being made to raise standards by providing opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have acquired. Many pupils are able to handle number and measurement appropriately and opportunities to use algebraic ideas are taken at the beginning of Key Stage 3. Pupils appreciate geometrical notions and are learning to consider extensions to the more traditional ideas through their coursework. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is generally sound.

46. The quality of learning in lessons is good, particularly at Key Stage 3. Progress in the acquisition of knowledge and skills is sometimes good though the development of understanding is less secure. The pupils are able to recognise what is taking place in a particular enquiry but an ability to think logically is relatively rare. They co-operate well with each other when the opportunity is presented. Pupils are sometimes encouraged

to be self-critical and the teaching should develop this characteristic more consistently.

47. The quality of teaching is usually sound and often good. In some lessons, the teaching methods motivate and challenge the pupils and appropriate resources are provided. The behaviour of the children rarely hinders learning. The need to extend notions which have been acquired previously is recognised by the department. Pupils are usually actively involved in the lesson and these opportunities promote good learning. The marking of the pupils' work is carried out conscientiously with pupils being given appropriate guidance on presentation and methods of working. The teachers in the department are coping well with the challenges they face and have given time to consider ways in which the provision for mathematics can be improved. Enhancement of the learning resources remains a priority. The pupils who experience difficulties regarding the basic concepts of number and shape are receiving support but further provision should be made in relation to materials and expertise.

## Science

48. Standards of achievement in science are good. In 1994, GCSE results for modular science (double award) were significantly above the national average with two thirds of the pupils entered achieving A\*-C grades. Girls and boys performed equally in gaining these upper grades. Results achieved in GCSE science (electronics) were also significantly above the national average for other sciences. Of the candidates entered for science (electronics), 60% gained a C grade. In 1995, Year 11 pupils were only entered for GCSE modular science (double award). Nearly half of the entry achieved A\*- C grades. This result is above the national average for maintained schools. In the lessons observed a majority of pupils achieved levels appropriate or better for their age and abilities.

49. The quality of learning is sound and often good, especially at Key Stage 3. Attitudes to learning among pupils are generally good. A better understanding of scientific facts and principles is developed in the majority of lessons. During practical work, pupils co-operate in small groups. This is a strength, providing pupils with the opportunity to bounce ideas off one another, speak, listen and develop hypotheses while designing their experiments and completing practical tasks.

50. The quality of teaching in science lessons shows many good features. There is full coverage and delivery of the National Curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and 4. All lessons are well planned. In the upper and middle ability GCSE sets at Key Stage 4, the deployment of different staff ensures that, where possible, the content of the lesson matches the particular specialism (biology, chemistry or physics) of the teacher. Different teachers are also used to deliver the specialist aspects of the Key Stage 3 course in Years 8 and 9. In lower ability classes at both key stages, pupils tend to stay with the same teacher for all aspects of their science work. Pupils benefit from this stability and do not appear to be disadvantaged by having the same teacher for the biological, chemical and physics modules of their varied course. Other good features incorporated in the teaching of science include the use of appropriate terminology for the age and ability of the pupils and skilful questioning to build on the knowledge and understanding gained previously. The structure of the timetable ensures that all science lessons are of 60 minutes duration providing suitable time for practical investigation. Although the school library is very well resourced with science books to support homework, textbooks are not used in the majority of science lessons. Suitable textbooks should be purchased and made available for use at home by Key Stage 4 pupils. This would develop self-learning skills, especially aiding revision for tests and examinations. This strategy would reduce the current dependence on duplicated revision sheets produced and distributed by science teachers prior to NEAB end of module tests. The science department also needs to develop its applied use of information technology. This could be achieved by the purchase of modern sensing probes which will collect and record data during experiments, especially science investigations which last longer than a single lesson.

51. The department has not yet purchased any commercially published data or worksheets to support the learning and progression of pupils with special educational needs. Some appropriate material has been written by science staff and support teachers who visit the school. Greater provision of such differentiated resources should be developed to ensure that pupils with special needs make as much progress as possible.

52. The department has a well documented policy for assessing pupils' work. This should be fully adopted by all science teachers to ensure greater uniformity in the quality of marking with the improved use of constructive

and supportive comment and the consistent award of merits.

53. Teaching is enhanced by a range of additional scientific activities. In Year 7, all pupils, irrespective of their ability, attend an exciting practical lecture linking the physical properties of sound to the cultural benefits of music and the design of musical instruments. At Key Stage 4, the more able pupils have the opportunity to visit the BNFL establishment at Sellafield to develop their ideas about science in society and wider environmental issues. Middle ability groups visit the nuclear facilities at Springfield. Inequality of opportunity exists for the lower ability groups which are not given the option of going on such educational visits. This imbalance should be addressed with the option of a suitable alternative visit or cross-curricular activity on the school timetable for lower ability Year 10 pupils.

54. All science lessons are taught in specialist accommodation. Two of the laboratories are rather small and conditions become congested with larger classes, especially during practical work. The design of some of the other laboratories is dated and is not conducive to the teaching of the modern practical aspects of science. The work of the science department is very efficiently supported by two technicians.

## **Technology**

### **Design and Technology**

55. In 1995 results at A\*- C in business studies were significantly above the national average. Results in food technology were close to the national average but were below in other areas of technology. In lessons and other work observed during the inspection about half the pupils were achieving the national expectation for their age and some achieved beyond it. When their abilities are taken into account most pupils achieve appropriate standards.

56. At Key Stage 3 pupils are able to use tools, implements and equipment with competence and confidence. However, they do not show as much confidence in the principles of investigating, designing and evaluating. At both key stages there are too few opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and a sense of adventure. Pupils display a sound understanding of what they learn and are able to apply knowledge effectively especially in food technology.

57. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils listen carefully and communicate well with teachers. The quality of teaching was sound or better in almost all of the lessons observed with no differences across the key stages. Lessons are well prepared, resources are excellent and effectively organised and pupils are well supported by materials prepared by teachers. However, some teaching allows little opportunity for pupils to respond creatively and the pace of lessons is slow. Some work in resistant materials does not challenge more able pupils sufficiently. The teaching staff have made significant progress in the delivery of the National Curriculum in a relatively short period of time and there is a need to continue that progress.

58. Schemes of work in food technology are comprehensive and of a high quality, but significantly less so in resistant materials. Assessment procedures show great potential and reflect the good work of the staff but more work should be undertaken to establish consistency of interpretation and standardisation of assessments. Homework is set regularly, followed up and is generally appropriate to the needs of the children.

59. The department has undergone major changes recently many of which have been positive and successful. Considerable developmental work has been planned and this should be monitored carefully. Resources and equipment are excellent, particularly in resistant materials where the accommodation is first class. The newly provided facilities offer a good opportunity to provide challenging work for pupils. In food technology, the accommodation is good although one room has limited scope for practical work.

### **Information Technology and Business Studies**

60. Good standards are achieved in communicating and handling information at both key stages. Pupils learn quickly and willingly, but opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative and demonstrate their capabilities

are sometimes limited by the nature of the worksheets. Teaching in the majority of lessons observed was good or better with almost all the pupils achieving at or above expectations for their age and ability. Pupil with special educational needs show confidence and make appropriate progress over time.

61. Within both key stages opportunities for using information technology in the subject departments is in the early stages of development with variable resources and facilities. The initial training for staff provides a promising foundation for progress. Pupils, with some notable exceptions in modern languages, resistant materials and science, are only just beginning to take advantage of the facilities and resources, usually through extra-curricular activities. The school is aware of the situation and plans have been formulated to make progress.

## History

62. In both 1994 and 1995 the proportion of pupils achieving five A\*- C grades has been close to national averages. In both years there was some underachievement of boys in relation to girls. Equal numbers of boys and girls entered in 1994, but there were 3.5 girls for each boy entered in 1995. In both years all pupils entered achieved within the A\*- G range. Many pupils perform better than might be expected in comparison with their known abilities on entering the school. At Key Stage 3, in relation to their age, pupils achieved the national expectation in most lessons observed, and some achieved beyond that. Knowledge of dates and events is generally secure. Pupils are beginning to make sound judgements based on evidence. There is evidence of a progressive ability to use sources discriminately. Most pupils generally achieve at least in line with their abilities, and many achieve beyond this. Concepts such as the role of parliament, kingship, and the distinction between Puritan and Catholic beliefs, are increasingly understood. Pupils use historical sources with progressively greater effect, drawing valid conclusions from them. At Key Stage 4, most pupils achieve the national expectation in relation to their age in the lessons seen, and above this in half of them. They perform equally well in relation to their abilities. The more challenging aspects of analysing source material, for example on early blast furnaces, are mainly approached with sound historical skills and judgement. GCSE coursework shows some depth and discrimination, and is well presented. Oral work is tackled confidently. Work is generally well presented. Pupils listen well to both their teachers and to one another's points of view. Some pupils show initiative in the use of information technology in homework tasks. Reading skills are appropriate for the more demanding texts and sources as pupils progress through the key stage.

63. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at least in line with their abilities, and often beyond this.

64. At Key Stage 3 the quality of learning was sound or better in the majority of lessons and was very often good. Pupils generally show positive attitudes to their work. They work well in pairs, and as individuals, and often with enjoyment. At Key Stage 4 the quality of learning was good. Pupils are accustomed to structured working environments in which their work is valued. They respond positively to this, as attentive listeners, and as willing participants in discussions and paired work. Their skills of discriminating analysis advance in their study of new sources, texts, and video presentations.

65. At Key Stage 3, teaching quality was good and sometimes outstanding. Within a framework of whole class teaching, successful paired work was often a feature, and some quality role play and simulation was seen. The high but appropriate expectations of teachers, their use of praise, varied pace, skilful use of questions pitched to involve all pupils and the match of learning resources, combined to produce lively lessons. Work is regularly marked. Good use is made of a range of accreditation including models and posters. Occasionally some teaching was not so well matched to pupils' needs. At Key Stage 4, teaching was sound in all lessons and good in very many. Subject command is secure; teachers are increasingly familiar with the demands of GCSE work. Progress across sequences of lessons is skilfully linked; good use is made of structured learning materials and, on occasion, historical artefacts. Teachers check and monitor pupils' progress systematically. Targets for improvement, involving pupil action plans, are set and monitored. The quality of teaching is a strength of the department, and makes a positive contribution to rising standards

66. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Cross-curricular contributions are identified in the scheme of work. All elements of the revised National Curriculum Order are in place, although the use of information technology is currently at an early stage. Assessment is in line with school and departmental policies. Marking of pupils' work is normally of a high standard, helpful to parents and pupils alike. Recording is secure with provision

developing well to meet statutory requirements in 1997. Reports to parents are informative and helpful

67. History is ably managed and well led as a department in the humanities faculty. It functions as an effective team. All staff are suitably qualified. It is a young team, rapidly gaining in experience, who are tackling change and innovation in an energetic way. There is a good quality handbook. Regular meetings are held with agendas and minutes. A useful development plan, supplemented by a clear action plan, assists careful monitoring and evaluation. More precise performance indicators and success criteria would further increase the effectiveness of these processes.

68. Resources for learning are reasonably adequate, but the way in which the school allocates its capitation to departments is not fully understood by staff. The main teaching rooms are suited, of reasonable size, with furniture which permits flexible use if required. Storage space is shared, and currently constrained for the developing needs of the department. The quality of display of pupils' work, including models and posters, some making good use of information technology, is good.

## Geography

69. GCSE results in 1995 for pupils gaining A\*- C grades were below national figures for all schools although results for girls were in line with national and LEA figures. In 1994 results for both boys and girls were at about the national and LEA averages. At Key Stage 3, the standards of achievement of most pupils meet or exceed national expectations, but a significant minority achieve below this. Almost all pupils are achieving appropriately for their abilities and many achieve levels that are high. However, there is a significant minority of pupils underachieving. At Key Stage 4 most pupils achieve the national expectations with a significant minority well below this. Almost all pupils are achieving levels appropriate for their abilities with a significant minority of mainly lower ability pupils underachieving. Overall standards are better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. Standards and quality are adversely affected by non-specialist teaching. Pupils at both key stages generally acquire a sound level of geographical knowledge and competence in mapwork skills; their sketch-maps and diagrams are usually well-presented. Most pupils show an understanding of relationships between physical and human factors and related environmental issues. Pupils are generally better at describing than analysing geographical problems as an over-emphasis on descriptive writing has limited pupils' abilities to explain and reason a case. The range of statistical and graphical analysis and methodology needs further development especially at Key Stage 3. The standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs are mainly satisfactory although there is some evidence of underachievement at both key stages. Considerable progress has been made on devising materials to support special educational needs pupils, although lower ability pupils are not always well-served in GCSE groups at Key Stage 4.

70. Pupils' quality of learning at Key Stage 3 was sound or better in virtually all lessons observed; in nearly half the lessons observed learning showed many good features. At Key Stage 4 the majority of lessons were sound or better with examples of good learning. In a third of lessons there were shortcomings particularly for lower ability pupils. Pupils mainly tackle work with interest and enthusiasm, listen attentively and contribute to whole class discussion. They are being given greater opportunity to work independently, especially in small group and paired role-play activities, for example, on aspects of limestone landscapes and environmental issues. They listen to and value each other's ideas and views. However, research and enquiry skills are less well developed.

71. At Key Stage 3 the quality of teaching was sound or better in virtually all lessons observed; in nearly half of lessons observed teaching showed good features. At Key Stage 4 the majority of lessons were sound or better with examples of good teaching being observed. In a third of lessons there were shortcomings, particularly with lower ability pupils. Good teaching included well-prepared and organised lessons with clear objectives, appropriately high expectations and good relationships; tasks were suitably challenging, well paced, matched to ability and with worksheets and teachers' explanations which were specifically aimed at the range of ability in the group. Where teaching was less than sound there was a lack of clarity of purpose, insecure subject knowledge and the teaching was not planned effectively so that there were problems with aspects of classroom discipline.

72. There are effective working relationships within the department. It is well led by an acting head of department. The departmental documentation and teaching materials provide consistency across the subject and

is a basis for good planning. A strength of the curriculum area is its young specialist teachers and the good working atmosphere. In the recent past, the department has experienced staffing difficulties and as a result schemes of work are in the process of being updated. Much progress has been made in implementing the department's assessment policy. Examples were seen of outstanding marking. The restriction on the pupils able to attend the fieldwork visit to Hothersall Lodge should be reviewed. The department is in a strong position to build on its many strengths to improve standards and the quality of teaching and learning further and to ensure that its departmental development plan is fully implemented.

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

73. GCSE results at A\*-C in modern foreign languages were above the LEA and national averages in 1994 and at about the LEA average in 1995. Able pupils doing German achieved well above the national average in 1994. Results in both years were a little better than suggested by abilities as measured on entry. In lessons and other work observed during the inspection most pupils at both key stages generally achieved at or above the national expectation. Beginners achieved well for their abilities in both French and German. Able pupils in general achieved appropriately and sometimes very well at both key stages. Many lower and some middle ability learners, including some with special educational needs, had made little progress and underachieved, mainly at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3, most pupils are capable of following the foreign language at an appropriate level, whether on cassette or from the teacher. Able pupils at both key stages achieve good standards when listening and speaking, although many are still too dependent on having the written word for support. Few can freely use past or future tenses in either speech or writing, even at Key Stage 4. Some younger pupils, including Year 7 beginners, could pose questions quite well; learners in one Year 9 group had started to use the perfect tense actively in French; in Year 8 some able German beginners could speak both accurately and fluently on a good range of basic topics. Although some pupils clearly enjoy speaking the foreign language, others, particularly some girls in special needs groups, are reticent and insecure in oral work. At Key Stage 4, most lower and some middle ability pupils make little effort when listening and achieve poorly when asked to speak from memory. Most pupils however can read satisfactorily and are comfortable with dictionaries, including some special educational needs pupils. Although some Year 7 beginners and a few other Key Stage 3 learners have made a good start in writing descriptions, letters and word processed items, the range and quality of written work is largely underdeveloped across the two key stages.

74. Able pupils are almost invariably well behaved and eager to participate. They work hard, entering freely into exchanges and clearly enjoying most aspects of language learning. They respond positively to well pitched challenges and to tasks which involve working in pairs or groups. They make clear progress, whether in terms of new grammar or vocabulary or using familiar language in new situations. On the other hand, by Key Stage 4 many less able pupils had largely lost interest in their lessons, attention levels were poor and a small minority of boys occasionally disruptive. Little real progress was made; unchallenging activities such as fair copying predominated and pupils worked at half pace or less. Learning was generally much better in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum classes than in GCSE lessons. Independent reading is being developed, there is some limited access to good computer programs and learning always takes place in accommodation which is up-to-date, attractive and appropriate.

75. Teaching was at least sound and often good with abler classes although there were shortcomings in lessons with middle and lower ability groups at Key Stage 4. There is currently some temporary use of part-time non-specialist teaching but otherwise the Department is made up of six suitably qualified teachers, including two French nationals. Although on occasions the language they use is too fast or too complex, they generally use the foreign language very well, especially at Key Stage 3, pitching it carefully at levels which ensure challenge as well as comprehension. National Curriculum planning is consistently good and teacher expectations are often high in the case of abler pupils and beginners. All teachers have a good command of resources to provide variety but four of the teachers are new to teaching and have still to become fully familiar with the GCSE syllabus and with maintaining pace and challenge in classes containing reluctant learners. This is an inexperienced but hard working and well-led department.

### **Art**

76. In both 1994 and 1995 two thirds of pupils entered for GCSE art achieved grades A\* - C. This is well above national and LEA averages. From lesson observations at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 the substantial majority of pupils achieve the national expectation in art and some achieve beyond it. When account is taken of ability almost all are achieving appropriately and a significant number are achieving levels that are high for their ability. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in this department. Pupils demonstrate very sound levels of technical and expressive skill in their work and the capacity to undertake and sustain quite lengthy and demanding projects. They are becoming familiar with an appropriate range of artists and artistic and craft traditions and they are beginning to integrate their theoretical and practical studies effectively.

77. In all the lessons observed there were good features in pupils' learning, none had major shortcomings and good progress is made both in lessons and in the longer term. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are familiar with a range of resources and materials which they employ using appropriate techniques. This includes graphic, paint and print media, collage and some three-dimensional media. At Key Stage 4 the range is broadened to include textiles and photography. There was no evidence of pupils using information technology in art. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to the subject, are well motivated, work co-operatively when required and most are confident in discussion.

78. In all the lessons observed the teaching was never less than sound and much of it contained good features. Pupils are offered a balanced programme of art, craft and design activities which encourages the progressive development of skills. Staff expectations of pupils are high. Learning objectives are clear and shared with the pupils; content is appropriate and the work is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. All the teachers have a secure command of the subject and motivate and challenge pupils to produce their best work. Pupils are encouraged to look critically at their work and to seek ways in which it could be improved. Relationships are usually warm and always respectful.

79. The department benefits from strong, purposeful and effective leadership. The departmental development plan is broad ranging and contains realistic targets which address the department's priorities. Schemes of work and individual lesson plans are thoroughly detailed and carefully but flexibly followed. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met with the exception of that to provide pupils with opportunities to develop information technology capability.

## **Music**

80. Although some pupils perform and compose at commendable levels of achievement, the standards of the majority at Key Stage 3 and 4 are less than satisfactory and significantly so in GCSE results over the last two years. A detailed scheme of work provides a basis for fulfilling the requirements of the National Curriculum but teaching styles and delivery inhibit practical music-making; opportunities for pupils to make progress as musicians are rare. There is an emphasis on learning about music before experiencing it. Singing, taught to the choir with flair and accomplishment, is rarely used in the classroom. Lesson targets and tasks, well resourced with worksheets, are largely written exercises often unrelated to sound or practical music-making. Well-behaved, responsive pupils spend much time learning about musical notation before being able to explore sounds in the preparatory stages of composing, performing and appraising.

81. Effective musical learning is evident for those pupils who are taught brass, stringed and woodwind instruments by visiting teachers and who play in the orchestra or sing in the choir. For the majority, access to a wide range of sound sources and opportunities to experiment are limited.

82. The flexibility of the present curriculum and staffing organisation is not always used to advantage and at times adversely affects the quality of learning for pupils. There is an imbalance in the weight of responsibility within the department. However, the recent inclusion in a larger faculty structure has benefited the music department especially in the development and monitoring of consistent systems for assessment, recording and reporting and in the identification of pupils with special educational needs. The generous allocation of staff for learning support enables effective monitoring of progress of less able individuals and musically outstanding pupils. A high degree of sensitivity and care for such pupils was apparent. In other instances, however, the learning support facility is ineffective.

83.Resources available for learning are of good quality but restricted in range and variety and there is no access to the information technology equipment for the majority of pupils.

84.The school choir and orchestra give performances in the community and participate in local music festivals as well as the school's carol service and variety show. A great deal of effort goes into the preparation of these activities and the worthwhile musical outcomes benefit the wider community of the school in addition to the direct musical advantages for the participants.

## **Physical Education**

85.Standards in the practical aspects of physical education are higher at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. Pupils at Key Stage 3 demonstrated appropriate levels of skill in the activities of the National Curriculum. Individual technique in games is well-developed by the majority of pupils although some are less confident in their application of tactics and attacking/defensive strategies. The standards displayed by many pupils in hockey are consistently high. Pupils across both key stages generally value exercise but their knowledge of the meaning of physical fitness is not always apparent. Provision for swimming is generous and generates good levels of achievement. GCSE results are above national and county averages. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the work of the department and make good progress.

86.The quality of learning is good at Key Stage 3 and broadly sound at Key Stage 4. Pupils generally make good progress in physical education. They are prepared to extend themselves physically and sustain their practice in elevating performance levels. They co-operate well and compete fairly in games. They apply the guidance offered by their teachers in an effective manner and evaluate their actions to good effect. In some lessons the relatively high level of non-participation detracts from overall progress, particularly at Key Stage 4.

87.The teaching of physical education is undertaken by a team of committed specialists who give freely of their time to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Teaching is consistently good in Key Stage 3 and is characterised by clear and helpful guidance given to pupils to enhance their learning, together with high levels of activity. This was particularly noticeable in the teaching of invasion games in which clear expectations were conveyed to the pupils about the purpose of the lesson and its relationship to past and future work. Whilst basically sound, some teaching at Key Stage 4 has shortcomings in that it presents inappropriate challenges (to some pupils).

88.The department is efficiently managed and effectively utilises its facilities by offering an appropriate range of activities to pupils, although current provision for cricket and net games is limited at Key Stage 3. The assessment scheme is manageable and provides meaningful information about pupils' progress, although its use in curriculum planning is not sufficiently exploited. Insufficient time is allocated to physical education in Key Stage 4 to enable the majority of pupils to benefit from a progressive and balanced experience of physical activity for the majority of pupils.

89.Extra-curricular provision enables many pupils to pursue their learning across a range of activities. School teams excel in local and regional competition whilst the opportunity to experience the benefits of outdoor and adventurous activity is offered on a frequent and regular basis.

## **Religious Education**

90.In lessons observed and work seen at Key Stage 3, pupils' achievement, when measured against the standards expected by the Agreed Syllabus, was almost always appropriate with many achieving above it. Some pupils achieve below that expectation. At Key Stage 4, where there was a limited opportunity for observation, most pupils achieve that expectation. When achievement is set against pupils' abilities, at Key Stage 3, almost all pupils are achieving levels appropriate for their abilities with many achieving beyond that. There is also some underachievement. At Key Stage 4 almost all were achieving appropriately. No judgement of pupil standards in the GCSE examination was possible as such courses have only recently been introduced.

91.Pupils' learning had sound features in most of the lessons observed at Key Stage 3. There were shortcoming



in important areas where pupils were taught by those lacking subject specialist qualification. At Key Stage 4 pupils' learning was sound in lessons observed. The planning of new courses to the Agreed Syllabus requirements is ensuring that learning transcends the acquisition of a narrow range of knowledge about particular religious traditions and moves to develop an understanding of beliefs central to particular religions and to reflective thinking on pupils' own search for meaning and value. Many pupils revealed a fascination for the subject and make perceptive observations. Proposals for the introduction of a GCSE short course and in-house certification of Key Stage 4 programmes are to be commended.

92.The teaching was sound in most lessons observed at Key Stage 3 and had many good features. At Key Stage 4 teaching was always sound. The quality of teaching is adversely affected where non-specialist teachers are used.

93.The subject is well managed by a new head of department who has clear plans for development. There are a number of identified weaknesses, the overcoming of which should be given high priority. There is one specialist teacher and eleven non-specialist teachers. Further progress on the deployment of the Agreed Syllabus will be dependent on good quality specialist teaching. The time-table provision for teaching the subject is insufficient to allow the school fully to teach the Agreed Syllabus. This is especially marked at Key Stage 4 where the majority of pupils in Year 10 receive significantly less teaching than others. There are limited learning resources available to teachers. This is especially important given that teaching of the subject is exclusively to mixed ability groups. Many classes are taught in the dining hall where teaching accommodation is unsuitable.

## **7 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FINDINGS**

### **7.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING**

94.In just over three quarters of lessons observed the quality of teaching was sound or better. In nearly half it had good features and no major shortcomings. Teaching at Key Stage 3 was slightly better than at Key Stage 4. Good teaching was observed in all subjects except music and a high proportion of sound and good teaching was observed in art, history, German and technology. In nearly a quarter of lessons seen the teaching had shortcomings in important areas.

95.In most lessons the work is well planned according to schemes of work which are related to the requirements of the National Curriculum. In the best the planning not only covers content but also pace, methodology and a variety of tasks and activities. Progress in matching the level of work to the various abilities of the pupils varies among subjects. Differentiation in teaching is a priority of the school and should be pursued so that the best quality work is discussed and disseminated by departments. The subject knowledge of staff is generally sound, the exception being where non specialist, or temporary staff have been employed sometimes to cover long term absence.

96.Teachers use a good variety of teaching techniques: in English tasks are often varied and well matched to the abilities of pupils who are encouraged to work co-operatively, sometimes outside their usual friendship groups. In some mathematics lessons objectives are clear and teachers have confidence in managing set tasks to be accomplished at predetermined times. In science a majority of lessons show skilful questioning, clear exposition and interesting work relevant to pupils' abilities. In technology practical skills and associated health and safety issues are well taught. There is good differentiated support material in food technology and high expectations in business studies. In foreign languages most teachers use the target language well, especially at Key Stage 3, pitching it carefully at levels which ensure challenge as well as comprehension. History lessons often have a clear focus shared by pupils. Teachers' expectations are high; they challenge pupils, use their subject expertise in questioning and reinforce the work with appropriate text books and other learning resources. In geography tasks are often suitably challenging, well paced and supported by worksheets and explanations suited to the range of ability in the group. In art pupils are encouraged to create their own art work and to undertake independent research, often for homework. They are also given direct instruction about the nature and history of art. In music there is expertise in the department to nurture the potential of choir and orchestra. In physical education where teaching is good the quality of technical feedback is high. Subject specialist teaching in religious education, where it occurs, supports pupils in the development of personal meaning through an

encounter with religious belief.

97. When teaching had shortcomings expectations were low, the pace too slow and techniques for classroom management were insecure. In these lessons tasks were sometimes dominated by low level copying, exercises the purpose of which was not clear, or unskilful teacher exposition. Some group work was insufficiently structured so that pupils lost concentration and even became disruptive.

98. Work is marked diligently by most teachers. An agreed school marking policy is in place, but there is some unevenness in marking across and between departments. Departments should continue to monitor their marking and assessment to ensure that the policy is consistently carried out. Most teachers work very hard and are committed to the progress of their pupils and the enhancement of the quality of their work. Relationships between teachers and pupils are usually friendly and productive. The school is in a good position to consolidate its emphasis on good teaching and high standards and to ensure that the quality of the best specialist teaching is discussed and shared by all staff.

## **7.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

99. The school has given a high priority to assessment, recording and reporting during the last two years. Clear, comprehensive and useful policies on many aspects, including marking, as well as clear practical guidance have been devised by widely representative working groups. Together, these provide an effective rationale for assessment; they indicate a good understanding of its purposes and functions and identify the responsibilities of subject and pastoral staff. All departments have interpreted the school policies in order to devise their own procedures and practices and are now in the process of implementing them. Most departments use a good range of assessment methods, including end of unit tests, work completed in class and at home as well as investigations and some fieldwork. All departments are in the process of compiling departmental portfolios to support moderation of achievement: good examples were seen in English, modern foreign languages and science.

100. Marking of pupils' work is regular and often thoughtful; the best is exemplary, although written comments are of variable length and quality both within and between departments. Good examples were seen in art, geography, English, history and mathematics: pupils received detailed, supportive and constructive comments which identified criteria for success as well as offering advice for future work. Although encouragement is given by many teachers, particular areas of strength and weakness are not always identified in detail. Recording in physical education, although consistent, is not sufficiently tied in to the learning objectives of specific areas of the department's provision. Pupils in some subjects, notably English and drama, contribute to assessments of their own work.

101. Many pupils at Key Stage 4, and especially Year 11, work with considerable commitment and value the opportunity to complete and word process a national record of achievement which acts as a summative statement of the range of their achievements while in school. Younger pupils are introduced to some elements of this process of self-evaluation: these include the setting and reviewing of personal targets; pupils in Year 9 write a personal statement of achievement. However, pupils at Key Stage 3 have less time and fewer opportunities than older pupils to undertake this process in a systematic way.

102. The school has successfully refined and considerably improved the format of reports to parents so that their layout is now clear and consistent; they cover attainment and progress as well as personal and social skills. Most subject teachers' comments are evaluative, linked to the National Curriculum and offer specific targets for improvement. The new system is already being evaluated. Many parents indicated that the reports they received were helpful.

103. In addition to the twice yearly, detailed reporting to parents, pupils' progress is also systematically monitored on two other occasions during the year. The resulting information enables departments, form tutors and senior staff to compare individual pupils' performances across subjects. Departments are then in a position to monitor some pupils' progress closely. In addition a group of underachieving pupils in Year 11 is identified and given extra support and attention.

104. The school meets current requirements for the assessment of the National Curriculum for science,

mathematics and English and informs parents of their children's performance as well as results for the school as a whole. It complies with all other requirements for the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment. Annual reviews of the statements of pupils with special educational needs are well-organised and parents are fully involved.

105. The school has been successful in devising policies and practices for assessment, recording and reporting. Staff have been given supportive training on the new school procedures. A considerable amount of data related to pupils' achievement on entry, information from primary schools, GCSE results and internal assessment practices has been gathered systematically. Departments, which include a large number of young and inexperienced teachers, now require time and opportunities to work together in order to evaluate their practices and to review and moderate pupils' work in order to utilise fully the evidence they have gathered about pupils' achievements and to use it to inform their future planning.

### **7.3 THE CURRICULUM**

#### **(i) Quality and range**

106. The curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 complies fully with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The length of the taught week (25 hours) exceeds government recommendations. At both key stages pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. At Key Stage 3, in addition to the National Curriculum subjects, pupils study personal and social education (PSE), a weekly lesson of information technology and religious education. In Years 7 and 8, pupils spend one period per week for half the year being taught drama in small groups; in Year 9 this period is replaced by a careers lesson. All pupils study French as their first foreign language; able linguists have only one period of physical education and two periods of French in order to provide time to study German. A small group of pupils in Year 7 choose to attend a Latin class for one hour a week after school. The PSE programme is taught partly by form tutors at the beginning of day and partly by a small specialist team as a modular course. The latter is well planned, covers suitable topics and is consistently taught; there is, however, relatively little time for form tutors to augment this programme.

107. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum both meets and exceeds the current requirements of the National Curriculum. All pupils follow a common curriculum of English, mathematics, science, physical education, a technology subject, a modern foreign language, history or geography and a PSE course. In addition, pupils choose one option from a variety of arts subject, electronics or GCSE religious education or physical education. Some pupils attend local further education colleges to study for GNVQ courses as part of this option pool or for their technology course. Time allocations are appropriate except for religious education for which insufficient time is available to meet all the needs of the Agreed Syllabus and for physical education for which one period a week does not currently provide a balanced and varied programme for all pupils. Careers education in Years 9-11 helps pupils to prepare for decisions which have to be made about continued education and adult life. The majority of pupils at Key Stage 4 also benefit from the time they spend on community work and work experience, although the minority of pupils who study a second modern foreign language do not undertake the community work. The PSE programme is further enhanced by well-taught short courses in health and education and information technology. Urdu at GCSE level is offered to pupils who choose it at a local college after school hours.

108. Pupils are placed in mixed ability tutor groups in Year 7 and taught in these groups or small mixed ability groups for all subjects except mathematics in which they are taught in ability groups. In Years 8 and 9 pupils are largely taught in ability groups or in small mixed ability groups for practical subjects. In these two years the least able are withdrawn for mathematics and English lessons and taught the National Curriculum by special needs teachers. While pupils clearly benefit from being taught practical subjects in small classes, there are some anomalies in the groupings so that some pupils in Year 8 are taught geography in mixed ability groups while others are taught in ability groups; most music classes are taught by two teachers. There is little provision of support teaching to help lower attainers or bilingual pupils.

109. A reasonable range of homework tasks is set in accordance with a central timetable and in line with school policy. On the whole, these tasks complement work done in class and make a useful contribution to pupils'

learning. The majority of pupils are conscientious in recording their homework in diaries.

110.The curriculum is supported by an extensive and varied range of extra-curricular activities, which help pupils to extend their expertise in activities related to the subjects they are studying as well as catering for a wide range of leisure and recreational interests. This is a highly beneficial feature of the overall life of the school and one to which many pupils respond positively.

111.The governing body receives reports and information about the curriculum from a curriculum group of teachers but has no curriculum committee of its own. This should be reviewed. In general, however, governors make informed decisions about the curriculum and fulfil their legal obligations.

## **(ii) Equality of opportunity**

112.The school has an equal opportunities policy which addresses gender, ethnicity and ability. The school seeks to enact this policy by providing equal access to the curriculum for all its pupils. This is generally realised in practice. Most subject departments have incorporated the school equal opportunities policy into their own documentation. Texts and teaching materials are monitored by a number of departments for example, English and history, to eliminate gender or cultural bias.

113.The ability level of pupils in some subjects results in different provision. Pupils selected to study a second foreign language in Year 8 and Year 9, for instance, do so at the expense of one period of physical education. This makes for some difficulty in covering the physical education programmes of study. In geography, only pupils of higher ability are offered the opportunity of a residential field course. Lower ability pupils in science do not benefit from 'science in society' visits.

114.There are no barriers to access to Key Stage 4 courses and the range available allows the needs of all pupils to be met through appropriate courses. The school undertakes some monitoring of option choices but there is still some evidence of traditional gender choices with many more girls than boys, for instance, studying a second foreign language at Key Stage 4.

115.Access to extra-curricular activity for all pupils is vigorously promoted, although attendance by pupils of Asian heritage is comparatively low. The school seeks to provide experiences and opportunity for all through afternoon theatre visits, and a broad range of extra-curricular sport and leisure activities.

116.The school has embarked upon the process of monitoring the academic performance of pupils with regard to gender and ethnicity. This exercise has yielded useful information and identified patterns of high and low achievement. This initiative should now be taken forward by the implementation of suitable teaching strategies to enhance the performance of pupils who underachieve.

117.There are no female teachers on the senior management team and this deprives girls of an appropriate role model and limits the representation of female perspectives at the highest level in the school. The school is aware of the situation.

## **7.4 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

118.The percentage of pupils diagnosed as having special educational needs (SEN) has been high in recent years, amounting to about 30% of the school population. Although the trend is downwards, current levels are still significantly above the county and national averages. There are 21 pupils with statements of special need and this number is broadly average for the type of school. The LEA notional funding to support non-statemented special needs amounts to £239,456 and the school is spending at least up to this amount through increased teacher deployment and material resources for such pupils.

119.The school's policies and procedures for pupils identified as having special educational needs are effective. Further revision is being carried out through a special educational needs development plan which clearly addresses the requirements of the Code of Practice. There is a designated governor for special educational needs.

A hard-working and committed head of learning support provides good leadership of special educational needs despite constraints of time-tabling arrangements and additional duties. These constraints hinder the achievement of the school's goal, of meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice. Support teachers contribute significantly to the learning of pupils with statements of special educational need through collaborative planning arrangements and effective deployment. The quality of this support is recognised and valued by the school.

120. A comprehensive register of all pupils with special educational needs is maintained and is made available to all subject departments. A regular schedule of meetings between the head of learning support and subject special educational needs link tutors provides for guidance, review and systematic information exchange about pupils with special educational needs. Where the need for closer parental involvement is considered necessary appropriate arrangements are made.

121. The aim of the learning support department to provide full access to the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is largely realised. Two pupils are withdrawn from the study of foreign languages and receive enhanced support in communication skills. The smaller teaching groups for lower ability pupils, together with access to an appropriate range of differentiated teaching materials, in Year 8 and Year 9 produce good levels of achievement in a number of subject areas, often above what might be expected for their ability. There is underachievement by lower ability pupils in modern foreign languages. At Key Stage 4, where support is less evident, lower ability pupils do not make sufficient, consistent progress across a range of subjects.

122. Learning support is managed efficiently and makes a positive contribution to the learning and achievement of the majority of special educational need pupils. For those pupils with an existing statement of educational need good provision is made including a regular statement review and the translation of statements into well-targeted individual education plans (IEPs). There is a comprehensive pro-forma available to subject departments for the initial identification and diagnoses of pupils perceived to be experiencing difficulties. IEPs resulting from such diagnoses merit further development particularly with regard to the setting of subject specific learning outcomes.

123. Worthwhile initiatives have been undertaken by the Learning Support Department involving extra-curricular special educational needs provision such as the homework club and paired reading.

## **7.5 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

124. The school has clearly defined aims deriving from a school mission statement. These general aims are interpreted as values and are developed into more specific aims under the headings of intellectual, aesthetic and creative, physical, personal and social. The school has a wide range of policies which were reviewed in February of the current year though some of them had been in existence for quite a short time. The school has recently gained the Investors in People award.

125. The school is supported by an active, committed and well informed governing body which fulfils its legal responsibilities. The governors meet termly and are fully informed by their five standing committees for Personnel, Finance and General Purposes, Site and Buildings, Discipline and Grievance and Health and Safety. All these groups have terms of reference and meet regularly. There is no governors' curriculum committee though there is a group made up of teachers and governors which advises the governing body. Working groups are established to meet particular needs when appropriate. The governors should consider setting up a full curriculum committee with terms of reference. There is an identified special educational needs governor.

126. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and enjoys the full support of the governing body. As a result of deputy head promotions there has recently been a review of the senior management structure and a decision to move to a more team-orientated structure. The senior management team is now made up of headteacher, heads of lower and upper school, curriculum development and pupil performance co-ordinators and the business and finance manager. The group meets regularly with published agenda and minutes which contain specific action points. This movement to a flatter management structure will need regular reviewing to ensure it is achieving its objectives. The Curriculum Management Team meeting is the main middle management forum, though there are also two pastoral management teams meeting as lower and upper school bodies. All groups meet monthly with agendas and minutes and their operating structure reflects the pastoral and academic

structure of the school. Not all these groups have terms of reference and contribution to policy is assumed but not clearly stated. There are also regular departmental and pastoral year meetings as part of a whole cycle of school meetings. The senior management team has recently made the decision to link its members to specific departments and this should be taken forward to ensure closer support and monitoring of classroom effectiveness to raise pupil achievement further. This is a necessary step. To ensure a productive outcome of these decisions it will also be necessary to review the teaching commitments of members of senior and middle management, some of whom lack the time to fulfil their responsibilities.

127.The school's routine organisation and administration is good and benefits from a staff handbook which informs all staff of agreed procedures. Communication systems within the school are effective through clearly understood processes. There is a weekly staff information bulletin with a daily briefing supported by daily notices. An annual calendar of school events is in place with a separate list of internal meetings. Communication with parents through the prospectus, individual letters and meetings is good.

128.The school has a three year development plan in place set against six key goals and has related departmental plans. Both the school and departmental plans are effective planning tools with precise performance indicators, but the process is driven by the key issues and is not as focused as it should be on curriculum and classroom effectiveness. In the light of the good work the school is doing on identification of underachievement there is now a need to plan more precisely the processes and actions needed to move forward from the identification of underachievement to the improvement of classroom practice. In particular, attention should be given to the support of heads of subjects and other co-ordinators in their efforts to raise standards. There are several working groups operating within the school with membership made up of interested people and representation of appropriate responsibilities; these groups make a useful contribution to the running of the school.

129.Mansfield has a hard working staff with strong overall management. There is a need now to be more responsive to pressures and initiatives from subject and co-ordinator level. In this way the quality of classroom provision can be further enhanced and pupils' achievement improved.

## **7.6 STAFF, LEARNING RESOURCES AND ACCOMMODATION**

### **(i) Teaching and non-teaching staff**

130.The school is adequately staffed to deliver the current curriculum. 62% of the staff have first degrees plus a postgraduate certificate of education. This is considerably higher than the national average for comprehensive schools. 17% have a bachelor of education degree and 19% have a teachers' certificate only.

131.The match between teachers' qualifications and their teaching commitment is generally good with the vast majority of lessons taught by teachers qualified in the subject. There is, however, some non-specialist teaching in music and religious education which adversely affects standards in those subjects. Temporary appointments, owing to long term, unforeseeable, staff absence have also lowered quality in English and to some degree in mathematics, modern languages and geography. The school has plans to remedy these deficiencies as soon as is practicable.

132.Of the teachers, 62% are below 40 years old and 32% are below 30. The age profile of the staff is much younger than that of an average secondary school. 63% of staff have less than 5 years' service; 10% have between 5 and 10 years, 17% between 10 and 20 years and 10% over 20 years. The average length of service is 6.33 years. This is a very low figure for secondary schools in the LEA.

133.There is a well documented policy and procedure for the induction of new staff which has coped well with the recent high staff turnover. The system places great emphasis on inducting new staff into the ethos and values of the school and received its Investors In People award partly as a result of the quality of its induction and training programmes. In some areas, however, newly qualified staff need more support with class management and the organisation of learning in their subject than is currently being offered. Training and professional development for all staff is well managed with clear procedures and lines of responsibility for identifying training needs, linking with the school and departmental development plans, and for dissemination.

The development plan indicates an intention to establish a system of performance review for staff in positions of responsibility, involving regular contact, monitoring, and support from members of the senior management team. This will further improve the quality of professional development.

134.The school has adopted the LEA appraisal scheme for teachers and has carried out a complete cycle of appraisal. Not all staff currently employed have been appraised.

135.The average teaching load is 80.5% which is relatively high for similar schools in the LEA. The pupil teacher ratio at 18.1 is also high as is the overall average group size of 22.5. This places considerable demands on staff, particularly at times of high staff absence when non-contact time is lost. As budget constraints allow, the school should review its deployment of staff.

136.Agreed job description are in place for all teaching staff, based on generic models. These are reviewed annually and line management responsibilities are clearly identified. There are job descriptions also for non-teaching staff.

137.Twelve full-time non-teaching staff are employed, including a business and finance manager, a bursar, a general office manager, a personal assistant to the headteacher, an assistant office manager, an administration and reprographics assistant, a telephone receptionist, a site supervisor, an assistant site supervisor; there are two technicians in science and a workshop/information technology technician. There is no library technician. These staff are included in the Investors In People programme and play a valued role in the life and work of the school. Day to day administration is extremely efficient.

## **(ii) Resources for learning**

138.Resources are generally adequate. Spending per pupil on books is well above the LEA average. Allocation of capitation to departments is based on an annual bidding process against development plan priorities. 15% of budget has to be bid against special educational needs and budgeted appropriately, though in practice, provision for special educational needs pupils varies between subjects. The actual allocation of money is decided by the headteacher and the business and finance manager.

139.The library's bookstock and other resources, including a CD-ROM and the computerisation of the issuing and stock control, have been considerably updated and enhanced during the last two years as a result of a good level of funding from a range of sources. The book stock is in line with national recommendations; the fiction is varied and well displayed; the non-fiction is attractive, recent and largely matched to curriculum needs. Pupils use the library for a range of relevant purposes at lunch-times and after school. About 500 pupils currently have a book on loan; both boys and girls in Years 7 and 8 borrow fiction and non-fiction for private reading and research homework in a range of subjects, although relatively few pupils at Key Stage 4 make use of the facilities. The library is well managed by a teacher/librarian who devotes a large amount of time and effort to the administration of the library in the absence of any clerical help or adult presence throughout the day. As a result of the expansion of the resources and the inclusion of some information technology equipment, the library is now crowded and rather cramped. The school has plans to enlarge and upgrade the accommodation in the near future. Currently it is difficult for departments to take pupils into the library in lesson time to use the upgraded facilities as it is used as a teaching space for PSE.

140.The overall ratio of computers to pupils is nearly 7 to 1 which is significantly better than the national average. Some machines are quite old but generally the stock is good. The school is conscious of the need to ensure greater usage of machines by all subjects to ensure that information technology is delivered across all curriculum areas.

141.Good use is made of additional funds received and the school has a clear charging policy which conforms to national requirements.

142.The school manages its overall budget well and has ensured that departments are generally well resourced. To support the school's target of raising achievement it will need to ensure that resources in some areas are more closely related to identified need and monitored more systematically through its regular planning cycle.

### **(iii) Accommodation**

143.The school is housed on an awkward site in a number of buildings erected at various times in the last 50 years. The playing fields are within walking distance. The governors' Site and Buildings Committee has pursued a vigorous and far-sighted policy of improvement and refurbishment: in recent years the exterior of the main block has been repainted and the interior up-graded and there are plans for the enhancement of the remaining buildings; new buildings have been added for technology and foreign languages; an all weather pitch has been constructed; the music and reception areas have been re-equipped; a new sports hall to be shared with the local community is being planned. Premises costs are currently running at 24.4% of the budget.

144.A Business and Finance Manager is in operational charge of the maintenance and improvement of the fabric of the school and this work is carried out very efficiently. Considerable savings on various contracts have been achieved and the school has been active and successful in securing funds from various sources.

145.There is a rolling programme for re-decoration and repair. Litter is a problem but it is quickly cleared by the site supervisor. No graffiti or wilful damage was observed during the inspection and pupils generally respect and look after the school. Because of the nature of the site some constricted walkways and steep steps are a potential hazard at times of maximum pupil movement.

146.Departments are based for the most part in suited areas and little specialist teaching takes place outside specialist accommodation. The quality of display both in subject areas and more generally is very good: in the public areas there are photographs and displays celebrating pupils' successes and in the classrooms there is much well-presented pupils' work and other educational materials. Pupils respect this work and no case of damage to display was observed.

147.Some girls' toilets are in poor condition and were the subject of a number of complaints by parents and pupils before and during the inspection. During the inspection one toilet area was being refurbished and there are plans to bring all girls' toilets up to an acceptable standard. The school should complete this work as soon as possible.

148.There is considerable pressure on all accommodation as the school grows in size, but successful planning and careful management have ensured that it is always adequate and in some areas excellent.

## **7.7 PUPILS' WELFARE AND GUIDANCE**

149.The welfare and guidance of pupils is given high priority by the school and is generally valued by pupils and parents. Form tutors are central to pastoral care with year heads co-ordinating provision. Established procedures provide form tutors with useful information about the academic progress of pupils together with their attitudes to work through a system of effort grades. Pupils giving cause for concern are identified and appropriate support given. Most form tutors know their pupils well and relationships of trust are apparent. A review of the pastoral programme has led to the successful introduction of a specific personal and social education (PSE) curriculum taught primarily by specialist teachers. The work is well-planned and effectively taught. The small element of PSE provision remaining within the form tutor period is supported with suitable resources but the quality of teaching is variable. Policy statements have been drawn up for health and sex education which provide clear guidance to parents about the taught programme. The school has been successful in securing additional funding through the Local Education Authority for health and drugs education.

150.Careers education and the work experience programme are exceptionally effective and valued by senior pupils. The careers resource area, to which pupils have good access, contains a wide range of informative materials. The careers service is used extensively by the school and is available to pupils on a frequent and regular basis. Speakers from a number of post-16 institutions and local industry periodically meet with pupils adding further to informed decision-making by pupils about occupational choice. Careers education is a strength of the school.

151.The school has designated members of the senior management team to oversee child protection issues.



Procedures to deal with pupils taken ill, or suffering from accidents during the course of the day are well-established and access to medical personnel and qualified first -aiders is clearly communicated.

152. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy which is conscientiously monitored by the health and safety committee which includes expertise from the local community.

153. Some aspects of pupil organisation and supervision over break and lunch times, particularly relating to the well-being of girls, merit review.

## **7.8 LINKS WITH PARENTS, AGENCIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

154. The school makes considerable efforts to involve parents and issues a parent school charter to the parents of children new to the school. This covers a wide range of issues including attendance and discipline and states that the school has an open door policy. Full reports are issued twice a year as well as supplementary reports, but reports are not always linked to parents' evenings. Around 60% of parents attended a recent parents' evening in the lower school but the proportion of ethnic minority parents attending was much lower. The school should seek ways of involving these parents more fully in the education of their children. Some parents were also critical of the way some parents' evenings were run and arrangements have been improved as a result. The school's parent teacher association make a contribution to funds for each department although comparatively few parents are involved in its activities.

155. The school's relationships with industry are very extensive and are a strength of the school. The opportunities that these links offer are harnessed effectively in a way that is beneficial across a wide range of curricular activities. Planning for these activities is well thought out, resourced and energetically teacher-led. The Young Enterprise club makes a particularly good contribution to broadening the experiences of pupils. Industrial expertise is used to enhance school learning and to raise pupils' aspirations and confidence.

156. The school has a clear, detailed and comprehensive policy for all subjects regarding transfer from primary school and effective arrangements are in place for the transfer of primary pupils. Curricular links with primary schools have recently been enhanced and are kept under review. Information on individual pupils is disseminated well to all departments. Primary links are well managed and appreciated by the schools involved. The transfer of pastoral information is very good and all Year 7 pupils interviewed during the inspection settled in very quickly and saw themselves as part of a caring community. Post-16 information and presentations are very good and there are useful and productive links with local colleges of further education. Use is also made of further education specialist provision for GNVQ and a drama course is conducted by another local secondary school. Further education providers have already made plans for how the GNVQ course can better meet the needs of school students in the future. These links work well for student learning in the vast majority of cases but a small number of lower ability students find it difficult to reach the appropriate level for one existing course. A review is planned. In the past two years, two pupils have achieved entry to Gordonstone School.

157. All pupils are sent on 10 days' work experience in Year 11 and only a small minority of pupils are found to be unsuitable for their placement. Pupils go through a programme of preparation for work experience and several debriefing sessions based on their diaries on return to school. Work experience is only formally integrated into the curriculum in English but has positive benefits in a number of other curricular areas such as information technology and craft design and technology. There is some overlap between the work experience and community involvement programme though both these opportunities for sampling life after school are welcomed by most pupils. Work experience and community involvement placements visited were well organised and met the needs of the pupils except in one exceptional case.

158. While there is currently some use of the school as a community resource, expansion is planned. The pupils provide much assistance to the community through their efforts in raising money and distributing goods to the more needy in their local area.

159. Pastoral and academic transfer arrangements help pupils to take advantage of the curricular opportunities offered by secondary school. Parental provision of funds through the PTA makes a contribution to the environment, safety and the curriculum of the school. Young Enterprise in particular and links with industry

generally are used very effectively to enhance school learning.

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