

INSPECTION REPORT

Airedale High School
Castleford

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique Reference Number: 108278

Headteacher: Mr. M.J. Bucktrout

Reporting inspector: Mr S Freeman
2636

Dates of inspection: 11th – 15th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708011
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown Copyright 1999

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crewe Road Airedale Castleford West Yorkshire WF10 3JU
Telephone number:	01977 722180
Fax number:	01977 722182
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Prime
Date of previous inspection:	18 January 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr S Freeman, Registered Inspector		Attainment & progress Teaching Curriculum & assessment Leadership & management Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnerships with parents and the community Staffing and learning resources Efficiency of the school
Mrs G Marsland		
Mr I Middlebrough	English	
Mr C Edney	Maths	
Mr K Hounslow	Science	
Mr C Collinson	Equal opportunities	Accommodation
Mr I Waters	Information technology	
Mr F Evans	Modern foreign languages	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	History	
Mr M Gallagher	Religious education	
Mr J Pickering	Geography	
Mrs E Charlesworth	Art	
Mr P Stevens	Music	
Mr K Boden	Special educational needs	
Mrs S Jeffray	Design and technology	
	Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Tel: 0161 282 2982

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

1 - 5

Characteristics of the school
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

6 - 28

Attainment and progress
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Attendance

Quality of education provided

29 - 78

Teaching
The curriculum and assessment
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Partnership with parents and the community

The management and efficiency of the school

79 - 101

Leadership and management
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
The efficiency of the school

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 102 - 136

Other subjects or courses 137 - 238

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 239 - 243

Data and indicators Pages 64 - 66

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- . Attainment in national curriculum tests and GCSE examinations is well above the average for similar schools.
- . A good firm foundation is beginning to be laid in literacy.
- . Procedures for support, guidance and pupils' welfare are good. Careers education and guidance are very good.
- . Very good mentoring of pupils in Years 10 and 11 promotes positive attitudes to learning and raises attainment.
- . Relationships are good among pupils and between pupils and teachers. The behaviour management group works well with staff in promoting good behaviour and dealing swiftly with behaviour difficulties.
- . Teaching is good in both key stages in mathematics, geography, history, modern languages, physical education, dance and drama.
- . Teaching was good or better in half of all lessons observed.
- . The overall leadership and management of the school is good. The vision, drive and leadership of the principal is very good.
- . The school ethos is good; the school aims and values are evident in its work, provision for pupils' social and cultural development is good. It is committed to raising attainment and providing equality of opportunity for all.
- . Staff work hard, are highly committed to the school and work well as a team. All staff are supported by very good professional development.
- . Accommodation provides a very good environment for learning and is treated with respect by pupils.
- . Resources are good and provide strong support for teaching and learning.
- . Financial control and school administrative procedures are very good. The school has been exceptionally successful in obtaining grant funding to support strategic developments. It provides good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment is below national standards in all statutory subjects except design and technology, modern languages and physical education in Key Stage 3; French and physical education in Key Stage 4.

- II. Standards are below average in literacy, numeracy and information technology throughout the school.
- III. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It was a key issue in the last report.
- IV. Teaching in 13 percent of lessons observed was unsatisfactory in Year 7.
- V. The Key Stage 4 curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in information technology or provide the depth of experience required in physical education. Provision for music is unsatisfactory.
- VI. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting the progress of pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory.
- VII. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Also, the school does not attempt to fulfil the educational or statutory requirements for collective worship; this was a key issue in the last report.
- VIII. Some statutory information is not provided for parents.
- IX. Insufficient attention is paid to some aspects of pupils' health and safety.

This is an improving school whose strengths outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The improvements have been greater than expected, particularly since September 1997. Evidence indicates a strong improvement in the ethos of the school, particularly the concern for higher achievement. There has been a steady improvement in attainment since the last inspection. The proportion of good and very good teaching has improved from four lessons in ten to five in every ten. The staff and governing body are more effectively involved in the strategic management of the school. The school has improved procedures to monitor and raise attendance. However, the overall rate of attendance has not improved. A key issue in the last inspection required the school to review choice procedures to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum for all in Key Stage 4. There has been a very good improvement in this aspect. Parents strongly praise the support available and the thorough and conscientious assistance of staff in helping pupils to make appropriate choices in Year 9. The equipment provided for information technology has improved dramatically. Curriculum provision in information technology was a key issue in the last inspection. There has been insufficient improvement and it still does not meet statutory requirements in Key Stage 4. Assessment was a key issue in the last report. There has been a good improvement in the use of assessment data, with more systematic evaluation of school, subject and, particularly, pupils' performance. There has been no improvement in collective worship. Accommodation and the provision of learning resources are much improved. A good firm foundation is beginning to be laid in literacy. Since the last inspection there has been very good improvement in geography and modern languages. Improvement has been good in English, mathematics, art, design and technology and history. The school now has very clear insight, strong motivation and well developed systems and strategies to make very good improvements in the future.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds in national tests and GCSE examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		K
			very well above average	A
			above average	B
			average	C
			below average	D
			well below average	E
Key Stage 3	E	A		
GCSE Examinations	D	A		

Test results for 14 year-olds in 1998 show that attainment rose sharply in English and fell in mathematics and science. Attainment in these subjects was well below average compared to all schools, but well above average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining level 5 and above in mathematics and science rose in 1999, but fell slightly in English. Since 1996 the trend in all core subjects together has been rising, but slower than the national trend. In 1998 pupils' average points score in GCSE examinations was below the national average, but well above average for similar schools. The average GCSE points score per student is rising broadly in line with the national average. In 1999 there was a rise of three percent in GCSE passes at grades 5 A*-C and 5 A*-G.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	satisfactory	mathematics, design and technology, geography, history, modern languages, physical education, dance and drama	music
Years 10-11	satisfactory	mathematics, art, geography, history, modern languages, physical education, dance and drama	music
English	satisfactory		
Mathematics	good		

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching in 87 percent lessons observed was satisfactory or better; 13 percent were less than satisfactory. Half the lessons observed were good or better. Overall, one lesson in ten was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a quarter of the lessons observed in Year 7. It is good throughout the school in mathematics, geography, history, modern languages and physical education, dance and drama. Teaching was unsatisfactory in music. The aspects of teaching which were good in a majority of statutory subjects, in both key stages, were teachers' knowledge and understanding, planning and the management of pupils.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are satisfactory and have a positive effect on attainment and progress.
Attendance	Attendance was a key issue in the last report. Despite the improvement in procedures, it is still unsatisfactory. Most pupils arrive at school on time and are punctual for lessons, but a minority of pupils are persistently late.
Ethos*	Parents, teachers and governors indicate strong improvement in the ethos of the school, including relationships, the learning environment and the commitment to high achievement. Inspection evidence is that the school's ethos is good.
Leadership and management	The overall leadership and management of the school is good. The vision, drive and leadership of the principal is very good.
Curriculum	The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced. The Key Stage 4 curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in information technology or make full provision for both attainment targets in physical education.
Pupils with special educational needs	There are detailed arrangements in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs, and for informing staff of the difficulties these pupils experience. However, there is a need for individual education plans to include clearer and more precise subject-specific targets, providing further guidance and support for subject teachers, and for monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision across the curriculum, spending outcomes, and pupils' progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils have a clear idea of right and wrong. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The school does not attempt to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Despite financial constraints, provision for staffing and resources are good; accommodation is very good. Professional development of all staff is very good.
Value for money	Social circumstances of pupils are well below national average. Attainment on entry is below average. Attainment is below the national average by age 16, but is in the top 25 percent of similar schools. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory. Expenditure per student is very low. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
X. Promotes appropriate attitudes and values. XI. Strong school improvement in the past two years. XII. Staff are approachable and enthusiastic. XIII. Staff are caring and give pupils a sense of success regardless of ability. XIV. School deals with complaints well. XV. Deals with behaviour and bullying effectively. XVI. Termly reports on the grades their children are achieving. XVII. The house system promotes good. XVIII. relationships across the age range. XIX. Extra-curricular activities and visits.	XX. Some parents would appreciate more support their children. XXI. Intimidation of younger pupils by older

Very few parents responded to the OFSTED questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection meeting.

Inspectors agree with parents about positive aspects of the school. The schools' partnership with parents and the local community is satisfactory and is making a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. There is no evidence from discussion with pupils that they are intimidated by others. They did state that the school deals with bad behaviour and bullying effectively. Parents could receive more information about the curriculum. This should strengthen the partnership with parents. They receive insufficient information in the governors' annual report to parents; also inadequate written subject-specific information in annual reports on pupils' progress, though the provision of termly grades for attainment and effort is good.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The following matters should be addressed by the governors, senior managers and staff in order to raise standards of attainment and improve the quality of educational provision in the school:

Improve the attainment and progress of all pupils by:

XXII. systematically and consistently teaching literacy, numeracy and information technology skills through all aspects of the curriculum* (paragraphs 19, 41, 44, 114, 115, 124)

XXIII. consistently providing work which is appropriately matched to the needs of all pupils* (paragraphs 40, 43)

XXIV. supporting, monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning* (paragraph 88)

Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

XXV. informing parents of their child's special educational needs* (paragraph 75)

XXVI. ensuring that individual education plans include clear and precise subject-specific targets and that all staff are incorporating these into their lesson planning* (paragraphs 42, 50, 59, 106)

XXVII. monitoring and evaluating the quality of special needs provision across the curriculum and providing further support and guidance to subject teachers (paragraph 50)

XXVIII. formally reviewing and reporting pupils' progress so that both school and parents have the information to systematically monitor and support progress (paragraphs 59, 89)

XXIX. monitoring the outcomes of spending on special educational needs to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness (paragraphs 89, 99)

Improve the curriculum by:

XXX. fulfilling the statutory curriculum requirements for Key Stage 4 in information technology* (paragraphs 44, 175, 177)

XXXI. implementing all strands of the physical education curriculum to sufficient depth (paragraphs 44, 202, 204)

XXXII. supporting the teaching of music (paragraphs 31, 32, 88, 199)

Promote attainment and personal development by:

XXXIII. seeking more effective procedures to promote attendance* (paragraphs 27, 28, 68)

XXXIV. promoting the spiritual development of pupils through the curriculum and life of the school (paragraph 60)

XXXV. fulfilling the statutory requirements for collective worship (paragraph 64)

Improve the quality of communication with parents by

XXXVI. providing statutory information in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents (paragraphs 76, 91)

XXXVII. ensuring that annual reports to parents on pupils' progress include specific information on pupils' attainment and progress in subjects* (paragraph 75)

Take all appropriate measures to ensure the health and safety of pupils in the school by

XXXVIII. implementing safety policies in all curriculum areas* (paragraphs 72, 135)

XXXIX. carrying out regular safety checks of electrical equipment (paragraph 72)

* This will build on work being undertaken in the school

INTRODUCTION

• **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 The school is situated within the former mining community of Airedale on the outskirts of Castleford, in an area of very high social and economic need, including above average unemployment, as in the previous inspection. Pupils are drawn from three local partner primary schools. Since the last inspection the school has grown from 933 pupils to 1084.
- 2 Pupils entering the school represent the whole attainment range, including some pupils of high attainment. Overall, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and information technology are below the national average on entry. The proportion of pupils entitled to free schools meals (37 percent) is above the national average and similar to the level at the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs is well above the national average. Thirty-five pupils have statements of special educational needs (3.2 percent), which is above national average (2.4 percent) and double the percentage at the previous inspection. No pupils have English as an additional language.

1 **Aim of the school**

- to develop individuals, within a caring environment, so that they learn and succeed
- the school is an Investor in People and is committed to:
 - provide training for all staff to allow them to contribute to the achievement of the school aims
 - supporting the continued personal and professional development of all staff

1 **Priorities**

4 **Within strategic plan 1998-2003**

- achieve budget stability
- improve the security of the site
- seek specialist school status
- secure consistently better exam results
- improve the image of the school
- review curricular provision 11-19

1 **School development plan priorities 1998-2000**

Major priorities

- Curriculum issues* - learning outcomes
- to make the curriculum more accessible, appealing and manageable
- review transitional curriculum arrangements
- develop a literacy programme

- Raising standards – effective teaching
- pilot single-sex lessons
- consider ways to recognise teacher performance
- manage effective teaching more closely

- Attitudes/behaviour – student behaviour
- review the code of conduct
- manage the code of conduct more effectively

Other priorities

- Review the house structure and monitoring*
- The image of the school

* Carried forward from 1996-98

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	103	111	214

5 National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	39	34	36
	Girls	69	51	44
	Total	108	85	80
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	50(31)	40(46)	37(49)
	National	65(57)	60(60)	56(60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	21(12)	22(25)	19(18)
	National	35(23)	36(37)	27(29)

5 Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	30	35	37
	Girls	61	60	56
	Total	91	95	93
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	42(34)	45(62)	43(50)
	National	61(60)	64(64)	61(71)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	27(18)	28(30)	25(18)
	National	30(28)	37(37)	30(29)

.....

1

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	94	93	187

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	28	76	88
	Girls	26	76	88
	Total	54	81	94
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	29(24)	81(72)	97(94)
	National	45(43)	90(89)	93(92)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	n/a	n/a
National		n/a

.....

2

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

Attendance

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

Authorised	School	8.7
Absence	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	School	3.3
Absence	National comparative data	1.1

5

5

Exclusions

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

Fixed period	102
Permanent	1

5 Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is: %

Very good or better	11
Satisfactory or better	87
Less than satisfactory	13

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

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

5 **Attainment and progress**

- 2 The level of pupils' attainment on entry is evident from pupils' records in previous schools, standardised tests in Year 7 and inspection evidence. These indicate that pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and information technology are below average on entry. The school reports a steady rise in attainment on entry since the last inspection, due to rising standards in primary schools.
- 3 National Curriculum task and test results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 indicate that attainment in English and mathematics was well below national averages and science was below average. Compared with schools of a similar type, attainment in mathematics and science were well above average, and English was above average. Overall attainment in the core subjects was well below average in comparison with all schools, but well above average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining level 5 and above in 1998 in English rose by 19 percent from a low position in 1997. Results in mathematics and science were lower than the previous year. The percentage gaining level 5 and above in mathematics and science rose in 1999, but dropped slightly in English.
- 4 Trends in Key Stage 3 levels since 1996 indicate that the English results are rising; in mathematics the trend is down; the trend in science is static. The overall trend in all core subjects together is rising, but slower than the national trend.
- 5 General Certificate of Education (GCSE) examination results for individual subjects in 1998, compared to other comprehensive schools, indicate that the percentage of pupils gaining grades A* - C was:
 - well above average in physical education, and drama
 - above average in modern languages (French)
 - below average in English language and literature, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, religious education and sociology
 - well below average in art, history, information technology, modern languages (German), music, and child development
- 1 In 1998 the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE passes at A* - C (29 percent) was well below the national average, but is well above average in comparison with similar schools and represents a continuous improvement since the last inspection. This rise continued in 1999 when 32 percent of pupils gained five or more A* - C grades. Sixty-three percent of the cohort gained one or more GCSE passes at grades A* - C, which is again a steady rise since the last inspection. The proportion gaining five or more A* - G grades (82 percent) was well below the national average, but average for similar schools. Ninety-four percent of all pupils gained one or more GCSE A* - G grade, which is similar to the national average, and above average for schools of this type. In 1999 there was a rise of three percent in pupils gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* - C and A* - G; also in those gaining one or more passes at grades A* - G.
- 2 Using the average points score of pupils in GCSE examinations, the results in 1998 were below the national average, however, they were well above average for similar schools. The average GCSE points score per student is rising broadly in line with the national average.

- 3 Inspection evidence based on lesson observations, discussions with pupils and examination of past and present work indicate that attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is:
 - in line with the national standards in design and technology, modern languages, physical education, dance and drama
 - below the national standards in all other subjects of the National Curriculum including, English, mathematics, science; also in religious education

- 1 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is:
 - above national standards in drama
 - in line with the national standards for modern languages (French), physical education and dance
 - below the standard in all other subjects of the National Curriculum, including modern languages (German); also religious education, media studies and sociology.

- 1 Taking into consideration pupils' attainment on entry to the school, the progress evident in their work over time and during lessons observed, progress in subjects is as follows.

- 2 Progress in Key Stage 3 is:
 - good in geography, physical education, dance and drama
 - satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, history, information technology, modern languages and religious education
 - unsatisfactory in music

- 1 Progress in Key Stage 4 is
 - good in geography, history, physical education, dance and drama
 - satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, modern languages and religious education and sociology
 - unsatisfactory in information technology, music and media studies

- 1 Pupils' attainment in personal and social education is appropriate by age 14 and 16. Most pupils also make satisfactory progress in both key stages.

- 2 Most pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress; progress is sometimes good in respect of prior attainment. Progress is good in reading as a result of the provision made through the learning support department, and is good in geography where a range of strategies to meet individual needs have been developed.

- 3 Pupils' progress is limited throughout the school by their basic literacy, numeracy and information technology skills, which are all below average in both key stages. Governors, staff and senior managers have identified clearly the issues related pupils' below average attainment on entry and a range of significant additional factors which influence their attainment and progress, including social circumstances. Some of the contributory factors lie outside the influence and responsibility of the school, but acquisition of basic skills is a fundamental priority for schools. Provision is good and a firm foundation is beginning to be laid in literacy. However, there is insufficient clarity, rigour or consistency in addressing basic skills in order to improve learning, raise attainment and promote improvements which affect success in all curriculum areas.

- 4 There is considerable analysis of data on student attainment and there is strong evidence of its use to raise standards. Pupils in every year group are counselled by their house tutors using this data concerning pupils' attainment and effort. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are given individual mentoring by the vice-principals to improve their performance. Heads of faculty and vice-principals also use the analysis of student attainment as a basis for discussions about effectiveness with individual staff and subject teams, and for their monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. There is evidence of the effectiveness of this support for both pupils and staff. The data analysis does not give information on the relative performance of boys and girls. However, the school considers that boys are under-performing in the same way that occurs nationally. To raise the attainment of all pupils, the school now provides single sex teaching groups in mathematics and science in Key Stage 4. Although it is too early to gauge the success of this initiative, the indications are positive.
- 5 The ethos of the school is now very evidently one of commitment to raising attainment. This has raised attainment in most subject areas. It has not led to sufficient improvement in raising the attainment of all pupils in relation to national standards, but it has lifted the school's attainment into the top 25 percent of similar schools in the country.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. This has a positive effect on attainment and progress. Most pupils show interest in their work and sustain concentration when teachers' expectations are high and pupils are challenged sufficiently. Good examples of this were seen in a Year 8 religious education lesson on Islamic civilisation and a Year 9 mathematics lesson covering angles and polygons. These demands have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The attitudes of some pupils, for example, in music and science lessons are less positive. The pupils lost interest in a Year 10 music lesson about Renaissance music and were very passive during a Year 11 science lesson on electrolysis seen during the inspection.
- 7 The behaviour of the pupils in and around school is satisfactory. Pupils are trustworthy and courteous and readily open doors for visitors. Parents have stated that the school promotes appropriate attitudes and values and deals effectively with inappropriate behaviour and bullying. This view was confirmed by the inspection. A small minority of pupils were seen fighting and displaying challenging behaviour, but the staff, with the support of the behaviour management group, dealt with incidents swiftly and effectively. The pupils also confirmed that the school deals effectively with bullying. There is a good behaviour management policy, bullying policy, also a code of conduct and a progressive system of rewards and sanctions which are understood by all pupils. These have a positive effect on behaviour. In the last inspection there were 55 fixed term exclusions. During the year prior to the inspection there were 102 such exclusions, but most of these were related to 24 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties on stages 2 - 5 of the special needs register, where exclusions were used appropriately as part of a behaviour management plan. There was one permanent exclusion in the last school year. The number of exclusions have been targeted for reduction and are now falling due to the effectiveness of the counselling provided by the behaviour management group.
- 8 Relationships throughout the school between the pupils and the staff are good and contribute to the positive ethos of the school. The pupils work together well in pairs and groups. The pupils also show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others which was demonstrated in Year 10 and Year 11 tutorials where pupils readily discussed their opinions and ideas in front of others.

- 9 The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils take responsibility as register monitors and for the school bank. There is a school council in operation and student volunteers are involved in the paired reading scheme and the 'First Response' attendance monitoring scheme. However, research skills and independent learning are unsatisfactory and do not permeate all subjects of the curriculum.
- 10 The school keeps clear records with regard to exclusion and has systematic monitoring procedures. It responds effectively to any incidents of sexual and racial harassment, bullying, and violent behaviour. Although the number of boys excluded is about double that for girls, the school's policy with regard to exclusions is applied fairly to all pupils and no equal opportunities problems exist.

26 **Attendance**

- 11 Attendance is unsatisfactory. At 88 percent for the school (1998/9), year it is well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average at 3.3 percent. Attendance records show that a significant number of pupils are failing to attend school in Year 11 where the attendance rate was as low as 83.17 percent on the Thursday of inspection week. Attendance levels for Years 7-9 are better, but still below the national benchmark of 90 percent. Registers are marked in accordance with statutory requirements at the beginning of sessions, also at the beginning of every lesson. Most pupils arrive at school and lessons on time but a minority of pupils are persistently late arriving at school.
- 12 Attendance in Years 10 and 11 was unsatisfactory during the previous inspection and the school is rigorously maintaining its efforts to monitor and target low attenders. Analysis of attendance figures show that there is no significant difference in the number of boys and girls with irregular attendance. Current initiatives include the monitoring of Year 11 attendance each day by the head of house and the monitoring of Year 7 disaffected by the Educational Welfare Officer. However, unsatisfactory attendance, and the failure of some parents to meet their statutory responsibility, continues to effect the school's attempts to raise levels of attainment and progress.

28 **Teaching**

- 13 During the week of the inspection teaching was observed in 186 lessons. Teaching in 87 percent lessons observed was satisfactory or better; 13 percent were less than satisfactory. Half the lessons observed were good or better. Overall, one lesson in ten was very good. Only one lesson observed was excellent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a quarter of the lessons observed in Year 7. The overall proportion of lessons observed which were satisfactory or better is the same as the last inspection. The proportion of good and very good teaching has improved from four lessons in ten to five in every ten.
- 14 During the inspection the quality of teaching for each subject was assessed through direct classroom observation, an examination of pupils' work, past and present, discussions with pupils and a review of teachers' planning. The following picture emerges from this evidence.
- 15 In Key Stage 3 the quality of teaching is:
- good in mathematics, design and technology, geography, history, modern languages, physical education, dance and drama
 - satisfactory in English, science, art, information technology, religious education, and personal and social education
 - unsatisfactory in music
- 1 Teaching in Key Stage 4 is:
- good in mathematics, art, geography, history, modern languages, physical education, dance and drama
 - satisfactory in English, science, design and technology, information technology, religious education, sociology and personal and social education
 - unsatisfactory in music
- 1 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good throughout the school in mathematics, geography, history, modern languages and physical education, dance and drama. The aspects of teaching, which were good in a majority of statutory subjects, English, mathematics, science and religious education in both key stages, were teachers' knowledge and understanding, planning and the management of pupils.
- 2 In the most effective lessons, teachers' knowledge is very good and well imparted to pupils through thorough planning, careful questioning and tasks that are appropriate, yet challenging, to the pupils in the group. The management of learning focuses on engaging pupils actively in the task. Pupils respond enthusiastically, work hard and make very good progress. Most of the very good lessons were observed in mathematics, geography and physical education. Very good lessons were taught by teachers of very varied experience and status, from inexperienced teachers to senior managers.
- 3 A very good lesson with a Year 7 low attaining group used the analysis of local photographs to develop this skill and to illustrate the differences between human and physical geography. The teacher's language, manner, activities and resources were very carefully tailored to the group. Good special needs learning support identified and addressed problems early. High expectations for work and behaviour were evident in the excellent management of learning and classroom routines. A disruptive student was handled with firmness and discretion to avoid destabilising the class. There was very good consolidation of knowledge, extension of concepts and skills, good gains in speaking, listening and writing. Most pupils maintained high levels of concentration, persevered despite difficulties and were highly productive, most completing between six and eight pages in their exercise books.

- 4 A Year 8 top attainment set had a very good lesson considering rainfall in Britain. The lesson began, and continued at intervals, with very good open-ended questions to link previous work with the present topic. Opportunities were offered for extended answers. Excellent emphasis was laid on understanding the meaning of questions and tasks, in order to complete the work successfully. The teacher's high expectations were made clear and pupils were keen, alert, involved and eager to respond to these expectations. Detailed planning and very good management gave a good structure to the lesson and ensured progression through a variety of activities. There was good emphasis on the use of technical vocabulary. Pupils made very good gains in writing, speaking, listening and examination techniques, as well as geographical understanding.
- 5 A gymnastics lesson, developing a range of skills on assisted flight with Year 8, was very well taught and promoted an excellent response. A major feature of the lesson was the training and support which enabled pupils to work competently, safely and independently on the apparatus. The lesson was carefully designed to challenge and enable pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, to make very good progress. Low attaining pupils have satisfactory body awareness, achieve simple gymnastic movements, consolidate skills and learn new ones as they explored the apparatus; high attainers were challenged to select and perform more difficult movements, with precision and style. Pupils rose to the teacher's high expectations, improved in response to the good assessment and feedback, and evaluated their work accurately in response to the teacher's skilful questioning.
- 6 An intermediate mathematics group in Year 10 made better than expected progress in the second of a series of lessons on right-angled triangles. The 'achievement culture' was evident as pupils entered the room with all necessary equipment and a readiness to work. Interest was captured and focused by a very good introduction, demonstration and explanation of Pythagoras' rule, using an overhead projector, which indicated the teacher's subject knowledge and understanding of the learning process. The teacher's very good questioning technique used pupils' answers to build concepts systematically and to assess their understanding. The teacher's expectations were high. Good management, praise and sensitive encouragement, promoted positive attitudes to work, respect for others, very good behaviour, pride in presentation and sustained concentration, which moved pupils towards higher achievement. There was no unfinished work in pupils' exercise books.
- 7 Pupils in a mixed-ability Year 10 Class responded extremely well to excellent teaching in their GCSE physical education theory lesson on types of movement. The teacher had very good subject knowledge which was skilfully conveyed. Pupils were stimulated and their motivation was sustained by a lively and sometimes humorous presentation, the demanding pace, the very good use of a variety of methods and resources, also the teacher's excellent management and relationship with the class. The teacher's very high expectations were reflected in the very well planned lesson, with clear objectives, which systematically developed pupils' understanding and language skills. These expectations were also very evident in pupils' excellent behaviour, their eagerness to learn, the quality of work produced and the excellent progress made by those of all attainment levels.

- 8 There were some common features in unsatisfactory lessons observed throughout the school. Expectations were often inappropriate, usually too low and tasks lacked challenge, not only for the highest attaining pupils, but sometimes too high for low attaining pupils. Work was not planned to meet the requirements of those with special needs and support was inadequate. The structure and sequence of learning, the use of time, and sometimes the use of the accommodation for activities, was not well planned. In some lessons there was inadequate teaching of concepts or development of skills, also the inability to refine understanding through questioning. A common feature was teachers talking at length and pupils sitting passively, except perhaps for the occasional one word answer to a teacher's question. Such approaches did not support oracy but there was sometimes support for literacy – usually technical vocabulary. Teachers in these lessons did not manage the learning well and achieve high standards of discipline. In a minority of lessons this led to disruptive behaviour, particularly at transitions from whole-class to group or individual activities. There was a lack of thorough and effective assessment, of pupils' work, particularly formative assessment which told pupils what they should do to improve. Homework was sometimes not a good use of pupils' time and was ineffective in reinforcing or extending what was learned in school. In such lessons progress was limited; pupils' previous learning was insufficient to build upon, little was learned that was new and there was limited application of previous knowledge and skills.
- 9 Pupils' progress is limited throughout the school by their inadequate basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology. Provision is good and a firm foundation is beginning to be laid in teaching literacy, particularly in those faculties which piloted the literacy project. There is considerable enthusiasm to address information technology, but the numeracy policy is not being implemented. Overall, there is insufficient clarity, rigour or consistency in teaching the basic skills across all curriculum areas.
- 10 Helpful and supportive guidance is provided for staff regarding pupils' individual educational needs. However, this information is not used sufficiently to inform teachers' planning. In lessons where it is available, the quality of support provided by special needs assistants is at least satisfactory and often good. There are no formal arrangements to facilitate their recording and reporting of progress towards targets.
- 11 Teachers in all subjects attempt to treat all pupils equally, both through their classroom techniques and in their choice of resources. For example, in mathematics the course text was chosen because of the way in which it supports equality of opportunity. In English, a range of multicultural issues are examined in an open and respectful way in both key stages. There is a lack of challenge for high attaining pupils in music, art, design technology, and religious education.

43

43 **The curriculum and assessment**

43 **Curriculum**

- 12 The overall breadth and balance of the curriculum is unsatisfactory because it does not fully meet statutory requirements. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at Key Stage 3. Provision now meets statutory requirements in Key Stage 3 but not in Key Stage 4. There has been insufficient improvement on this key issue. Information technology provision throughout the school was a key issue in the last inspection. Also, the two attainment targets in physical education are not taught to sufficient depth. Strong emphasis has been placed on establishing a framework to support literacy across the curriculum. Provision is now good and implementation is improving. Support for numeracy is unsatisfactory. The total teaching time of 25 hours per week exceeds the nationally recommended minimum of 24 hours.

- 13 The curriculum is planned effectively to promote pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and provides satisfactory development of knowledge and skills as pupils move through the school. Satisfactory liaison takes place with primary schools concerning the curriculum. Pupils are prepared very well to make informed decisions about opportunities after the age of 16. This preparation includes visits to the school by staff from local colleges and opportunities for pupils to visit colleges, including the opportunity to take part in a programme of taster courses.
- 14 Overall, the curriculum in Key Stage 3 is broad and well-balanced. The curriculum includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education. The time allocated to subjects across the key stage is appropriate to address the programmes of study, except for pupils with special educational needs who lose the same geography period each week in order to receive supplementary literacy support. Also, the time allocation for music is lower than average, which affects progress, teaching and the status of the subject.
- 15 In Key Stage 4 the curriculum provides good breadth, except for information technology. All pupils receive a broad core comprising English, mathematics, science, design and technology, modern languages, physical education, religious education and personal and social education. Additionally, all pupils take a subject from the humanities and creative arts. Two further choices are available, including language and science. The school provides courses in child development, dance, drama information studies, media studies and sociology at GCSE; also French City and Guilds and a certificate of achievement in geography.
- 16 A key issue in the last inspection required the school to review choice procedures to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum for all in Key Stage 4. There has been a very good improvement in this aspect. Parents strongly praise the support available and the thorough and conscientious assistance of staff in helping pupils to make appropriate choices in Year 9.
- 17 There is limited vocational education in Key Stage 4. Only general national vocational qualifications in construction and in hairdressing and beauty are offered through a local college. The school is considering offering other courses.
- 18 Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school and receive their curricular entitlement. Staff receive clear and helpful guidance regarding the nature, degree and range of pupils' difficulties. There is evidence of effective support within some subject areas, but provision for special educational needs does not permeate the school's organisational and curricular structures and practice. The content of lessons generally takes account of the needs of low attaining pupils, but the lack of clear and precise targets on individual education plans, and the absence of subject-specific targets for these pupils, results in lost opportunities to match more closely curriculum content and teaching strategies to pupils' needs.
- 19 There is good provision for health, sex and drugs education through a well planned and co-ordinated programme of personal and social education which is taught effectively by a trained team, supported by speakers from outside agencies. The well documented programme, which also includes, literacy support and study skills, makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and preparation for adult life.

- 20 The school makes very good provision for careers education and guidance throughout the school. The programme is well planned and managed, and is taught through personal and social education lessons. It prepares pupils well for the decisions they have to make at the end of Key Stage 3 and when they leave the school. There is very effective co-operation with the local careers service, which contributes to work in lessons and provides opportunities for individual advice in Years 10 and 11. The careers centre is very well resourced with print and electronic information. Pupils and staff are well supported by the library assistant. Scheduled lunch-time 'drop-in' sessions in the careers centre provide further support and information for pupils. The school makes good use of its links with local employers and colleges, for example in developing pupils' interview skills, and provides work experience for all pupils in Key Stage 4. This is well managed and is carefully prepared and followed up to ensure that pupils benefit from the experience. The very limited number of pupils remaining in education post-16 is a major problem in this area. The proportion of those staying in education after leaving this school has risen from 31 to 45 percent since the last inspection.
- 21 A good programme of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum and the majority of pupils participate. There is a good range of regular weekly activities, including study support. Opportunities to take part in sport, especially team games, are very good and the standards are high. The school competes with considerable success in local and national events. There are also very good opportunities for overseas visits and residential outdoor education. There is a good range of cultural, subject-based and recreational visits.
- 22 The school makes good provision for equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. All departments refer to equality of opportunity in their documentation. The school is alert to pupils making stereotypical choices when selecting subjects for study in Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, pupils still tend to make them. For example, in design and technology girls are in the large majority in food technology, whilst in resistant materials the reverse is the case. The school is rightly proud that in some instances stereotypical barriers are slowly breaking down. A small number of boys take child development. Many boys are finding success in dance when previously they would have not participated. The fixed timetable arrangement which prevents Year 7 pupils with special educational needs having equal access to the geography curriculum, is unsatisfactory.

54 **Assessment**

- 23 Assessment was a key issue in the last inspection. There has been a good improvement in the use of assessment data, with more systematic evaluation of school, subject and pupils' performance. The school is beginning to use information on pupils' attainment on entry to demonstrate the value it is adding as pupils proceed through the school; also to use value added measures to set targets for school improvement. Comparative information from the local authority and benchmarks related to similar schools is being used to evaluate school and subject performance in GCSE and National Curriculum tests as a means of identifying areas for improvement. Insufficient attention is paid to the performance of subjects and the school in relation to national standards.
- 24 The school makes satisfactory use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning at both key stages. Pupils' attainment in basic skills is tested on entry using nationally recognised tests. There are examples of entry and performance data being used very effectively in geography, and used well in English, design and technology, history and physical education. Its use is unsatisfactory in music, also in information technology in Key Stage 4.

- 25 The major improvement in the use of assessment data is in relation to individual pupils' attainment and progress. These procedures are now good. In a number of subjects, pupils are beginning to be involved in their own assessment. From their first term until they leave the school, pupils are assessed for their attainment and effort, using grades related to their attainment on entry and their forecasted attainment in GCSE examinations. The grades are used well by subject staff, house tutors and vice-principals to track pupils' progress and to mentor individuals. This grade information is provided for parents and is much appreciated. There is a mis-match between the grades given in Key Stage 3 and National Curriculum levels and the explanatory letter for parents interpreting the grades is too technical.

Special Educational Needs Assessment

- 26 Detailed arrangements are in place both for identifying pupils with special educational needs, and for informing staff of the nature and range of difficulties experienced by pupils. Statutory requirements are met in respect of statemented pupils. The school makes effective arrangements for implementing provision identified in the statement, whilst maintaining a broad curriculum relevant to their needs.
- 27 Records provide an accurate profile of pupils' special educational needs, but arrangements for target setting and review are unsatisfactory. There is little evidence of progress being reviewed regularly or of targets being set that would facilitate the monitoring of progress across the curriculum. Subject specific targets are not in place in all curriculum areas and are not regularly monitored or reviewed.

59

59 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 28 The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. The school's cultural awareness project led to an audit of the spiritual and moral strands within the curriculum. Each subject area is aware that it can make a contribution to this aspect. In practice, however, the contribution from subjects varies. In English, through their written work on haikus and in drama, through the quality of their personal expression, pupils gain some spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. This is to be seen in other subjects, for example, religious education, history, geography and art. In music there are missed opportunities for reflecting on the nature of music and how it affects feelings. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is unsatisfactory.
- 29 The school provides a sound moral framework in which pupils can grow and develop. The school's aims and its clear code of conduct show a carefully considered and sensitive approach to moral development. Subject areas highlight moral issues. In English, in their work on the Titanic, pupils are aware of the lack of concern for the poorer passengers. In drama, Year 11 pupils worked with Year 7 pupils in a session on 'bullying' in which the senior pupils took on the role of the victims. History emphasises the student's personal responsibility in preparing for examinations. Year 9 pupils, through their religious education lessons, understand the grim realities of life that faced Anne Frank and her family. The personal and social education programme supports the moral development of pupils. The daily routines of the school, and the very sensitive way in which the staff relate to the pupils, underpin both moral and social development.

- 30 The provision for the social development of pupils is good. The staff act as good role models for the pupils. They care about their pupils and this is reflected in the consistently sensitive way in which they relate to pupils. The house system provides a good social and moral environment in which young people can grow and mature. The integrated form groups create harmonious social groupings, which strengthen the social life of the school. The school council, the paired reading scheme and the year eleven monitors provide some opportunities for pupils to be responsible. The peer counselling service, which is offered by some Year 11 pupils, is valued by pupils in other years and is an example of the thoughtful approach of the school. There is a good range of well supported extra curricular activities, which are popular with the pupils.
- 31 Provision for the cultural development of pupils is good. Through the subjects of the curriculum, pupils learn about their own and other cultures. For example, in English pupils study literature and poetry of other cultures as well as their own. In art, pupils look at a range of art movements, including the art of China and Japan. In modern foreign languages pupils take part in visits to France and have pen friends in other countries. In religious education, pupils study the teachings and beliefs of Christianity and the major world faiths. Through their history curriculum, pupils study their own history and that of the American West. In their study of 'medicine through time' pupils gain valuable cultural insights into medicine as it evolved from ancient times to the present day. The school encourages pupils to take part in residential and theatre visits and a range of other cultural activities as well as being involved in the school productions.
- 32 At the time of the previous inspection the failure to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils was a key issue. There is a list of themes for all assemblies and suitable assembly materials are available. However, an act of collective worship is not always included in assemblies and is totally absent in form periods. The school does not attempt to fulfil the educational or statutory requirements for collective worship, so this remains a key issue.

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

- 33 The school provides good support, guidance and welfare for the pupils, which has a positive effect on their attitudes and progress. Parents consider the staff to be approachable, enthusiastic and caring. The pupils have stated that they feel safe and secure in the school.
- 34 The monitoring of the pupils' academic progress and personal development is good. The house tutors and heads of house monitor homework, set targets and monitor pupils' personal and academic progress. Year 10 and 11 pupils have two tutorial sessions a week with their house tutor, which also involves individual mentoring. The mentoring of the pupils promotes positive attitudes to learning and raises attainment. The pupils themselves also become involved in monitoring their own progress through the home / school journals which monitor in detail attendance, homework and merits.
- 35 The school has good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The school code of conduct is understood by all the pupils and there is an effective behaviour management policy and bullying policy in place. Parents consider that some pupils are disruptive but this is managed effectively by the school. Relationships between the staff and the pupils are good. Strategies to reward positive behaviour and implement appropriate sanctions are in place and are effective. There is support from outside agencies including the youth service and social services. Incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour are recorded and dealt with by the behaviour management group, who also offer individual and group mentoring sessions for disaffected pupils. The support of parents is sought, appropriately. The behaviour management group provides valued and effective support for the staff and pupils.

- 36 The school has satisfactory procedures in place for monitoring and promoting attendance. Good attendance is rewarded by certificates, merits and prizes. House tutors and heads of house assist the educational welfare officer in monitoring attendance. This co-ordinated approach enables the school to monitor attendance levels and to take swift action. The school makes every effort to involve parents of non-attenders in dialogue, but receives a limited response from some parents.
- 37 Procedures for the promotion of the pupils well-being are good. There is a designated teacher responsible for child protection, who effectively supervises the provision and liaises with outside agencies. Staff have received training and are aware of procedures. At breaks and lunchtimes the pupils are supervised well by staff and support staff. Sex education, health education, careers guidance and drugs awareness are taught through the good personal and social education programme. A team of staff have now been trained to teach the programme, which has improved since the previous inspection.
- 38 Primary school links are well developed and curriculum liaison takes place. Year 6 pupils are invited to the school and the staff from Airedale visit the primary schools to meet prospective pupils. Preparation is good for transition to Key Stage 4 and for the decisions pupils have to make when they leave the school.
- 39 Teaching and non-teaching staff, work hard to promote pupils' all round development. Effective systems are in place to assist pupils in managing their behaviour and to support them in developing positive attitudes towards learning. Specialist special educational needs support from outside agencies is valued and provides helpful guidance to staff.
- 40 The health and safety policy has been revised since the last inspection. Health and safety procedures for the whole school are in place; fire precautions are good; appropriate risk assessments take place but some risks remain in the science department. Electrical checks have not been carried out. There are sufficient staff, including a school matron, who are qualified to carry out first aid.

72 **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 41 The school's partnership with parents and the local community is satisfactory overall and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.
- 42 The opportunities the school provides for parents to become involved in their children's learning are satisfactory. The home/school association holds social and fund-raising events. Parents are very supportive and have raised funds for a minibus, books and prizes. Ninety percent of parents attended the last parents' evening. The home/school journals are an effective means of communication between home and school but are not always used effectively by parents to encourage their children or to follow the progress they are making.
- 43 The school provides parents with information on pupils' attainment and effort each term, in the form of grades. This information is strongly appreciated by parents. Pupils' annual progress reports do not provide parents with sufficient details of pupils' attainment and progress in subjects. Some reports contain advice on how pupils can improve their performance, though often this is not sufficiently specific to the subject. Arrangements to inform parents of their child's special educational needs, and to keep them fully informed of the child's progress, are unsatisfactory. Parents are fully involved in satisfactory in statutory reviews.

- 44 The school prospectus and governors' report to parents do not meet statutory requirements. The prospectus does not contain details of religious education and collective worship. The governing body's last annual report to parents (1997-98) omitted the statutory national comparisons on attainment. Also, the information related to special educational needs provided for all parents through this report is unsatisfactory and does not meet statutory requirements.
- 45 There are regular newsletters which provide good information regarding forthcoming events. Parents receive information regarding the courses available in Key Stage 4 and are invited to an information evening in Year 9. They are very positive about the procedures and their implementation. They stated at the pre-inspection parents' meeting that they would appreciate more information about the topics being studied so that they could be supportive. This should strengthen the partnership with parents.
- 46 The school's links with the local community make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' attainment and personal development, which enhance pupils' learning and contribute to the positive ethos of the school. The two week work experience programme for Year 10 pupils is well supported by local businesses and the careers service. The trade and enterprise council recently supported the Year 7 key skills initiative. The local women's group run the adult learners' centre at the school which provides approximately 500 people with vocational and degree courses supported by local colleges. The school sports centre is let to the community. The youth service has a base on site and provides the pupils with information and social activities. The youth service base also houses the Year 11 peer counselling service. Links with the local high schools are strong and the school participates in inter-school sports competitions, including rugby and football. Teachers have taken business placements and the technology department have links with a local computer company. The art department has been involved in designing retail displays. The school has received sponsorship from a local coach company, car company and garage. The school is committed to the expansion of business links and has been successful in doing this since the last inspection

78 **Leadership and management**

- 47 The overall leadership and management of the school, consisting of the governing body, principal (headteacher redesignated principal in September 1999), the senior management team and subject leaders is good. The day-to-day management is very good. Teaching and support staff are committed, hard-working and function well as a team. All contribute to the smooth running of the school. The aims and values of the school are well implemented throughout the life and work of the school. These factors promote attainment, progress and pupils' personal development.
- 48 During 1997 the school faced a period of uncertainty and major transition. The retirement of the headteacher led to the appointment of the present principal who was previously a deputy headteacher at the school. The major tasks were tackling the projected £250,000 budget deficit, maintaining staff morale in the face of inevitable staff reductions, improving student attitudes and behaviour, strengthening the curriculum for all and raising standards. The school is successfully addressing these priorities. Parents, teachers and governors indicate strong improvement in the ethos of the school, including relationships, the learning environment and the school's commitment to high achievement. Inspection evidence is that the school's ethos is good.
- 49 The action plan following the last inspection addressed the key issues and other development areas. The school failed to keep parents informed of developments related to the key issues. This plan was absorbed into the brief 1998 – 2000 school development plan and more detailed subject action plans. Most planning documents have clear objectives, precise targets, criteria for judging effectiveness, timescales, resource implications and identification of those responsible for action. Others are less specific and useful. Few outcomes are directly related to pupils' attainment.
- 50 Staff and governors are appropriately involved in strategic (five year) planning and school development (two year) planning, through residential conferences, where priorities are refined, also through the action-planning processes. Departments are required to report formally on their progress with regard to relevant sections of the school development plan and departmental action plans. These reports are available to governors. Governing body meetings are also held in each department of the school, and include a report on departmental developments.
- 51 Governors are committed to the school and its improvement. They have received satisfactory training. The governing body is appropriately constituted and functions effectively. It is monitoring the quality of education provided, the standards of attainment and the cost-effectiveness of management decisions on pupils' attainment, but these discussions have not been clearly minuted. The senior management and governors have paid insufficient attention to the low attainment of pupils in relation to schools nationally. They are aware of the impediments to attainment and progress and have a clear message that the school results are improving against those of similar schools. However, the principal has not informed the governing body of the national perspective in his regular reports to them. There is also little evidence of discussion of national results in the full governing body, and the governing body's last annual report to parents (1997-98) omitted the statutory national comparisons.

- 52 The principal provides very strong and purposeful leadership and very effective management of the school. His personal commitment, drive and vision have given clear direction to the school and have been crucial to the improvements which have taken place since his appointment. His recognition, development and support of the staff as a team is exceptional. Governors, staff, parents and pupils, who have expressed their views, are very appreciative of the changes in the school under his leadership and recognise that they are working together to promote higher achievement.
- 53 The principal and vice-principals work very effectively together. There is a clear separation of roles which build on their complementary knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and personalities. The high percentage of time spent by the vice-principals in mentoring pupils and monitoring and evaluating teaching is contributing to rising standards and improvements in the quality of education.
- 54 There is a layer of middle management consisting of specialist subject leaders and heads of faculty. This is an effective system for management, administration, financial control and staff support. The house system works effectively in managing, monitoring and supporting pupils, pastorally and academically. The system is well managed.
- 55 Monitoring of pupils' performance is firmly established in the school. Pupils' attainment and effort are monitored and reported to parents termly. The criteria for attainment are linked to GCSE standards and progress is judged against targets related to attainment on entry. Subject leaders and the pastoral team are successfully involved in the collection of data analysis, student support and reporting. Vice-principals monitor closely the attainment of pupils in Years 10 and 11 and provide regular personal mentoring for them.
- 56 Heads of faculty scrutinise pupils' work, examine teachers' planning and conduct classroom observations to monitor, evaluate and promote developments in teaching and learning. Heads of faculty report weekly to vice-principals on progress, who in turn report to the principal. This monitoring is systematic, rigorous and has improved the quality of teaching. Variations in the quality of teaching, within and between subjects, indicate the need to target strategically the support, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Heads of faculty, particularly those responsible for inter-disciplinary teams, are able to arrange additional release for teaching duties, but have insufficient time specifically allocated for these vital responsibilities.
- 57 In the last two years heads of faculty and subject leaders have become much more accountable for the work in their subjects. They have produced reports on pupils' test and examination performance and the staff response to this data; also reports on various aspects of the work of the subject area. Management by subject leaders is good in English, mathematics, art, dance, sociology history, modern languages. It is very good in geography. Through the hard work and commitment of the special educational needs co-ordinator much has been achieved in terms of raising staff awareness, improving the quality of provision and raising standards in literacy. However, present arrangements prevent her undertaking crucial elements of her role effectively. Heads of faculty and subject leaders have insufficient responsibility for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
- 58 There is an effective policy for equal opportunities drawn up several years ago by a voluntary committee of staff. This policy was kept deliberately general and is accepted by all staff. The school monitors well the implementation of principles embedded in the policy.

- 59 The school is not fulfilling statutory requirements with regard to information technology in Key Stage 4 and collective worship for all pupils. The two attainment targets in physical education are not covered in sufficient depth in Key Stage 4. The prospectus lacks details on religious education and collective worship. The governors' annual report to parents lacks required information on national test and examination comparisons, the implementation of the special educational needs policy. There are also matters of health and safety identified in this report which require action.
- 60 There has been insufficient improvement on some key issues identified in the last inspection, specifically attendance, collective worship and provision for information technology. Nevertheless, the overall improvement since the last inspection is good. The school also has very clear insight, strong motivation and well developed systems and strategies to make very good improvements in the future.

92 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

92 **Staffing**

- 61 The school has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. There is a good match between teachers' qualifications and first and second subjects taught. Deployment of staff is equitable across the age and ability range. Although the student - teacher contact ratio is high teachers prefer to keep smaller classes than increase their proportion of non-contact periods. The fact that the school has a budget deficit has also constrained staffing expenditure at a time when student numbers have been rising. Nonetheless, the school's complement of teachers is used efficiently and their hard work and commitment to the school is central to its mission. Quality of classroom support, both teaching and non-teaching, for pupils with special educational needs, is at least satisfactory and often good. The school has technical non-teaching support of good quality in science and technology. However, the school is aware that there is insufficient technical support; the science technician, for example, has difficulty in providing support in ten laboratories. The school intends to remedy this shortage when budget restraints are lifted. There are no language assistants to help pupils improve their progress in modern foreign languages. There are sufficient clerical and administrative staff provide the teaching staff with a full and efficient range of services.
- 62 Arrangements for induction of newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school are very strong. Newly qualified teachers spoke extremely highly of the support they received before joining the school and, subsequently, of the quality of the advice, guidance and monitoring received when in post. The school has been accredited as an Investor in People. It has a vigorous and well devised training strategy which encompasses the development needs both of individuals and of the organisation as a whole. The involvement of all staff – both teaching and non-teaching – in the corporate life of the school is a significant strength. All members of the staff have full access to training and development opportunities and make good use of it. Teachers and non-teaching staff speak warmly of the high quality of the full staff residential training conferences which act as a cohesive force within the school. The staff-development co-ordinator works efficiently through the staff development committee on behalf of the staff and keeps the training portfolio up-to-date. All staff have job descriptions and their personal development needs are met through a cycle of line-managed interviews, data collection, target setting, support, work shadowing, also review and evaluation. These arrangements the requirements for appraisal meet. The individual, faculty and whole school needs which arise from this process help to shape the training provision and the school development plan. The issues raised in the previous OFSTED report have been resolved in part. Information technology is now being co-ordinated, roles and responsibilities of staff have been clarified and arrangements for the professional development of staff have been refined. However, the budget deficit has precluded the appointment of modern

languages assistants, additional non-teaching technical staff or significant reductions in the high contact ratio.

Accommodation

- 63 Since the previous inspection the design technology area has been rebuilt, following a fire, and there has been refurbishment of much of the school. All of the faculties have their own teaching areas with good sized rooms and facilities grouped together in teaching suites. Specialist provision and accommodation for teaching the curriculum is very good. The condition of the buildings is good: they are well maintained and there are no signs of vandalism. Adult education classes take place on site and the community has use of the sports hall and other buildings. The adult learners' centre and sports hall are managed by the school. Space is provided on site for a crèche, the education welfare service and youth service. The accommodation enables pupils with disabilities who attend the school to have full access to the curriculum and provides a warm welcoming and stimulating environment to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

Learning resources

- 64 Faculties have good resources and materials to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. In the previous inspection report the low level of resources was a key issue in that it adversely affected standards in some subjects. The school has resolved this issue and resources have been improved substantially. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are of a high quality and are well used. Information technology provision has also been augmented; there are now 163 up-to-date computers available, many of which are connected to the internet. There is, however, teachers of all subjects need further training so that the school can make the best use of them. The ratio of pupils to computers is above average at 6:1. Faculties now have sufficient books and an adequate level of funding to maintain resource provision. Clerical and administrative staff provide faculties with a good level of support, and service them efficiently with reprographic facilities and with administrative and financial services. The school is entrepreneurial in its approach to resource acquisition. It has, for example, received lottery funding and is approaching completion of a £200,000 conversion project to provide a community arts centre. The degree of spending on books is satisfactory. The learning resource centre provides pupils with good support. This facility has improved since the previous inspection. It houses 15 networked multi-media computers and a selection of CD-ROMs. The book stock comprises 8100 volumes, which is appropriate for a school of this size. The fiction section is good although there is a need to extend the range of books to support technology and modern foreign languages.

96 The efficiency of the school

- 65 The financial resources of the school have been severely strained in recent years by increased costs, particularly staffing costs. This has led to a budget deficit which was reduced by prudent measures from £196,000 to £137,000 during the financial year to March 1999. The governors are fully aware of the school's financial situation. They have been, through the finance committee, vigilant in the oversight of the budget and the implementation of a recovery plan to bring the budget into surplus by 2001. Staffing costs have been reduced through early retirement and changes to the management structure. The school has also been successful in attracting external funding through the lottery and a variety of successful bids. These specific grants have been well incorporated into the school's development plan and contribute well to its mission to raise standards. The standard of financial planning is good and spending is effectively targeted at strategic educational developments. Governors are fully involved in prioritising of spending and the financial planning process.

- 66 Staff deployment is now more efficient. Resources for learning, which was a key issue in the last

inspection, have also been substantially improved. The financial allocation made to subject departments has improved significantly and there has been substantial investment in computers. Accommodation is good and well used.

- 67 Arrangements to monitor the outcomes of spending in respect of funding provided for special educational needs are unsatisfactory and fail to ensure that the most efficient and effective use is made of the resources provided.
- 68 Financial control and management are efficient. Administrative staff concerned with finance have clear roles and follow sound routine procedures. Records are kept in good order. The most recent auditor's report confirmed that the school's good standard of financial management. The recommendations of this report are being implemented.
- 69 The socio-economic circumstances of pupils are well below the national average. Overall attainment on entry is below average. Pupils' attainment is below the national average by age 16, but is in the top 25 percent of similar schools. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. In both key stages, pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. The expenditure per student is very low when compared with the national picture. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

101 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

101 **English**

- 70 In the 1998 National Curriculum tests in English held at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' performance was well below the national average at level 5 and above and at level 6 and above. Between 1996-98 average levels in the tests have been well below the national average both for boys and girls. The 1998 test results were an improvement on the 1997 performance. The department was successful in modifying its scheme of work better to prepare pupils for end of key stage assessment. Furthermore, when the 1998 test scores and teacher assessments are compared to those gained by similar schools, pupils' performance was above average at level 5 and above, while at level 6 and above it was well above average. Results in the 1999 English tests were lower than in the previous year, although not markedly so. There is no easily discernible reason for this; there was no obvious under-performance in specific areas in the tests. This cohort of pupils is now in Year 10. Scrutiny of their work and lesson observation indicate that they are achieving appropriately for their abilities.
- 71 GCSE trends in English indicate that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in the 1998 GCSE examination was below the national average. This result was close to that obtained in 1997. However, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C in 1999 rose by 9 percent; a significant achievement. Girls' results in English Language are higher than those obtained by boys, in line with the national trend. In the 1998 examination in GCSE English Literature the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was below the national average. Results in the 1999 examination were broadly similar overall, although boys' performance was lower than in the previous year. Results at grades A*-G in 1998 were a little below the national average in both subjects although the department is committed to entering as many pupils as possible for the examination, in line with its policy for equality of opportunity.
- 72 During Key Stage 3, pupils make satisfactory progress. When pupils enter the school, standards in English are below average. Lesson observation and scrutiny both of available indicators and pupils' work show that standards remain below average by the end of the key stage. Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results in English are below average and there is a significant proportion of pupils who, on entry, have very low reading ages. The department's good literacy support and enrichment programme is having a significant effect on the progress made in reading and writing by these pupils. There is a strong emphasis on literacy in Year 7 English lessons. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are addressed vigorously and teachers help pupils to become more proficient at handwriting. During Key Stage 3, pupils are helped to become confident speakers and listeners through a range of paired and group activities. In a Year 8 lesson on media literacy the teacher very skilfully elicited a range of spoken responses on stereotypes associated with old age. She helped pupils successfully to use their spoken language to make appropriate word choices and how to associate them with images in advertisements.

- 73 During Key Stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of the key stage standards are below the national average but with the majority of pupils achieving standards inline with their prior attainment. GCSE courses are taught thoroughly and writing is further strengthened by the use of study skills. The department's arrangements for setting ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities. During Key Stage 4, pupils engage with a range of challenging texts which further develop their competence in reading and in speaking and listening. In a lesson on Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls' pupils showed that they could elicit and discuss a range of views on the moral issues which run through the play. They demonstrated a secure understanding of the text and a capacity to apply it to their own lives. One girl argued that the purpose of the inspector was to persuade the reader that, "If we go through life doing only what we want, then other people will be hurt".
- 74 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages although individual education plans are not used systematically and insufficient use is made of subject-specific targets within them.
- 75 Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good across both key stages, with pupils working together co-operatively in a friendly spirit. Levels of concentration are well sustained in the majority of lessons. Relationships are strong and behaviour is good in most lessons. Where pupils' responses were weaker it was usually because the pace was too slow or because work was not matched closely enough to pupils' learning needs. In some instances, pupils lacked more opportunities to do things for themselves.
- 76 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory in the majority of lessons seen. It was good in over a third of lessons and in one lesson in ten was very good. The quality of teaching was broadly similar in each key stage. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils. Planning of lessons is thorough with teachers sequencing lesson content very carefully. Pupils are managed effectively and, in many lessons, the level of challenge is good, with a judicious balance of teacher-led and student-initiated learning. There is good individual support for pupils, particularly for lower attainers in Key Stage 3 who benefit considerably from the emphasis on literacy skills. Homework is set regularly and homework tasks are of good quality.
- 77 A few lessons were rather slow to start, with an over-emphasis on procedural detail. Pupils' progress was hampered in lessons where the teachers controlled the learning process too tightly or where the style of questioning was narrow. The repertoire of activities for speaking and listening is narrow in some classes in both key stages. In particular, there are occasions when teachers begin analysing poetry and prose too quickly and reductively without having elicited pupils' responses. This practice reduces motivation. Basic tasks and language drills are continued for too long in a small number of lessons in Key Stage 3. In such instances a proportion of the pupils already understand the work being covered and their interest wanes.

- 78 Curricular planning is thorough. Provision is broad and generally well balanced. All attainment targets are addressed and the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are well represented in the Key Stage 3 schemes of work, which are lively and interesting. Provision for teaching media and knowledge about language is good. Gender issues are well reflected in the schemes. For instance, the theme on the 'Titanic' is well conceived and has a strong appeal to boys, many of whom warm to the technical specifications and analytical detail contained within it. The Key Stage 3 schemes include insufficient literature based work. The schemes are quite lengthy and take many weeks to teach; the fact that some are heavily language based results in long periods when pupils do not engage with novels, short stories, plays and poetry. Although all pupils do study literature in Key Stage 3, they do so too infrequently. The department should also seek to increase the incidence of wider reading and reading for pleasure in Key Stage 3. This weakens the foundations on which GCSE courses are built and lowers standards in Key Stage 4. There is insufficient common ground for the teaching of language skills in Key Stage 3; currently teachers make their own interpretation of this area within the schemes and some contextualise them for pupils more proficiently than others. The quality of curricular provision in Key Stage 4 is good where planning for the development of knowledge, concepts and skills is strong. In both key stages provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
- 79 Arrangements for the assessment, recording, and reporting of achievement meet statutory requirements. Assessment in both key stages is satisfactory although those pupils who fall on the GCSE C/D borderline are not targeted sufficiently. Pupils' work is marked regularly and most marking is constructive and helps pupils to improve their work. The department makes insufficient use of available attainment data to monitor and compare the progress in English within and between discrete cohorts of pupils as they move through the school.
- 80 English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development both in terms of provision within its schemes and through the sensitive handling of moral, social and cultural issues in lessons. There is also a strong spiritual element in such things as pupils' autobiographical writing, which is created with feeling and sensitivity, also in their creative writing, such as the excellent haikus which were displayed in one of the classrooms. The quality of display is good throughout the department and provides an important showcase for pupils' work.
- 81 The acting head of department is providing effective leadership and a strong sense of direction for English. The ethos for the subject is good. There are clear management systems and a good level of internal communication. Regular meetings and bulletins give teachers the opportunity to meet and plan energetically together. The department provides a good learning environment and is committed to raising standards. The issues raised in the previous report have been addressed. Provision for information technology teaching has been improved, the allocation of pupils to ability sets is now successful, and schemes have been revised to take account of the need for closer match between work set and pupils' prior attainment. The department has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers; teachers are effectively and fairly deployed. Following a serious fire at the school, the department has taken possession of new suited accommodation of excellent quality, a key feature of which is the provision of speaking and listening rooms which are helping to raise standards in oracy. There are sufficient good quality resources for the teaching of English. The department is managed efficiently and has the capacity to continue its improvement.

- 82 The school makes good provision for the development of literacy. In 1998-99 a whole-school focus on literacy brought new insights to staff and enabled them to look critically at the level of literacy support across the school. In particular, five faculties - English, mathematics, science, design and technology and humanities – were targeted to receive the main thrust of this initiative. Thirty-six teachers agreed to teach one specific literacy lesson within a Literacy Hour framework during each three week period. A whole-staff training day was devoted to raising awareness in literacy. A number of key activities were initiated: paired and shared reading which included older pupils helping younger pupils; and a range of literacy activities undertaken during morning tutorial time. A literacy co-ordinator carried out valuable work in synthesising the various strands of support. Subsequent evaluations of progress made indicated that some schemes of work had been modified to take account of literacy demands. The range of literacy activities built into the initiative was wide and included strategies to help pupils to become more proficient readers and writers: the ability to interpret and act on written and spoken instructions; developing proficiency in carrying out independent research, including note-making; fluent writing and symbolising; study skills; drafting and editing work; key words; and interpretative listening. This work was supported by a good policy document to help develop common and consistent approaches to literacy development. Although the original literacy project was of a single year's duration much of the practice engendered by it is still being continued each day, to the obvious benefit of pupils. The school should now continue to monitor literacy development to capitalise on the gains already made and ensure consistent practice in all subjects.
- 83 Pupils' standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are below average on entry, with a significant proportion of pupils having low reading ages. Standards of literacy are generally below average in both key stages. Across the subjects of the curriculum there is still a clear need to develop writing skills and to increase the range of purpose and audience for writing in some subjects. There is scope further to increase the use of drafting and study skills in some lessons although the standard of handwriting is generally good. Early attention to improving reading fluency is lifting progress but strategies to help pupils to become more flexible in the ways that they read – such as skimming, scanning, and sequencing of materials – are underdeveloped in some subjects. Teachers have an improved knowledge of the specific reading demands which their subjects impose on pupils and are careful in matching texts to pupils' learning needs. Pupils become increasingly confident speakers as they move through the key stages, although there is scope further to widen the repertoire of activities for speaking and listening to promote greater independence in learning.

Drama

- 84 In 1998 the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades in drama was above the national average. Girls scored more highly than boys, in line with the national trend but boys performed particularly well when compared to boys' performance nationally. Boys also reached the top grades: two obtaining A* and two obtaining A grades. The 1998 results in drama were broadly comparable to those obtained in 1997. In 1999 the A* - C rate fell by 20 percent although the size of entry rose by the same proportion and included a higher proportion of lower attainers. This cohort was also affected during Year 11 by staff changes and staff illness. Nonetheless, the final results were close to the spread of predicted grades.

- 85 In lessons seen standards usually matched pupils' abilities. Most reach the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 3 with a smaller proportion achieving more highly. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening and literacy are below average on entry; consequently, progress in drama is slower at the beginning of Key Stage 3. However, by the time that they near the end of the key stage standards have risen appreciably with many pupils performing confidently. Progress is good in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, pupils continue to make good progress. By the end of the key stage standards are above the national expectation with many pupils attaining well for their abilities. Take-up of drama is very good at Key Stage 4; it is significant that some lower attainers count drama as one of only a small number of GCSE subjects to which they can aspire. Skill acquisition is carefully sequenced in drama. During Key Stage 3 pupils become increasingly confident in group work. In a Year 9 class pupils focused on the theme of 'angel and devil' and showed competence in the range of presentational devices used when trying to persuade others to 'act against their will'. Their use of voice, movement, expression and working on different levels demonstrated flexibility in response; higher attainers maintained the 'freeze' impressively. In Key Stage 4, pupils demonstrated their capacity to use aspects of physical theatre (using the body to create objects etc.) and their more advanced improvisational skills. In one Year 11 class pupils had researched the topic of bullying by exchanging roles with Year 7 pupils. By so doing they gained sensitive insights into the mind of the victim and used them to create a drama on bullying for a younger audience. They included stereotypes (of bully and bullied) to be challenged by the audience. This work was carried out to a good standard with pupils showing inventiveness and confidence.
- 86 Attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour is generally good. Motivation and levels of concentration are well sustained during lessons. Where response was less good there was some over-anxiety on the part of teachers to pupils talking. Using the task to control behaviour would have been preferable in such instances.
- 87 Teaching in drama is good in the majority of lessons in both key stages. There was a smaller proportion of very good and satisfactory teaching. Explanations are clear and teaching is enthusiastic and energetic. Pace is usually brisk and good use is made of teacher-in-role. Lessons are usually well organised and carefully sequenced with evaluation built into the activities. In some lessons there was a need to increase the incidence of student response in evaluation. Sometimes teachers do not leave enough time at the end of lessons for pupils to present their group work to the class. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to capitalise on what has been learned. There is a need to modify the pace and pitch of delivery in some lessons so that pupils understand that quiet use of voice in presentations can be equally effective.
- 88 Curricular provision, including provision for pupils with special educational needs, is broad and balanced in both key stages and ensures that continuity and progression in learning are maintained. Schemes of work are of good quality. Arrangements for assessment are good. Drama makes a full contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a good record of theatre productions, theatre visits, artists in residence, and pupils performing to outside audiences. Drama addresses a wide range of moral, social and cultural issues through its curricular provision: bullying, community, gender, equal opportunities, trust, birth and old age, etc. It plays a significant and valued part in the life of the school. The department is well led. The issues raised in the previous OFSTED report have been rectified although drama is still taught in the hall. Nonetheless, the department makes good use of the available accommodation and resources. There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff to teach drama. The department is managed efficiently and has both the capacity to improve and a commitment to high standards.

- 89 On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the national average. In the 1998 national curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or above was well below the national average. The performance of girls in these tests was higher than boys, but still below the national average compared to similar schools the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or above was above average; it was well above average for those attaining level 6 or above. The proportion of pupils in 1999 reaching the nationally expected level 5 was broadly similar. In the 1998 GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4, 32 percent of pupils gained an A* - C grade compared with 45 percent nationally. GCSE results for 1999 were broadly similar. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in the 1998 GCSE examinations.
- 90 The majority of pupils nearing the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 attain standards which are below the national average. Generally pupils make good oral contributions in lessons, are able to discuss their work and use mathematical language effectively. Pupils were also able to work out simple calculations without the use of calculators. However, many pupils throughout both key stages were unable to retain sufficient understanding of underlying concepts to transfer their knowledge and skills acquired in one context to a problem encountered at a later stage in their study of the subject. Some pupils nearing the end of Key Stage 3 were able to demonstrate good techniques for carrying out practical investigations and are beginning to think mathematically. At the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils were handling algebra to a satisfactory standard and coping well with the higher GCSE course.
- 91 Progress in both key stages is satisfactory overall. There is evidence of good progress in mathematics lessons observed in both key stages, with pupils making better than expected progress. However, because pupils find difficulty in retaining knowledge, skills and understanding and progress over time is satisfactory rather than good. While pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall there were some examples of very good progress being made by these pupils in Key Stage 3, where teaching was good and additional support well focused, through the contribution of classroom assistants. In a few lessons low attaining pupils with special educational needs were making unsatisfactory progress due to unsatisfactory teaching and, sometimes, large group sizes.
- 92 There was evidence of improving numeracy skills in mathematics lessons, particularly with pupils at the early stages of Key Stage 3, but standards are still below national expectations. Numeracy is supported in some other subjects, but insufficient attention is being paid to it and the school policy is not being implemented.
- 93 Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are usually co-operative in lessons and are keen to learn. Many take pride in their work and attend lessons properly equipped. They settle down quickly, willingly participate and maintain concentration. Behaviour overall is good and in the majority of lessons it is good or better. Unsatisfactory behaviour is restricted to a few classes for low attaining pupils. In these classes many pupils found difficulty listening and following simple classroom rules, preferring to shout out, interrupt the teacher and generally distract others. In most classes relationships are good and pupils showed respect for teachers. Pupils are usually polite and confident when speaking to adults. They are willing, when asked, to take responsibility.

- 94 Teaching is a strength of the department. In just under 9 out of 10 lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better. It was at least good in 6 out of 10 lessons and very good in 3 out of 10 lessons. Shortcomings in the quality of teaching concentrated on some of the lessons with low attainers and pupils with special needs, where teaching was unsatisfactory. Recurrent features of good teaching are high expectations of pupils, sensitive, but firm, classroom management and good subject knowledge. In the best lessons question and answer techniques are used well to challenge pupils to think mathematically and to explain to others in the class the reason for answers. In these successful lessons there is also effective use of warm-up sessions at the beginning of lessons to practise mental arithmetic skills in these successful lessons. Effective teachers praise pupils to build their confidence at every opportunity and deal with incorrect answers in a supportive way. The development of a technical vocabulary is good in many lessons, with teachers using every day language to explain mathematical terms. In one lesson observed pupils were asked to put key words in a sentence as an oral exercise, thus practising literacy skills alongside their understanding of the subject. Lack of challenge in the work and slow pace of lessons marked the small minority of unsuccessful lessons. The management of classroom behaviour was also unsatisfactory and a significant contributory factor to unsuccessful lessons.
- 95 The curriculum meets statutory requirements, with good planning for development of knowledge and skills and satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils. The department is well led and there are good procedures for monitoring and supporting the work of teachers. Resources are adequate; they are well organised and used effectively. Accommodation for the subject is good.
- 96 Since the last inspection the department has worked successfully to raise GCSE results. Resources for learning have been improved substantially, with a good range of textbooks available and the installation of a computer network. Learning resources for the lowest attaining pupils have also been improved.

128 Science

- 97 Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are below the national average. However, when compared with similar schools the pupils' performance is well above the average for pupils reaching level 5 or above and level 6 or above. Results over the last three years show a trend similar to that occurring nationally, which is relatively stable. Over the last three years boys' performance was well below the national average whilst girls' was below average. GCSE results for double award science in 1998 were well below the national average. This year's results show a significant improvement. The number of pupils who take double award science has increased since the last inspection. Some of the highest attaining pupils take all three separate sciences. Results for these pupils are close to the national average, but numbers entered are small. The rest of the pupils took single award science for whom results were well below the national average. Overall, pupils achieve GCSE results below the national average.

- 98 Attainment at the end of both key stages is below the national average. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 find making correct conclusions from their experimental work quite difficult. The highest attaining pupils in Year 9 have a satisfactory knowledge of acids, alkalis, and neutralisation, but found application of this knowledge very difficult. By the end of Key Stage 4, in their investigations pupils show a satisfactory understanding of fair testing. Measuring techniques are sometimes inadequate to obtain reproducible results. Pupils' skills in generating hypotheses and offering scientific explanations are unsatisfactory. When faced with scientific problems the highest attaining pupils in Year 11 place too much reliance on their teacher to resolve them, rather than offering possible explanations for themselves. Application of knowledge is unsatisfactory, which is one of the reasons why pupils rarely achieve the highest GCSE grades. Weak skills in numeracy inhibit attainment for many pupils because they restrict access to the higher level work. Pupils in both key stages have low levels of factual recall and understanding of recent work.
- 99 Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment and then achieve below national average levels by the end of Year 9. In lessons, pupils make good progress whether investigating the laws of reflection for light or learning about colour mixing of light. In Key Stage 4 the percentage of pupils obtaining the higher GCSE grades matches well to what happens nationally for those obtaining Level 5 and above in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils make good progress when carrying out tests to determine the freshness of milk, or when learning about the discovery and uses of metals. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other lower attaining groups but their progress is determined by the quality of the support staff. Teachers are aware of those pupils with individual education plans, but it is difficult to monitor their progress, because there are no subject specific targets. When progress in lessons is unsatisfactory it is mostly because the teacher has insufficient control of behaviour so that too little work is completed.
- 100 Pupils' attitudes to learning overall are satisfactory. However, most pupils are too passive, with only the higher attainers showing interest and, more rarely, enjoyment. The number of pupils opting for double award science, although increasing, is below the national average. Erratic attendance undermines progress and attainment for many pupils. Behaviour is usually satisfactory or better so that most pupils have every opportunity to learn. However, there are a significant number of occasions when behaviour is unacceptable so that pupils' learning is disrupted. Pupils work well together when carrying out experiments. Pupils generally follow instructions, although many take insufficient care to work safely, or to obtain reproducible results. Safety glasses are worn properly by some, but not by others. Many pupils cannot resist the temptation to burn wood splints for no good purpose. When using Bunsen burners pupils take insufficient care either to light, or to control them properly. When moving around the laboratory to collect materials and equipment, pupils act responsibly. Although most pupils put their hands up to answer questions in class, a significant number spoil perfectly correct answers by calling them out, thus showing little respect for others. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative are limited because of the directed approach to teaching.

- 101 The quality of teaching is variable in this department, but is satisfactory overall. In about seven-tenths of lessons teaching is at least satisfactory, with four-tenths good or better. However, in three-tenths of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory or worse. The teaching of half the teachers in the department was unsatisfactory on some occasion during this inspection. There is no significant difference between the key stages in the quality of teaching. Teachers set high standards for discipline, which are mostly achieved. However, in some lessons teachers fail to control unacceptable behaviour of pupils, so that too little work is covered and lesson aims are not met. Teachers usually have thorough subject knowledge and understanding. However, unsatisfactory teaching in one Key Stage 4 lesson was due to the teacher's lack of subject expertise. Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally appropriate. Lessons are carefully planned, sometimes using a range of resources and methods. Although material is available, teachers provide insufficient work suitable for pupils of different attainment. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but do not use sufficiently scientific supportive comments, so that it is not clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is variable particularly for the lower attaining pupils.
- 102 In an attempt to raise attainment the department teaches the double award course through single sex groups. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of this initiative but early results are encouraging. The way in which the double award course is organised fails to give the pupils the full benefits of a modular approach. Another problem with this course is that teachers are required to teach all three specialist subjects to the highest GCSE level. This arrangement is one of the factors which prevents pupils achieving the highest grades. Assessment procedures help to form similar ability teaching groups. These procedures are reasonably effective as shown by the generally good agreement between teacher assessments and results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The department does not consistently use assessment information to inform pupils of their current standards so that they can have a clear target for improvement.
- 103 The management of the department is satisfactory. There is a good team spirit. The department is well supported by an inexperienced technician, but support time is poor for the range of courses on offer and the number of laboratories which have to be serviced. The recent addition of a room fully equipped with computers and data-logging equipment puts the department in a very good position to develop the full potential of information technology. The department gives due attention to health and safety, but some risks still exist. Chemical solutions are inconsistently labelled with hazard warning signs. Concentrated acids are not stored in drip-proof trays. Portable electrical equipment has not been tested within the recommended twelve-month period. Procedures for the use of radioactive sources are not followed.
- 104 The following matters were raised in the previous report and there has been insufficient improvement: poor behaviour still affects some lessons; the knowledge base of high attainers continues to be weak; high levels of absence by some pupils spoils their progress; finally, and most importantly, the quality of teaching is still variable.

136 **Art**

- 105 By the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 attainment is below national standards. Girls' attainment exceeds that of boys. During the inspection most of the work being produced in Key Stage 3 lessons met expectations. A highlight is the pupils' ability to contribute constructively to discussions of their own work and the work of famous artists. The majority of pupils are producing work commensurate with their ability although the higher attaining pupils, while producing good work, are not fully extended. Exciting, original textile design and graphic work, inspired by the Masai tribe, is produced by Year 9 pupils. The 1998 GCSE results show that of those pupils entered for art or textiles, only 32 percent gained passes A - C grades, well below the 59 percent national average. Again the girls' attainment is higher than that of boys but in 1999 18 percent of pupils gained grades A - C. A student with Down's Syndrome gained a grade G in art this year; her only pass at GCSE. There has been a slow but steady improvement in examination results since the previous inspection.
- 106 Progress in both key stages is satisfactory, as is the progress of pupils with special education needs. The examination results fail to reflect the work being done in the department. There is evidence of consolidation of previous learning and new learning, particularly at Key Stage 4. However, class work and homework are insufficiently challenging in both key stages. Some pupils have enough natural and taught ability to develop their work in innovative, original ways, while others seem content to rearrange images taken from books, the internet and other sources. There has been insufficient improvement in observational drawing skills and research methods, weaknesses first identified in the previous inspection. These undermine progress and attainment. The pupils' skills of design and composition are good.
- 107 An undoubted strength in the department is the good relationship between the pupils and their teachers. This encourages confidence, and with few exceptions, the pupils concentrate on their work and persevere when faced with difficulty. In a number of lessons teachers insist their pupils work together to suggest ways others might improve their work. Discussions of work are invariably mature, sensible and constructive. A reluctance to experiment when selecting methods or materials or when planning their work is a weakness amongst the pupils. The respect they have for the subject, its fabric and resources is good and it is particularly noteworthy that delicate displays of work around the school remain undamaged. The creative nature of the subject, and their teachers' clear lead on behaviour leave the pupils in little doubt about the directions they need to take as they grow into young adults.
- 108 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The best teaching occurs in Key Stage 4 where it is good. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding and usually insist on high standards. The variety of skills teachers possess is a distinctive feature of the department. Work is carefully marked, annotated, returned to pupils and followed up with discussions in lessons, when teachers ask pertinent questions and encourage sensible, constructive answers. They also draw on a range of resources to make the subject comprehensible. The small number of unsatisfactory lessons were due to the teacher's inexperience or low expectations, also the poor behaviour of Year 7 pupils, who are not yet familiar with the department's expectations. Generally teachers plan effectively and employ strategies which match the needs of their pupils and the curriculum. They also use time and resources effectively. Overall, their management of pupils is good.

- 109 The curriculum, identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, is broad and balanced and allows pupils to work in two and three dimensions. The inadequate use information technology also caused concern at the previous inspection, but several work-stations are now in place and pupils make use of a range of programmes in their work. Computer generated imagery from software and the Internet was central to the efforts of Year 11 pupils designing a children's comic. Efforts to fully integrate the new technology into the curriculum will further increase the learning opportunities for pupils. The single period allocated to art in Years 8 and 9 is limits the range of the curriculum, the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' progress and the status of the subject. Assessment in art is good and is used to inform the curriculum in both key stages. Systems for recording assessment are good.
- 110 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Lesson activities and subject matter encourage pupils to reflect on their own experiences as they develop their work. Self-knowledge and self-discovery are features of the portraits being produced in Year 7. Teachers also leave their pupils in no doubt as to the difference between right and wrong. The high profile of critical studies introduces the pupils to a variety of European and non-European art and encourages an awareness and understanding of beliefs and attitudes not normally encountered in their daily lives.
- 111 There is a positive ethos in the department and sensitive, firm leadership provides clear direction. The subject leader has plans, priorities and targets for improvement, but insufficient thought has been given to the implications of time, resources and cost. Teaching and curriculum developments are monitored and supported and the department's aims are reflected through its work. The number and qualifications of the staff match the demands of the curriculum. The new accommodation has a positive impact on standards. Resources are adequate but could be used a little more adventurously, thus allowing pupils a more experimental approach.

143 **Design and technology**

- 112 GCSE results overall are below the national averages. Food technology results have improved steadily since the last inspection but remain below average, as do results in graphics. Resistant materials, and systems and control courses show a marked decline in results over the same period and are well below national figures. These trends are confirmed by the 1999 figures. The department has made progress in implementing the new range of GCSE courses but there is insufficient match between the teaching and the course requirements in resistant materials and systems and control.
- 113 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national standards. Practical projects are carefully structured to guide pupils through the process of designing, making and evaluating. Booklets are provided for different levels of ability but the same working procedures are required for each. Lower attaining pupils benefit from this structured approach but it limits the responses required from higher achieving pupils.
- 114 Pupils are beginning to acquire the practical skills of working with tools and materials. For example, in a Year 9 electronics lesson pupils of all abilities demonstrated that they had acquired the basic skills of using simple machine and hand tools and could use these with a degree of confidence. A lower attaining student competently soldered the connections of a battery cap to her electronic circuit with minimum help. Pupils could use technical vocabulary accurately.

- 115 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national standards. Many pupils can explain verbally the processes they are involved in but lack the practical skills to express their ideas graphically or in writing. Low literacy skills prevent many pupils from accurately recording information, leads to poor presentation of work and depresses overall attainment. Pupils often make good contributions to class discussions and with skilful questioning give accurate responses. For example, in a Year 11 food technology group pupils of all abilities made sensible contributions to a discussion on compiling a questionnaire on lunchtime eating preferences. They could extend their answers when required. Later written work, however, revealed a wide variation in their ability to record and consolidate the work. This was also seen in other parts of the curriculum area.
- 116 Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory for most pupils in relation to their level of attainment on entry. In many cases progress is slow but some higher attaining pupils show that they are developing the independent learning skills necessary for successful project work. Progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Some pupils are able to build on earlier experiences and work with a degree of self-motivation. Pupils who do not achieve this are well supported by their teachers. Progress in both key stages was greatest when the tasks presented appropriate challenges and had a focus clearly understood by the pupils. For example, pupils in a Year 8 food technology lesson clearly benefited from analysing the properties of materials and making choices for the manufacture of their recipe cards. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and receive good help and encouragement.
- 117 Many pupils in both key stages are confident in the use of equipment for a range of purposes, including processing data and text, and using graphics software for their GCSE project folders. A strength of the department is that it introduces pupils to electronically controlled machinery early in Key Stage 3. Pupils make progress through the school aware of what the technology can achieve and have the confidence to use it when appropriate. Projects using this technology should be carefully monitored to ensure sufficient progression of skill and complexity across the key stages.
- 118 Pupils enjoy design and technology and this is reflected in their good, positive approach to their work. They co-operate well and are generally considerate of each others' needs. Pupils in a Year 9 resistant materials group, for example were congratulated by their teacher for the way in which they helped each other during the lesson. Most pupils are attentive, keen to contribute to lessons and respond well to verbal instructions. Where lapses occur they are usually dealt with effectively and in a quietly assertive manner.
- 119 Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Key Stage 3. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and have extended their expertise to include the new technology. The best teaching was typified by a clear explanation of the task, setting appropriate targets for the lesson and beyond, and the use of a range of suitable teaching strategies. For example, in a Year 8 food technology lesson interest was maintained by using a combination of whole class, small group, paired and individual methods. Teachers usually emphasise opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills in the planning and teaching of lessons. For example, pupils in a Year 8 resistant materials lesson were given a clear explanation of the technical vocabulary to be used and the task of writing out the definitions in their folders. Key words are on display and are referred to during lessons. Where teaching was less successful it lacked variety and sufficient challenge. A year 11 resistant materials lesson, for example, consisted entirely of individual research for GCSE projects and would have benefited from occasional whole group intervention by the teacher. Homework is effective in reinforcing classwork. The head of faculty monitors teaching within the area and the staff work well together. Effective support is provided by an experienced technician.

120 Leadership of the department is satisfactory. Good progress has been made in revising policies and schemes of work. Both are detailed and closely matched to national curriculum requirements and whole school policies. Pupils' assessment sheets are comprehensive and inform pupils of the level at which they are working. Staff discuss this with pupils to make them aware of what they need to do to make progress. Pupils are insufficiently involved in self-assessment. The head of faculty produces detailed analyses of assessment data and the information is used to inform discussion on curriculum planning and pupils' progress. Accommodation for technology is modern, spacious, well maintained and provides a stimulating working environment. Pupils have access to a wide range of equipment and resources including electronically controlled milling machines, a suite of thirty networked computers and appropriate software. This major investment in resources is managed effectively and the department is well supported financially.

152 **Geography**

121 GCSE results at grades A*-C rose steadily for the five years to 1998 when results (36 percent) were below the national average of 50 percent. A further rise in 1999 took the figure to 45 percent. Wide variations in the performance of boys and girls in previous years show no discernible pattern, but this year's results follow the national pattern.

122 Pupils' attainment on entry is very low and by the end of Key Stage 3 are below the national standards. Year 9 pupils can construct climate graphs from new data and use the graphs to compare and contrast the climates of two neighbouring regions.

123 Attainment in Key Stage 4 is below the national standard. In Year 10, pupils can use their graphical skills to derive information about population change from the demographic transition model, and Year 11 understand wave action and other forces of erosion which create sea cliffs.

124 Pupils make good progress in their lessons in both key stages. Basic geographical skills of mapping, sketching, photograph analysis and graphical and diagrammatic construction are gained in Year 7. Also Year 7 pupils know the difference between physical and human geography and understand, in simple terms, why settlements grow in particular locations. Year 8 pupils develop understanding of how rainfall is caused. In Year 8, higher attaining pupils can explain how rainfall is caused using correct terminology. In the study of place in Year 9, pupils gain insight into Kenya's climate by using skills of graphical construction learned in knowledge and understanding of climate and weather gained in a Year 8 thematic study and applying all this to Mombassa and Nairobi.

125 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their lessons through the targeting of appropriate tasks, the provision of materials matched to pupils' attainment and the individual support of their teachers. However, over time, Year 7 pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress as they only have one lesson each week instead of the two periods per week which everyone else has.

126 The numbers of pupils choosing to study geography in Key Stage 4 has risen steadily in recent years to over 40 percent of the age group. There is, however, a gender imbalance which gives cause for concern with considerably more boys than girls studying the subject. In both key stages pupils' attitudes to work are generally good. Pupils like geography. They are alert, involved and attentive to their teachers with whom they have good relationships. Most pupils respond well to challenging tasks but some pupils lack confidence and seek reassurance.

- 127 The overall quality of teaching is good. It is very good in a quarter of lessons observed. Teachers are confident in their command of the subject matter and control and manage their pupils well. Teachers have clear aims and make them explicit to the class. Lesson plans are detailed and give structure and variety to lessons. Lessons have a brisk pace and appropriate progression, with activities to challenge the highest attainers, but individuals experiencing difficulties are given good support. Level descriptions are regularly used in class as a developmental tool to give pupils a clear idea of how to improve. Good use is made of questioning techniques with opportunities given for pupils to extend or refine answers, but some oral sessions are too long and pupils' attention flags.
- 128 The curriculum meets all requirements and includes the use of information technology to assist in the teaching and learning of geography and to develop pupils' skills with spreadsheets and word processing. Insufficient use is made of fieldwork in Key Stage 3 as part of a skills development programme. Pupils in Year 7 with special educational needs do not have equal access to the geography curriculum, as they only have half the time allocation of other pupils.
- 129 Assessment procedures are very good, with all pupils' national curriculum levels tracked and recorded. Marking is regular and thorough, with supportive comments which help pupils to improve.
- 130 The department is very ably led. There is a strong commitment to the school and its values and to maintaining and raising standards. Developmental planning is good, with clear priorities and targets. The work of the department is carefully monitored and there is a strong sense of teamwork and mutual support. Documentation of schemes of work, policies and routines is comprehensive and thorough. Most notably, there is rigorous and detailed analysis of examination and assessment data to validate the work of the department and as a management tool to instigate change.
- 131 The teaching staff are capable and have a range of experience. They operate in adjacent classrooms which supports the team approach. Resources are good in range, quality and number. Good use is made of resources, both human and material, and there is prudent management of funds. The efficiency of the department is very good.
- 132 The previous report described the department as 'sound with good features' and called for more use of information technology, differentiated resources, further investigative work and the extension of fieldwork. All these issues have been addressed and, although there is still room for further development of fieldwork, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

164 **History**

- 133 Attainment in history is below national standards at the end of both key stages. In the 1998 GCSE results 22 percent of pupils achieved grades A*-C. This is well below the national average of 52 percent. At grades A* - G there is a similar pattern. 83 percent of pupils achieved grades A* - G compared to the national average of 96 percent. The GCSE results for 1999 show improvement. In 1999, 44 percent of pupils achieved grades A* - C and nearly 90 percent achieved grades A*-G. This is a significant improvement which brings the history results nearer to national averages and reverses dramatically the declining trend of the results in earlier years. Boys tend to perform slightly better than girls in history, except in 1999, when the boys achieved much better results.

- 134 Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are below national standards. Most pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment. Teacher assessments for 1999 show just over 40 percent of pupils are attaining at the expected standards. However, the trend in the Key Stage 3 assessments over the last three years is one of steady improvement. The attainment of most pupils is affected by poor literacy skills.
- 135 The overall progress of pupils in history is satisfactory. Although standards are below average on entry, there is a steady improvement throughout both key stages. Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory; it is good in Key Stage 4. History is now attracting more pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils in Year 9 describe the events and changes in the industrial revolution. They understand the move from hand power to water and steam power. They know about the consequences of the growth of towns and the public health problems. In Year 8, pupils can identify the factors affecting the development of the Arab army in the Islamic world. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because the work is adapted to their learning needs.
- 136 In Key Stage 4, Year 10, pupils studying 'medicine through time' have a clear understanding of the medical theories of the ancient world. They realise that a religious view of illness could exist beside a more natural approach. Pupils in Year 11 make good progress in their coursework because they use their fieldwork notes and analysis of sources to select and organise information to satisfy the demands of an examination question. The coursework on the development of Ferrybridge as a coaching centre is very well organised, with a good range of contemporary sources. This contributes to improving student confidence and raising standards. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because the department provides a course which follows the GCSE syllabus content but at a more accessible level. This course is linked to the record of achievement and is validated by an examination board.
- 137 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are interested and involved in the lessons and enjoy their work. They listen carefully to the teacher and concentrate on their work. Pupils are well behaved. The use of extended writing skills is promoting independent study skills among the pupils. When the teacher asks questions, pupils can become very involved in learning. For example, a Year 7 class, studying Hannibal's attack on the Roman Empire, enjoyed working out why Hannibal chose the route through the Alps.
- 138 Teaching in history is good. One in five lessons are very good. The teachers are hard-working and dedicated. Their command of the subject and their lively approach makes lessons interesting and motivates pupils. Carefully structured lessons with clear objectives and challenging tasks, which make pupils think, involve pupils of all levels of attainment in the process of learning. Good assessment and monitoring procedures enable teachers to check understanding and progress. Marking is very good. It helps pupils to improve and is a very effective dialogue between pupils and teachers. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is a key factor in the improving standards at both key stages.
- 139 Leadership and management of the department are good. Standards of teaching and learning are monitored. National Curriculum levels are used to inform and motivate pupils. The staff work as an effective team. There is a concern to raise the standards of all pupils and this is seen most obviously in the improved quality of the teaching and in the standards expected of the pupils. There is a work ethic in history.

- 140 History is a good and improving department. Standards at both key stages are rising. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Provision for information and communication technology is better and it is being integrated into the curriculum. There is a concern to improve the standards of literacy among the pupils and the department is offering an alternative history course at Key Stage 4, which is externally accredited, for those pupils who find the full GCSE course too demanding. History makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

172 **Information technology**

- 141 There have been substantial changes in the organisation of information and communications technology (ICT) since the previous inspection. The facilities and resources have been much improved and the courses have been restructured. This is the first year in which the new arrangements are fully in place.
- 142 The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national standard. The National Curriculum entitlement is provided through subjects which have responsibility for various strands of ICT. Pupils have satisfactory skills in organising and communicating information and an understanding of the use of ICT to control equipment and events. They are confident in using their ICT skills in lessons to support their work in other subjects.
- 143 In Key Stage 4 the attainment of pupils is below the national standard. ICT is delivered in a cross-curricular way through a range of subjects and each faculty has a base for the teaching of ICT. These arrangements are very new and not all pupils are receiving their full National Curriculum entitlement. Information Studies is included as an optional GCSE in Key Stage 4 and in 1999 grades A* - C were achieved by 38 percent of the pupils entered, below the average nationally. This was the first year in which pupils were entered for GCSE in this subject.
- 144 Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. In Year 7 all pupils have a short introduction to information and communications technology. They develop and use basic skills of communicating and handling information and extend their knowledge of word processing, for example in writing a letter and setting it out on the page. Standards achieved in these lessons at the start of the course are satisfactory and pupils are working at close to national standards in this limited range of ICT applications. Throughout Key Stage 3 pupils continue to develop their skills, for example, in technology where pupils design and produce board games, and investigate activities requiring computer control, and in English where pupils plan and design a newspaper obtaining information from the internet
- 145 Overall progress in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. The progress which pupils make in some strands of ICT, particularly the word processing and desk top publishing applications, is satisfactory. However, arrangements for the provision of ICT are not finalised, the curriculum does not meet requirements, so progress is less than expected. Examples of the use of ICT are seen in most subjects, for example, in mathematics where spreadsheets are used effectively to produce graphs of algebraic functions, and in religious education where research skills are developed using information obtained from CD-ROMs and desktop publishing skills are used to assemble and present the information. In the Information Studies GCSE course, the coursework requirements are satisfied and pupils show competence, for example, in the entry of data, sorting information and searching a database.
- 146 In both key stages pupils with special educational needs are included in the courses that are provided by the various subjects. These pupils make similar progress to others.

- 147 The recent improvements in ICT resources enrich the provision throughout the school. The internet is accessible to all faculties and makes a valuable contribution to the development of research skills and the skills of accessing and using information, for example, in French where information on weather forecasts is obtained and used, and in science where the BBC website is used to obtain information for use in biology. Departments have a range of CD-ROMs as sources of information, and although the resources are limited at present, good use is made of those that are available, for example, in an interactive program to support class teaching on chemical elements, and the use of a CD-ROM to contribute to the physical education GCSE course.
- 148 Pupils are interested when using the facilities in information and communications technology and they work satisfactorily on the tasks they are set. Pupils are able to take responsibility for aspects of their own work and when required to make choices they do this sensibly. Good work by pupils' and good presentation are seen in projects in geography, for example, in the investigation of microclimates and the use of a range of applications to compare life expectation and wealth; also in history in projects on Islamic civilisations and the first world war. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, and when using the computer facilities, is good.
- 149 Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. There are examples of good teaching and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of ICT in the applications used in their subjects. The planning is satisfactory and supported by the documentation that the faculties provide. Teachers' expectations of pupils are satisfactory. The management of learning is good. Where the teaching is good teachers are committed to the use of ICT and they are competent in using the ICT applications required, for example in the development of a graphics activity producing posters using drawing and design facilities. There is also good teaching in the GCSE course where the topics build effectively on previous knowledge. Where there are weaknesses in the teaching they arise mainly when insufficient attention is given to the need to develop and extend pupils' skills and knowledge of ICT. New arrangements for the assessment of pupils have been introduced. They are satisfactory in Key Stage 3, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4. There are examples of effective practice in the documents used in geography and history for matching pupils' work to National Curriculum levels.
- 150 The leadership of ICT is satisfactory. A decision to cover the ICT through other subjects has been made and steps taken to implement this approach. The resources are now sufficient to provide each major faculty with at least 15 computers and a printer, for departmental use, and a room within faculty areas which can be booked by members of the faculty. These arrangements ensure very good provision for all faculties, and a firm basis for future development. The co-ordinator has been in post since September and has responsibility for the complex task of setting up an effective cross-curricular delivery of ICT. An organisation for the delivery of ICT in Key Stage 3 has been agreed on and is working. The arrangements for Key Stage 4 have just begun, and are following similar arrangements to those established for Key Stage 3. Provision in Key Stage 4 was a key issue in the last inspection. The curriculum still does not meet statutory requirements. There has been insufficient improvement on this key issue. An audit of staff development needs for ICT has been done and arrangements made to finance training for all staff. Accommodation for ICT is now very good. Resources available are very good with sufficient up-to-date computers to support cross-curricular provision of ICT, networked across the school and with access to the Internet. There are now sufficient computers. The ratio of six pupils to each computer is better than the national average for secondary schools.

- 151 The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - C in the 1998 GCSE examinations in French was marginally above the national average: the proportion of pupils gaining these grades in German was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - G was above the national average in French, but just below in German. Boys' attainment in French at grades A* - C was well above that of boys nationally. In 1999 in the results at grades A* - C in French for all pupils were similar, despite having increased the number of pupils entered by 10 percent. The German results are still awaiting the outcome of re-marking of many of the tapes in the oral component of the exam.
- 152 Pupils' attainment is in line with national standards at the end of Key Stage 3 in French and in German, which is begun in Year 8, with a limited time allocation. Pupils' understanding is good, because of the extensive use of the foreign language in the classroom by the teachers, and because listening exercises feature in nearly every lesson. Beginners in Year 7, French and in Year 8 German, successfully identified from cassette new words that they had learnt. Oracy skills are weak. Teachers use chorus work by pupils well to introduce and consolidate vocabulary, but not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to develop the language in paired work. In role-play pupils are dependent on prompts. The best speaking was in a top set in Year 9 when pupils gave presentations from memory of ordering food in a restaurant. In written work pupils show a good knowledge of topic vocabulary in French and in German at appropriate levels. There is insufficient attention to accuracy in many cases, particularly with regard to accents and genders.
- 153 Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national standards in French and below standards in German.
- 154 Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of topic vocabulary to enable them to carry out tasks at their appropriate levels. Lower attainers in French and German, studying for the City and Guilds examination, could identify and note information from cassette. They can write short sentences with reasonable accuracy. Higher attainers in German in Year 10 participated in a role play using key words for the topic, identified them in a reading text and gave their own opinions briefly in writing. Higher attainers in French and German in Year 11 can use their skills to devise their own role-play or to write a letter describing accommodation, either using prompts or working from memory. In the scrutiny of work, higher and average attainers showed a good knowledge of topic vocabulary, with varying degrees of grammatical accuracy. One piece of French coursework showed a very high standard of writing, with a full range of tenses.
- 155 Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory in both languages. Past work is consolidated in revision exercises and there are gains in knowledge in most lessons with the introduction of new material. Year 7 French beginners learnt 12 new words: middle attainers in Year 8 made good progress with the acquisition of breakfast foods, recognising them later in a reading context. In another Year 8 lesson for middle attainers, pupils extended speaking and writing skills by combining their topic of weather with clothes from a previous unit. Listening tests help to consolidate new material. Teachers' strategies, particularly games and competitions, help pupils to commit vocabulary to memory.
- 156 Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory in both languages. Teachers' focus on key words for listening exercises has helped pupils to improve their technique. Teachers' good use of the foreign language in the classroom in most, but not all, lessons helps pupils to develop understanding. Good advice about examination technique or coursework is also given, so that pupils know what they can do to improve. Writing skills are being developed, but too little attention is given to accuracy, for instance with the use of capital letters for nouns in German.

- 157 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Some are integrated into higher sets, and sets for lower attaining pupils in both key stages are small. Progress for pupils with special needs in both key stages is satisfactory. Support, when available, is good: in one lesson a statemented boy made good progress in the lesson in listening and writing with support from the special needs assistant. There is good liaison between the teacher and the learning assistant, who feels part of the class. She participated in the chorus work and was called upon to answer a question in French! Pupils in Year 11 French and Spanish sets made good progress in the lesson: in the former with learning and writing, in the latter with speaking and reading.
- 158 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are attentive and well behaved in lessons. They respond well to chorus work and react sensibly to tasks at the front of the class. They enjoy the games and competitions, and these are particularly well used in lower sets to help pupils' concentration. One Year 7 French class enjoyed working with texts in the information technology room. They work well independently, or in pairs or groups when they are given the opportunity. They listen well to the cassette recordings. Presentation of written work is unsatisfactory. At present, pupils do not complete corrections to their written work.
- 159 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, and in two thirds of the lessons it is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and they use the foreign language well in the classroom to challenge the pupils. Lessons are well prepared and well planned; they include a variety of activities and of language skills. There is insufficient use of pair work to develop oracy and limited challenge to individual pupils after chorus work. Time limits are set for each task, and teachers ensure that the tasks are understood by all pupils. Good strategies, such as chorus work, flash cards, games and competitions, are used well to consolidate work and to engage and maintain pupils' interest and concentration. Classroom management is good. Relationships are good. Teachers make good use of resources, and the visual element of some of them is good, as with the use of three different colours to help pupils in a lower attaining set distinguish between *au*, *à la* and *aux* in a French lesson. Homework is set regularly.
- 160 Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. Staffing is now stable and two additional members have joined the department. Very few of the teachers were present at the last inspection. Languages for all pupils have been introduced. There has been a successful introduction of the City and Guilds examination in French, German and Spanish for lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 4. Schemes of work have been rewritten. Coursework has been introduced for the GCSE forms. The department has raised the profile of modern languages with visits abroad, clubs and pen pals abroad. There is an exchange of videos with a German school. French is now the main language and German is taken by the top two sets in Years 8 and 9. The new head of faculty is providing good leadership and management within the department: there is regular monitoring of standards. The department works well as a team and is committed to high achievement. Resources are now very good. The department is housed in new accommodation, including an information technology suite with 15 new computers, which are just coming into use. The department is well established and equipped to raise pupils' attainment.

192 **Music**

- 161 GCSE results are well below the national average, but in 1998 were better in music than the school average. The rising trend over several years was not continued in 1999.

- 162 By the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is below the standard expected in 14 year-olds. Although many pupils understand musical notation and can read simple melody and rhythm, the level at which they are working is that of younger pupils. Singing is weak, pupils having a limited range. Boys are not given the help they need to cope with their changing voices and as a result they fail to pitch accurately. When listening to recorded music, pupils recognise metre and instrumental sound and can respond to the mood suggested by different types of music. There is no discernible difference between the standards achieved by higher or lower attainers or those pupils with special educational needs.
- 163 By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is also below the standard expected. Where pupils notate their composition this is always in the treble clef, with little attention to texture or the characteristics of instruments. Few pupils take instrumental lessons, which would enable them to have a more rigorous grounding in music. They have collected some useful vocabulary, but this does not support understanding of the historical aspect of music for the listening component of the course.
- 164 Pupils do not sustain the rate of progress seen in the early part of Year 7, and across Key Stage 3 it is unsatisfactory. This is accounted for, in part, by the amount of time allocated to music, which is less than the national average, which fragments teaching and impedes pupils' progress through a carousel arrangement in the faculty. Pupils with special educational needs are not given the help they need, through structured work or in-class support, and spend much of their time unproductively.
- 165 As many pupils embark upon their GCSE course without having achieved a satisfactory standard in Key Stage 3, they continue to make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. Their lack of grounding in using a computer means that they lack a valuable tool for improving and refining composition.
- 166 Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning music are unsatisfactory. Behaviour in class is satisfactory and the majority of pupils have learnt to ignore the disruptive behaviour of a small number who wander around the room. Year 7 pupils work well in groups, but by Year 9 many pupils have lost the interest required to work on assignments and they are not given sufficiently clear instructions or examples to encourage them. GCSE music recruits well, but many pupils are surprised by the demands of the course and the need to be well organised. A few dedicated instrumentalists, from the 19 pupils who have lessons, play together regularly in a band. The small size of the choir, drawn mainly from Year 7, is compensated for by the enjoyment of the singers, skilfully led by an accomplished singer and teacher.
- 167 Teaching is unsatisfactory. Although lessons are planned to offer a variety of activities the methods employed are restricted. Very little was seen during the inspection of the teaching of musical skills. This was particularly apparent in singing lessons where pupils were allowed to sit on desks and chairs without regard for posture. However, when pupils were given some instruction on breathing and diction in the choir practice, they sang well. The needs of all pupils are not met with carefully structured or appropriately challenging work; the content of lessons is not chosen to inspire the pupils to be involved in music-making. There is no evidence that the few instrumentalists in the school are encouraged to deepen their understanding by using their additional experience to raise the standard of music-making in the classroom. Pupils' understanding and response is not checked regularly, especially in Key Stage 4, and there are occasions when pupils leave lessons without fully understanding the topic.
- 168 Music is part of the wider arts faculty and benefits from the shared ethos and accommodation. There have been considerable improvements in resources since the last inspection.

- 169 The proportion of pupils who gained grades A* - C in the 1998 GCSE examinations was well above the national average, and all pupils gained at least a grade G. This was the first year of the examination in the school, and the 1999 results are similar. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls, or pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. These results are better than those in most other subjects in the school.
- 170 In work seen during the inspection pupils' standards of attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 are in line with the levels expected nationally with above average standards in games. Standards of attainment are similar to those observed in the previous inspection. By the age of 14, attainment meets national standards in gymnastics. Many pupils show confidence and control in floor work and on apparatus, using basic skills appropriately as they explore movement pathways. Pupils' planning, performing and evaluating skills develop well in this activity. Good standards are attained in games; boys demonstrate their understanding of a defensive line, while practising tackling in rugby league, and in indoor hockey. Planning and performance skills develop satisfactorily throughout the key stage but the majority of pupils' skills in evaluating performance against stated criteria are unsatisfactory. Pupils have a sound understanding of the effects of exercise on the body, and the need to warm up before participating in strenuous exercise. By the age of 16, attainment in the core physical education programme are in line with national standards, and exceed this standard in games. Good work was seen in football, where pupils applied their knowledge, skills and understanding of rules and tactics, effectively, in the game. Pupils working towards the Junior Sports Leader's Award show confidence and skill in organising warm-up activities and small group games. Standards in GCSE coursework are generally above average. Pupils' GCSE written work indicates a good understanding of theoretical aspects, which they can apply to their practical experiences. In a Year 10 theory lesson, for example, pupils wrote their own definitions of key words and demonstrated the meaning of words, such as abduction, in a sporting context.
- 171 Standards in extra-curricular sport are very high, and school teams and individual pupils regularly gain representative honours at district, county and national level. The Year 7 rugby league team won the 1999 Yorkshire and Humberside Schools' Cup, and one Year 11 student represented team against France. The school currently has the Wakefield Schools' Girls' 100 metres champion, and the under-13 girls' rounders team won the 1999 Wakefield Schools' Championships.
- 172 Pupils' progress in relation to their prior attainment is good in both key stages. This is because the pupils are well motivated, and good teaching promotes a demanding pace of learning both in lessons, particularly GCSE lessons, and extra-curricular activities. Effective gains in knowledge, skills and understanding are made in the majority of lessons, particularly when teachers share the intended learning outcomes with the pupils, and regularly check that they understand the tasks and know what they have to do to improve. Discernible progress is evident in many lessons as pupils of all levels of attainment consolidate their knowledge and refine their skills through practice. This was well illustrated in a rugby league lesson where pupils practised their tackling in the context of a strategic defensive line. High and low attaining pupils make good progress in gymnastics, as they practise individual skills through tasks carefully matched to their abilities. Particularly good progress is made in games, where pupils respond well to the enthusiasm of the teachers, acquire new skills and develop understanding well. There is less evidence of progress in pupils' skills of evaluation, as most pupils are rarely given the opportunity to observe, analyse and comment on performance in a structured way. Pupils studying GCSE often make very good progress because of strong teaching and the help they receive from teachers outside lessons. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well integrated into the physical education programme, and generally progress at the same rate as their peers. Extensive opportunities are provided for pupils of all ages and abilities to participate in extra-curricular

sport. These are well supported and many pupils make very good progress in their chosen activities.

- 173 Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated, prompt to lessons and hardworking. Very good standards of behaviour, good preparation and a high level of participation are consistent features of lessons. Pupils respond well to the good humoured encouragement of the teachers, show a serious approach to their work and maintain the brisk pace of work expected of them. On the whole, pupils concentrate well and stay on task. They collaborate well together in group work, and this is a particularly good feature in games, where successful teamwork was evident in hockey, football and rugby league. Independent learning skills develop when pupils contribute ideas, and are given some responsibility for their own learning, for example, in leading the warm-up in lessons and organising small group games in the Junior Sports Leaders' Award course. GCSE is a popular option at Key Stage 4, and the high level of support which well over half the pupils in the school give to the extra-curricular programme, reflects their enjoyment in and commitment to the subject.
- 174 The quality of teaching is good in both Key Stages. No judgement on teaching was made in the last inspection. Consistently good teaching is a significant factor in pupils' very good progress in GCSE. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, and the faculty has developed a sound working ethos. High standards are expected and attained in every respect. Student management and organisation is a particular strength of the faculty, leading to good use of time and resources. Lessons are well planned, reflecting secure subject knowledge, and have clear objectives, usually focussing on performance. Teachers generally seem less secure about implementing the National Curriculum requirements concerning student involvement in evaluating their own and others' work. This major weakness noted in the previous inspection report, has not been adequately addressed in planning or practice. Teaching strengths include high expectations of pupils, skilful questioning to enhance knowledge and understanding, and a lively pace in lessons. Tasks are usually matched to pupils' abilities. A feature of the best teaching is that pupils are given some responsibility for their own learning, such as in gymnastics, where pupils successfully worked independently and in groups, to set up a complex apparatus layout without the need for intervention by the teacher.
- 175 The Key Stage 4 curriculum does not provide for all pupils either the depth, or the continuity and progression of experience, required in the statutory strands of physical education. Progress since the last inspection has been generally good, particularly in the school's endeavours to improve standards of attainment through additional staffing, enhanced facilities and the introduction of dance into the curriculum for all pupils. The faculty gained the SPORTSMARK award in 1997 and has also introduced GCSE, with the subsequent achievement of very good results. However, there has been little improvement in some aspects reported in the last inspection. The limited opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work have already been noted, and this important element is not planned in schemes of work or assessed adequately. The system of assessment is unsatisfactory, as there are no stated criteria against which attainment is measured. Faculty documentation is, at times, contradictory, and gives insufficient guidance on important aspects, such as the implementation of schemes of work. An extensive programme of extra-curricular sport reflects a considerable commitment by staff from within and outside the faculty. This commitment makes a strong contribution to the ethos of the school and has a direct and positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

207 **Dance**

- 176 In 1999 pupils took the GCSE dance examination for the first time, and three out of four pupils gained grades A*-C. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment by the ages of 14 and 16 is in line with national standards, with a significant minority attaining above average standards.

- 177 At the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils show control and precision as they warm up, and make a good beginning in creating a group choreography based on their coursework. Year 9 pupils, for example, showed contrasting dynamics and good use of spatial patterns, as they composed small group dances based on a jazz motif. Attainment in the GCSE dance group is average, with a group of more experienced dancers who perform to a higher standard. Many pupils have a good sense of rhythm and timing, and show versatility, as they work at choreographing their own dances. High attaining pupils have good technical skill in the use of action, space and dynamics, and they perform with confidence and personal artistry. At this early stage in the GCSE course, girls outperform boys. Extra-curricular dance plays an important part of the dance programme, and there is a flourishing Airedale Youth Dance Group. Airedale dancers won the prestigious award for Best Choreography in the Rock Challenge International Dance Competition in March 1999.
- 178 Pupils' progress in dance is good in both key stages, as they build on previous knowledge, skills and experience to create a group choreography. This is because good teaching motivates pupils and makes demands on them. Discernible progress is often evident in lessons, as pupils, particularly girls, consolidate and refine their performance through practice.
- 179 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in both key stages. Their behaviour is also very good and the majority of pupils are well motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy dance. Pupils collaborate well in groups, stay on task and generally work hard. Many pupils show physical commitment and take a pride in their performance. The impressive response by boys is notable and a large group has opted to take GCSE in this subject.
- 180 The quality of dance teaching is good. The teacher has an excellent knowledge of the subject, reflected in well planned lessons with clear objectives shared with the pupils. He is a positive role model and has developed very good relationships with the pupils. Expectations of pupils are high, and they are given every opportunity to take some responsibility for their own learning. They are enabled to set their own pace, for example, as they choreograph their dances. Although this sometimes leads to a slow pace in the lesson, pupils' independent learning skills develop well. Other teaching strengths are the quality of teacher observation, assessment and feedback, and strategies which enable pupils to critically appraise the quality of their own and others' work.
- 181 Dance benefits from strong leadership, which has created a vibrant ethos, pervading the whole school. The provision of an attractive dance studio has given the subject status and the studio has become a popular venue for pupils at lunchtime and after school. Unfortunately, a weakness of provision is the lack of changing accommodation and pupils have to dance in their school clothes. This is unsatisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and teaching fully supports the policies of the school, for example, the literacy policy, with very good use of the technical language of the subject, which is well displayed in the dance studio. Extra-curricular dance is well supported by pupils and they perform in many festivals in the area. Pupils have also created a production to show feeder primary schools what dance is about at Airedale. When resources permit, there is a dancers in residence programme which brings pupils into contact with a variety of approaches to dance, and expertise in different aspects of this art form. A recent focus on Asian dance produced sensitive and imaginative responses from pupils.

213 **Religious education**

- 182 Attainment in religious education is below the standard expected of pupils at the end of both key stages. The short course GCSE results for 1998 are below national averages. Twenty-nine percent of pupils achieved grades A* - C compared to the national average of 40 percent. At grades A* - G, 84 percent of pupils achieved these grades compared to the national average of 94

percent. The 1999 GCSE results dropped below those of 1998.

- 183 Although these results are below national standards, the 1998 results represent a creditable achievement for a year group taking a new examination for the first time, given the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. In 1999 two pupils sat the full GCSE in religious studies. Both pupils achieved grades A* - C, one student being awarded an A* grade.
- 184 At the end of Key Stage 3, while pupils have worked to the attainment targets of the local agreed syllabus the standards achieved are below expectations for pupils aged 14. There is a consistent emphasis on pupils' understanding religious language. However, the work of many pupils of all levels of attainment lacks depth. The standards pupils achieve are affected by weak literacy skills.
- 185 In Key Stage 3 overall progress is satisfactory, but there is an element of unsatisfactory progress. In their work on Anne Frank, Year 9 pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of the times and the pressures under which Anne and her family lived. They can relate this to the stages in which persecution can turn into genocide. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils understand the effects of persecution on the individual and, in their writing, show a sense of empathy with Anne Frank's plight. Unsatisfactory progress occurs where the tasks set are inappropriate or lack sufficient challenge. The quality of written work varies. There is some interesting work exploring the 'sacred.' There are some well written paragraphs on the Trinity from a higher attaining student. Sometimes work is unfinished and poorly presented.
- 186 In Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory. Year 10 pupils, studying the Jewish and Roman evidence about Jesus Christ understand that the Christian's refusal to offer sacrifice caused economic problems. They appreciate that Josephus, Pliny and Tacitus offer differing viewpoints. Pupils in Year eleven are beginning to use their information and communication technology skills to access and retrieve relevant information on contemporary moral issues. The sample of written work seen shows a satisfactory knowledge of Christian teaching on various sacraments. Pupils are also able to write about the different denominations within Christianity.
- 187 Pupils' response to religious education lessons is satisfactory overall. In most classes pupils are well behaved and listen carefully to the teacher. They answer questions when asked. Response is unsatisfactory in some lessons in Key Stage 3 because pupils are unwilling to listen and be involved and are easily distracted. However, in one year eight class, response was very good because pupils used their drama skills to explore an incident at Taize. In this lesson pupils were alive with enthusiasm and creativity.
- 188 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one third of lessons observed, all in Key Stage 3. There are strengths in the teaching. There is a genuine interest in religion and a good understanding of the concepts involved. Teachers work hard. They are concerned to teach the technical vocabulary of the subject and encourage pupils to learn about the major world faiths and to reflect on religion. There are, however, significant weaknesses. There is a narrow repertoire of teaching and learning style. The work set often lacks challenge or is not appropriate for a particular class. In some lessons there is a lack of management skills and little to enthuse the pupils.
- 189 The religious education curriculum complies with the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. Religious education is now offered to all pupils and there is sufficient time at both key stages. In Key Stage 4 pupils follow the short course GCSE.

- 190 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The short course GCSE is well planned. Resources and accommodation are adequate. Assessment, monitoring and target setting are not systematic enough. Pupils are not involved in evaluating their own work. Since the last inspection provision for religious education has improved and the short course GCSE is now offered at Key Stage 4. Resources have improved. Religious education makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

222 **Child Development**

- 191 Child care and development has proved a popular addition to the Key Stage 4 curriculum since its introduction. The first GCSE examinations were taken in 1999 and results were well below the national average. There is a determination amongst the present team of staff to raise standards. Inspection evidence is that some progress has been made towards this.
- 192 Pupils enjoy the subject. They are generally well motivated and behaviour in lessons is good. Those experiencing difficulties are well supported. For example, with additional help and differentiated worksheets, two lower attaining pupils in Year 10 were able to follow the text of a topic on antenatal care. Most pupils can relate the work to areas of their own experience and to other aspects of school work. For example, one Year 10 student was able to see the similarity between a urine test for pregnant women and tests for acids and alkalis in science.
- 193 Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to the value of the subject for the personal and social development of the pupils. Lessons are usually well planned, include clear targets for the pupils and are often enlivened by relating the topic to recent personal experience. Staff have not undertaken any formal training, but work well together to support each other and share ideas. Co-operation with design and technology helps to fulfil practical coursework requirements. The male teacher on the team is an important feature in promoting parenting issues as not solely the province of girls. Three boys are currently studying the subject.
- 194 Leadership is satisfactory. The recently appointed subject leader has made sufficient progress in revising schemes of work and auditing resources. The subject is a valuable addition to the school curriculum.

226 **Media Studies**

- 195 The media studies course has quickly become established as an examination option. There is intense competition between pupils the optional visual and performing arts for pupils in Key Stage 4. Therefore, numbers and the attainment of those on the course fluctuates dramatically. In 1998, the first GCSE entry in media studies by the school, 53 percent of an entry of 40 pupils gained grades A* - C. In 1999 the proportion of A* - C grades rose to 73 percent, but from a total entry of 15 pupils. There is no national comparative data. Grades in media studies compare favourably with pupils' grades in other subjects. For some pupils this was their only examination pass.
- 196 The attainment of the current cohort is below average for GCSE, some are well below average. Pupils have basic knowledge of the concepts and technical terms used in the subject, but few have the depth of understanding and sufficient awareness of application to talk or write fluently in media language. Assignments from the previous year indicate a full range of attainment, including work of a very high standard.

- 197 Progress in lessons observed and from current course work is unsatisfactory. Progress is hampered by pupils' attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Previous assignments and evidence of developmental stages indicate generally good, and sometimes excellent, progress in the development from a project brief to completion and astute evaluation.
- 198 Generally pupils' response to media studies is satisfactory. Pupils are very positive about the significance of media studies for an understanding of contemporary society. Previous examination assignments, from those of all attainment levels, demonstrate sustained concentration, strong application and a thorough response to the challenge of the design brief. Some pupils in lessons observed showed interest, enthusiasm and initiative, but most were passive, even lethargic, and made minimal contributions to lessons, except very brief responses to direct questions by teachers. Most boys in groups observed were not engaged in or by the tasks and were talkative; a few were disruptive.
- 199 Due to timetable constraints, there was insufficient evidence to reach a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. Planning is good and lessons are well structured to promote progression. Teachers work very hard to motivate pupils, but some activities do not engage lower attaining pupils. Pupils are guided well through the project design process. Assessment of assignments is supportive, very closely related to the criteria and enables pupils to know precisely how their work could be improved. Analysis of past examination grades indicates a wide variation between results gained with different teachers
- 200 This course is making a very significant contribution to pupils' understanding of contemporary society and communications, also to the whole school's awareness of the media. Initial expenditure to establish the course has been well spent. There are still some significant items of equipment lacking, a digital camera, for example. The accommodation is well placed and equipped, but poor ventilation hampers progress.

232 **Sociology**

- 201 GCSE results at grades A* - C in sociology show a downward trend over the last four years. Attainment was above the national average for pupils of this age in comprehensive schools in 1996 and 1997. In 1998 the results fell 15 percent to 52 percent, just below the national average of 54 percent, and fell again to 41 percent in 1999. Almost all pupils achieved results in sociology in the last two years which were as good or better than their average grades in all subjects.
- 202 Attainment evident from written work and lessons observed is below average by the end of Key Stage 4. Year 11 coursework projects for the GCSE examination in 1999 are very well structured and indicate appropriate understanding of the various methods used by sociologists and their application. Aspects of critical understanding, analysis and evaluation are below average.
- 203 Overall, progress is satisfactory for all pupils. During the inspection, lessons focused on the visit of the local member of parliament (made a minister just prior to the inspection) for a clinic with pupils. Lessons indicated that pupils are developing satisfactory elements of technical language and basic knowledge about social structures and processes. In a Year 10 lesson pupils made good progress in formulating, considering and posing questions for a formal occasion. Thinking through the relative merits of the questions, the balance of issues and the development process from first thoughts to formal questions was good. Progress of Year 11 in coursework assignments is satisfactory. However, in classroom interaction and in the formal meeting with the minister, pupils' contributions indicated an inadequate grasp of the social concepts and issues inherent in the questions they posed, also insufficient skills, language and experience of discussion, debate

and formal reasoning.

- 204 Pupils are positive about the subject and the teacher. It provides a fresh start in Year 10, has a reputation for good results and handles issues which are important to pupils. Behaviour is good, pupils work collaboratively when required, they are also respectful of the views of others. There is a lack of initiative and pupils are largely passive. Assignments show a good capacity for private study by high attaining pupils, but this is limited in others.
- 205 Teaching in lessons observed and evidenced in assignments is satisfactory. The teacher is very knowledgeable and experienced. The approach to discipline and management provide good support for learning. Lessons are well planned, structured and sequenced. Good relationships with the teacher and among pupils enable pupils to express themselves freely. The teacher skilfully builds upon and extends student comments into an acceptable format. However, pupils are aware that if they remain passive and fail to respond to questions, the teacher will give them answers. So they become knowledgeable but fail to grapple with the issues in ways which will gain the higher grades.
- 206 The subject is well managed. Very good support is given to pupils. The curriculum meets requirements, though there is insufficient emphasis on critical understanding, analysis and evaluation, which carry almost a third of the marks for course work and the examination. The course has a good structure for continuity and progression. It makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and is supportive to low attainers. Assessment of assignments is unfailingly encouraging and supportive. It is focused closely on examination criteria for average and below average, but less tightly focused and critical for higher attaining pupils. The subject is full of opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These receive too little attention overall, but pupils are eager to explore issues like racism in their assignments, and are well supported by their teacher in this exploration.

238 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

238 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 207 The inspection was carried out by a team of 14 inspectors, one of whom was a lay inspector, who between them spent a total of 52 inspector days in the school.
- 208 During the inspection, the team spent 173 hours observing 186 lessons or parts of lessons, covering all year groups and all teachers present. Additionally, 52 hours was spent scrutinising a sample of past and present work from six pupils in each year and others across the school, from specific subjects, observing registrations, assemblies, extra-curricular and lunchtime activities.
- 209 Formal and informal discussions were held with pupils about their work and the school. These also took place in classes and around the school. Interviews and other discussions took place with subject co-ordinators, the principal and vice-principal, senior teachers, administrative staff, teachers, support staff and a range of governors, including parent governors.
- 210 The team read all the available school documentation and reviewed teachers' planning and records.
- 211 A questionnaire was sent to all parents and 50 replied. Some parents added further comments. A meeting was held for parents and 13 attended. All the views expressed by parents were taken into consideration when inspectors made judgements about the school.

243

DATA AND INDICATORS

243

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 - Y11	1090	35	320	403

243 Teachers and classes

243 Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

58

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

18.25

243 Education support staff (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of education support staff:

14

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

377

[Secondary schools]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:

78.2

Average teaching group size:

KS2

-

KS3

24.4

KS4

22.3

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	2,183,113
Total Expenditure	2,124,295
Expenditure per pupil	1,993
Balance brought forward from previous year	-195,799
Balance carried forward to next year	-136,981

Number of questionnaires sent out:	1,000
Number of questionnaires returned:	50

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	24	68	6	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42	52	0	0	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	28	48	12	4	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	24	66	8	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	38	56	0	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	52	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	34	58	2	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	30	64	2	4	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	18	60	18	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	10	64	14	8	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	30	64	4	2	0

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.

243 **Other issues raised by parents**

Some parents would appreciate more information about topics being studied, so that they can support their children.

Intimidation of younger pupils by older ones.

243