

INSPECTION REPORT

The Calder High School
Hebden Bridge

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique Reference Number: 107562

Inspection Number: 185485

Headteacher: Mr. David Scott

Reporting inspector: Mr. Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708468

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brier Hey Lane Mytholmroyd Hebden Bridge West Yorkshire HX7 5QN
Telephone number:	01422 883213
Fax number:	01422 882684
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. Lesley Mackay
Date of previous inspection:	September 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ross Maden, Rgl		Attainment and progress
		Teaching
		Leadership and management
Susan Walsh, Lay Inspector	Equality of opportunity	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Andrew Blow	Mathematics	The efficiency of the school
Kenneth Boden	Design and technology	
Pat Curtis	Art	
Brian Hitchens	Geography	Curriculum
Terry McDermott	Physical education	
Michael Morecroft	Science	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Jo Peach	Modern foreign languages	
Rita Price	Information and communication technology	
Geoff Price	English	
David Sharpe	History	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Religious education	
Jim Waddington	Key Stage 4	Assessment
	Sixth Form provision	
Gareth Watson	Special educational needs	
	Special educational needs assessment	
Paul Wilson	Music	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

01543 675027

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Examination results at GCE Advanced level (A-level).
- The good progress of pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- The attitudes to learning and behaviour of pupils.
- The consistently high quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher; management at all levels within the school is a strength.

- The support, guidance and welfare of pupils.
- The links with the community to enrich the quality of education for pupils.
- The use of the learning resource centre to promote independent learning skills.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment in information and communication technology at Key Stage 4.
- II. The quality of accommodation.
- III. Meeting the legal requirements for religious education in the sixth form and in providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
- IV. The quality of target-setting and reports to parents.
- V. The allocation of time to National Curriculum subjects at Key Stage 3.
- VI. The quality of school development planning.

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection week are to be tackled. This plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress on most of the key issues arising from the last inspection. Clear targets are now set for pupils and departments, especially at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The strategies to help pupils reach these targets are less well developed. There have been good improvements in ensuring that the work set matches pupils' abilities. Progress has been made in developing a long-term development plan. There has been significant progress in increasing the opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. All pupils are now entered for the short course in GCSE religious education at the end of Year 10, but the provision in the sixth form fails to meet statutory requirements. The school has made some progress in providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils but still fails to meet statutory requirements. All the health and safety issues identified in the last inspection report have been effectively tackled.

Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in results at A-level, the average points score increasing from 18 in 1995 to 22 in 1999. Standards at GCSE have been maintained over the same period. The number of pupils in the school has increased from 1269 in 1995 to 1302 in 1999. Attendance rates remain satisfactory and the number of exclusions remains static over the period since the last inspection. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. In 1995 teaching was good or better in over half the lessons. This has improved to three-quarters in 1999. Given the positive and energetic response to tackling the key issues from the previous report and the high quality of management within the school there are very good systems in place to continue the school's improvement.

• **Standards in subjects**

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1999:

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

The comparison with similar schools is made on the basis of the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. Results in Key Stage 3 tests are above average in science, close to the average in mathematics and below average in English. The strongest subjects at GCSE in 1999 were art, dance, drama, graphic products, music, Italian and French. At A-level the average points score was well above the national average. In biology, general studies, geography, German, history, sociology, performing arts and psychology over 50 per cent of candidates gained the higher grades A and B.

• **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English (including drama), science, art, geography, history, music.	Design and technology
Years 10-11	Good	English (including drama), science, geography, physical education (including dance).	
Sixth form	Good	Art, geography, history, science, physical education (including dance).	GNVQ Intermediate courses
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

There is a consistently high standard of teaching across most subjects. The quality of teaching in three-quarters of all lessons was good and in a further fifth of lessons it was very good. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of lessons and only one per cent of lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory.

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	Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. It is better at Key Stage 3 than in the rest of the school.
Ethos*	The ethos is very good. Pupils' have good attitudes towards their work. The quality of relationships is very good.
Leadership and management	The quality of leadership provided by the governors, senior managers and middle managers is very good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership.
Curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for its pupils. There are weaknesses in the time allocated to some subjects at Key Stage 3.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision for these pupils is good and they make good progress towards their individual targets.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Pupils are well served by the dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff. Resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
Value for money	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
<p>VII. The school is very approachable when parents have concerns.</p> <p>VIII. Pupils achieve high standards of work.</p> <p>IX. The values and attitudes promoted by the school are very positive.</p> <p>X. The majority of children enjoy going to school.</p>	<p>XI. Homework.</p>

The parents' responses to the questionnaire indicate that most parents are satisfied with the work their children are given to do at home. However, a minority of parents were dissatisfied. Pupils felt that the amount of homework was fair. The inspectors' judgement on homework is that the school does make regular use of homework to support and reinforce pupils' learning. Tasks set for homework are generally appropriate. In modern foreign languages homework tasks are restricted by the lack of textbooks for pupils to take home. In most subjects there are clear policies and guidelines for teachers in setting homework.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve the standards achieved and the quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

Raise attainment in information and communication technology by:

- XII. ensuring that all subjects have access to information and communication technology to support learning;
- XIII. ensuring that all pupils at Key Stage 4 receive their full entitlement in information and communication technology;
- XIV. improving the quality of information and communication technology hardware and software.

(Paragraphs 128, 137, 161, 170)

Work with the local education authority to improve the accommodation by:

- XV. refurbishing the science accommodation;
- XVI. providing outdoor playing fields that can be used on a regular basis;
- XVII. accelerating the implementation of the programme to refurbish internal areas of the school.

(Paragraph 87)

Meet the legal requirements for providing religious education in the sixth form and in providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

(Paragraph 52, 82)

Improve the quality of target setting and reporting to parents by:

- XVIII. setting targets in Key Stage 3;
- XIX. ensuring a consistency in the use of National Curriculum levels across all subjects;
- XX. including within parents' reports the identification of targets to improve pupils' performance;
- XXI. identifying specific strategies to help pupils meet their targets.

(Paragraphs 47, 50, 59, 69)

Ensure an equitable distribution of time for all subjects of the National Curriculum subjects at Key Stage 3 by:

- XXII. ensuring that higher attaining pupils have sufficient time to study French and German at Key Stage 3 and enabling those pupils who wish to continue studying French and German at Key Stage 4 to do so;
- XXIII. allocating equal amounts of time for the subjects within the expressive arts programme;
- XXIV. ensuring within the design and technology courses that pupils can make consistent progress in the designing and making processes.

(Paragraph 40, 136)

Improve the targeting of finances to support priorities in the school development plan by:

- XXV. ensuring that all priorities within the school's development plan are clearly costed with specific success criteria;
- XXVI. ensuring that the budget allocations set by the governing body reflect the priorities identified in the school development plan;
- XXVII. ensuring that all budget holders have specific written guidance on financial procedures.

(Paragraphs 81, 93, 94)

In addition to the key issues identified above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion within the action plan. They are included in paragraphs:

Shortcomings in the provision of careers education (44, 57); Imprecise targets in individual education plans (49).

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1.The Calder High School is a comprehensive school, educating boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 18. There are 1302 pupils in the school, including 200 students in the sixth form. The school has maintained its popularity since the last inspection. There are 194 pupils on the school's special educational needs register which is broadly in line for a school of this size. Forty-two pupils have statements of special educational need. When pupils enter the school their attainment is in line with national averages. There are many high attaining pupils within the school, although a small number of higher attaining pupils do attend grammar schools in nearby Halifax. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

2.The school is located in the Luddendenfoot Ward and draws the majority of its pupils from the Upper Calder Valley. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average. These pupils, mainly Muslim, are attracted from nearby Halifax. The proportion of adults with higher education is above the national average as is the proportion of pupils from households of a high social class.

3.The aim of the school is:' to aim high to create an environment for success, security and happiness in partnership with parents and the community'.

4.The school has the following priorities in its development plan to meet this aim:

- To provide an effective staff development and training programme;
- To review the curriculum structure;
- To improve the physical environment and learning climate;
- Develop information and communication technology.

1.Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	108	112	220

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	41	64	68
	Girls	72	74	68
	Total	113	138	136
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	51 (80)	59 (64)	60 (64)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	22 (46)	38 (38)	27 (26)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	67	68	80
	Girls	91	78	83
	Total	158	146	163
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	72 (61)	66 (68)	74 (62)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	37 (30)	39 (37)	48 (42)
	National	N/A (31)	N/A (37)	N/A (31)

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
1999	103	119	222

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	47	93	95
	Girls	56	104	112
	Total	103	197	207
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	46 (38)	88 (84)	93 (93)
	National	46 (45)	91 (90)	96 (95)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	9	100
National		N/A

Attainment in the Sixth Form³

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	40	33	73

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.4	25.6	22.3 (20.7)	4	1	3.0 (1.6)
National	N/A	N/A	N/A (17.6)	N/A	N/A	N/A (2.8)

Number entered for the IB Diploma, and percentage of *such students* who achieved this qualification:

Number	% Success rate

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

³ Figures in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

School	48	60.4
National		55.1

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.6
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.4
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	94
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	23
Satisfactory or better	99
Less than satisfactory	1

5. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

5. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

5. Attainment and progress

2.The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 was well above the average in English, and above in mathematics and science. In 1999 the proportion reaching Level 5 or above was well below average in English close to the average in mathematics and above in science. The proportion reaching Level 6 and above in 1998 was well above in English and close to the average in science and mathematics. In 1999 the proportion reaching Level 6 and above was below in English, close to the average in mathematics and above in science. When the results for the last three years are taken into account, the performance of pupils has been close to national averages. When compared with that of schools of a similar type the school's performance is above average. The performance of boys over the last three years is close to that of boys nationally and the girls' performance is close to that of girls nationally. The inspectors found no evidence within the school to explain the different results in English between 1998 and 1999.

3.Taking into account the standards indicated by National Curriculum tests, the scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of lessons the inspectors' judgements are that standards by the end of Key Stage 3 in science, art, history, modern foreign languages, music and religious education are above national averages. They are in line with national averages in all other subjects.

4.In the 1999 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grades A*-C was 46.4 per cent, which was close to the national average of 47.8. The proportion gaining five or more passes at grades

A*-G in 1999 was 88 per cent, which was in line with the national average. When all the results are taken into account, between 1996 and 1998 the average performance at GCSE was close to the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grades A*-C but below the national average for those gaining five grades A*-G. Over the same period girls' results were in line with the national average but boys' results were below. However, in 1999 there was a significant improvement in the GCSE results and the average points score per pupil was 38.8 compared to national average of 38.0. There are several factors to account for this improvement, which include a change in the number of subjects taken by pupils, a higher proportion of girls to boys in 1999 and the effective targeting of underachieving pupils. When compared with that of schools of a similar type, the school's performance is above that of those schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

5.Results in GCSE examinations in 1998 were well above average for art, drama, English literature and German. They were above average in English Language, French and geography and in line for history and design and technology. Results were below average in information and communication technology, mathematics, science and home economics. Results in GCSE examination in 1999 were above average for art, dance, drama, design and technology (graphic products), music, Italian and French.

They were in line for all other subjects except design and technology (food), geography, German, information and communication technology and child development in which they were below average. Most pupils following the GNVQ course in manufacturing course were successful in completing the course requirements.

6. Taking into account results from GCSE examinations, the scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observation, the inspectors' judgements are that standards by the end of Key Stage 4 in English, mathematics, science, art, dance, drama, history, music, religious education and modern foreign languages are above national averages. They are in line with national expectations for geography, design and technology and physical education and below in information and communication technology. They are below in information and communication technology because not all pupils at Key Stage 4 receive their entitlement to information and communication technology.

7. In the 1999 A-level results the average points score at 22.3 was well above the national average. In 1998 the average points score was 20.7 when the national average was 17.6. Over the period 1996 to 1998 the average points score was well above the national average. In 1999 nine subjects gained 100 per cent A-level passes and over 50 per cent of candidates gained the higher grades A and B in biology, general studies, geography, German, history, sociology, performing arts and psychology.

8. Attainment in Advanced GNVQ for 1999 shows an improvement on the 1998 results and is above the national pass rate. At Intermediate level GNVQ, attainment is slightly below the national pass rate for these courses. From the scrutiny of students' portfolios and in the lessons observed the standard of attainment was in line with course expectations for both Advanced and Intermediate courses, performance criteria being met for the majority of students of average attainment and above. Students' attainment in the key skills course is good, approximately two-thirds of Year 12 students achieving Level 3 proficiency in information and communication technology and number. The programme is particularly effective in supporting the induction of students who have transferred courses within the school year, for example in promoting word processing skills and increasing self-esteem. The school took part in the pilot single award in business where students achieved the award after one year of study and the quality of assessment by teachers was judged to be excellent.

9. Pupils join the school with levels of attainment which are in line with the national average. There are many higher attaining pupils within the school although there are grammar schools in Halifax which attract some of the local higher attaining pupils. The proportion of pupils entering the school who have special educational needs is in line with the average for a school of this size.

10. The school sets appropriately high targets for examination results at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The governing body, in agreement with the local education authority, have published appropriate targets for the Year 2000. At GCSE the targets include 43 per cent of pupils gaining five grades A*-C and 95 per cent gaining five grades A*-G. Since the last inspection the school has developed considerable expertise in evaluating the progress of individuals and groups of pupils within the school. There are detailed evaluations at both department and school level. Significant progress has been made in using commercial schemes to analyse the 'value added' the school

provides and in setting targets for individuals and groups of pupils, especially at Key Stage 4. The strategies for helping pupils meet these targets are well developed and effective in increasing the proportion of GCSE grades A*-C and in raising boys' attainment. However, currently no targets are set for Key Stage 3. Reports to parents do not identify targets to help pupils' raise attainment or the strategies to meet these targets

11. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades A*-C at GCSE, since the last inspection has increased from 42.2 per cent in 1995 to 44.4 per cent in 1999. The proportion gaining 1 grade A*-G and 5 grades A*-G has remained static and the average A-level points score has increased from 18 to 22.

12. Across the curriculum levels of literacy are generally above average, improved since the last inspection by initiatives such as the 'Reading Trees' programme which now extends to all three years in Key Stage 3. In all subjects pupils' levels of reading enable them to cope with textbooks and worksheets. Good reading standards are evident in science, history, geography and GNVQ lessons, although opportunities for reading are limited. Standards of writing are now generally good. There is extended writing in mathematics, history, geography, science and music. Good presentation and accuracy are features of work in mathematics, music, modern foreign languages and geography. There is evidence of cross-curricular work on literacy, and most teachers are consistent in applying the whole school spelling policy.

13. The levels of numeracy in the school are generally good at all key stages, including the sixth form. In Key Stage 3, there is a consistent approach to calculation. The use of calculators is sensible and appropriate emphasis is placed upon pupils' ability with paper and pen methods. Pupils of all abilities are able to do calculations effectively in other subjects, for example in science in force, speed and acceleration according to their levels of attainment. All pupils are able to use data-handling methods effectively to support work in other subjects, for example frequency distributions, pie charts and bar charts in science and geography. The good progress that higher attaining pupils in Year 9 make with algebra enables them to apply their knowledge in chemistry in manipulation of chemical formulae, and these pupils are able to use their powers of analysis to good effect in finding patterns and connections from scientific results. Similar strengths are found in Key Stage 4. In the sixth form students' levels of mathematics support science well, for example in doing extended calculations in chemistry and physics and in developing arguments to support an hypothesis, for example in the bounce of a squash ball. In geography students use advanced statistical methods, which not only takes advantage of the work they do in mathematics, but also extends their knowledge in geography.

14. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress in science, history, music, drama, dance and religious education. They make satisfactory progress in all other subjects.

15. In Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress in all subjects except German, geography and information and communication technology where progress is satisfactory. In the case of information and communication technology progress is limited because not all pupils have sufficient access to computers to develop their skills.

16. In the sixth form progress is very good in performing arts. It is good in all other subjects except in modern foreign languages and GNVQ courses where progress is satisfactory.

17. The attainment of pupils and students with special educational needs throughout the school is satisfactory in relation to their capabilities. They make good progress towards their individual targets. A significant number of pupils make sufficient progress in learning to continue their education with reduced levels of support. The specialist support for pupils with English as an additional language is limited in quantity but good in quality. Most classroom teachers provide good support for these pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language are making at least satisfactory progress and many are making good progress.

21. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

18. Pupils' attitudes in Key Stages 3 and 4 are good. Pupils are enthusiastic and apply themselves well to their lessons. They try hard even when they are not confident, for example in information and communication technology. They are able to maintain concentration and respond easily and quickly to their teachers' instructions. Pupils enjoy most of their lessons and they take a pride in their work. There was no evidence to support the previous inspection report's findings of a small amount of disaffection.

19. Pupils are very attentive; they listen well and are keen to answer questions. Their replies are usually well considered and articulate. They are often confident enough to ask questions in order to clarify matters. Pupils work well in pairs and groups in very many lessons in English, physical education, information and communication technology and personal and social education (PASS).

20. Students in the sixth form who are studying A-level subjects and GNVQ advanced courses have very good attitudes to their work. The response shown by students studying other GNVQ courses is not always enthusiastic. Students studying A-levels are very interested and involved in their work and they are determined to succeed. They are prepared to ask questions, oral exchanges are of a high standard, and many perceptive comments are made.

21. Behaviour is of a very high standard. Pupils behave particularly well in the classroom. Parents were concerned that some teachers were unable to manage the behaviour of pupils in lower sets. There was no evidence to support this view and during the inspection pupils of all abilities behaved well including those who were considered to have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Behaviour in lessons in the sixth form is excellent and students settle very quickly to the tasks which have been set for them. Pupils behave well in the dining area and their behaviour in assemblies is often exemplary. Some younger pupils can be boisterous when confined inside on narrow corridors during inclement weather. During lesson changes, however, pupils behave very well, demonstrating tolerance and good manners when trying to negotiate the narrow, crowded corridors and staircases. Pupils generally have good manners and are welcoming to visitors. Pupils are trustworthy they take care of property and there is little vandalism and there are few graffiti, despite the poor decorative state of the

building

22.Levels of fixed-term exclusions are high when compared with levels in similar sized schools nationally. The school excludes pupils whose behaviour is considered to be unreasonable and this includes any incidents when the authority of a teacher is threatened. Few pupils are excluded more than once and the success of the school's approach is reflected in the high standards of behaviour.

23.Relationships are very good. Pupils give each other time and space to express views. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds mix well with other pupils. They demonstrate a good respect for the views that others may put forward. Consequently pupils feel that they can be frank when expressing their views in subjects such as drama and history. Pupils are prepared to take the initiative in assisting others, for example - in information and communication technology lessons. Relationships are also very good in the sixth form; students work very effectively in pairs and are able to collaborate well.

24.Pupils' personal development is very good. The learning resource centre is well used by many departments including history, geography and science to encourage pupils to develop independent learning and research skills. Pupils apply themselves well and are proficient at using books and CD-ROM's, working hard without constant supervision. Pupils have the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of activities and tasks that encourage their own personal development and allow them to contribute to the life of the community. Many students in the sixth form are involved in a wide range of voluntary activities such as helping in a local respite care home or staffing The Young Musicians Chamber Music Festival.

28. **Attendance**

25.Attendance rates are satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils attend school on a very regular basis. Attendance is better at Key Stage 3 than it is at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. A small number of pupils, however, do develop erratic patterns of attendance and by Year 11 there is a small but significant number of pupils who have become disaffected and do not attend school regularly.

26.Most pupils are punctual in arriving at school in the morning and pupils move between their lessons quickly and efficiently so that lessons start on time.

30. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

30. Teaching

27. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. It is at least satisfactory in 99 per cent of lessons across the age range. Teaching is good in three-quarters of lessons and very good or excellent in nearly a quarter of lessons. Most year groups receive similar proportions of good and very good teaching. The good quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the progress that pupils make in the school.

28. At Key Stage 3, teaching is very good in dance and good in all subjects except for design and technology and modern foreign languages where teaching is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, teaching is very good in dance and drama. It is good in all other subjects except for music, in which teaching is satisfactory. In the sixth form teaching is very good in art, geography and physical education. In all other A-level subjects teaching is good and the teaching of GNVQ courses is satisfactory.

29. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Specialist teachers have very good knowledge and understanding. In most lessons the planned activities are good, especially in English and geography, most teachers setting challenging tasks. Teachers' expectations are high and this is a particular feature of most lessons in mathematics, modern foreign languages, drama, dance and art. However, in some GNVQ lessons there is a lack of challenge and pace in the activities set and there is a lack of a clear structure in the planning of lessons.

30. Generally, teachers are successful in meeting the needs of all pupils at all levels of attainment. Expectations of pupils with special educational needs are high. They join in classes with the rest of the year group and the few pupils with statements of special educational need are supported well by their classroom assistants. The quality of teaching within the learning support department is never less than satisfactory. It is often good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well organised. When the special needs teacher is working alongside colleagues from other departments there is effective teamwork both with the subject teachers and with the special support assistants. The specialist support for pupils with English as an additional language is limited in quantity but good in quality. Most classroom teachers provide good support for these pupils.

31. Mainly there is a good variety of teaching methods used. A major strength of the school is the opportunity for pupils to develop independent learning skills in most subjects, with the exception of modern foreign languages. Generally teachers encourage pupils to make full use of the well equipped learning resource centre to support learning. Less well developed is the use in all subjects of information and communication technology to support learning. The major barrier to subjects using information and communication technology is access to computers. Access has improved with the introduction of new equipment but the school recognises that additional resources are required. In sociology and psychology very effective use is made of student learning guides. Teaching strategies and methods in resistant materials have not been adapted for the effective teaching of design based activities.

32. Very good relationships between teachers and their pupils form the basis of the good management of pupils in lessons and usually teachers achieve high standards of discipline. In most lessons teachers use time well. In the most effective lessons there was sufficient time at the end of the lesson for teachers to consolidate what had been learned in the lesson. Resources are well used in subjects. The learning resources centre is well used by many teachers to support pupils' individual research.

33. Generally teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although a minority of parents and pupils commented that work sometimes takes a long time before it is returned to pupils. In most subjects teachers adjust their planned teaching in the light of the knowledge gained from marking pupils' work. The best marking indicates clearly to pupils what they need to do in order to improve their performance. In most subjects, the marking of pupils' work is good. It is very good in history. Marking is not consistent in modern foreign languages, and in English the assessment of pupils' work is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3.

34. Responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate that a high proportion of parents are satisfied with the work their children are given to do at home. However, a minority of parents were dissatisfied. Pupils felt that the amount of homework was fair. The scrutiny of pupils' exercise books and planners indicate that the school does make regular use of homework to support and reinforce pupils' learning. Tasks set for homework are generally appropriate. In modern foreign languages homework tasks are restricted by the lack of textbooks for pupils to take home. In all subjects there are clear policies and guidelines for teachers to set homework.

35. The main weakness in teaching at the time of the last inspection was that in unsatisfactory lessons there was a lack of challenge. This issue has been tackled effectively by the school. Teaching was judged to be strong in the sixth form at the time of the last inspection and this still remains the case. The variability in teaching at Key Stage 3 mentioned in the last report is no longer a concern. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. In 1995 teaching was good or better in over half the lessons. This has improved to three-quarters in 1999.

39. The curriculum and assessment

36. The curriculum of the school is generally broad and balanced, but there are some weaknesses or deficiencies at all key stages. The teaching time per week of 23 hours and 30 minutes is significantly less than the recommended time of 25 hours. The school has been unable to extend the teaching hours because of constraints placed by the schedules of the school buses. Nevertheless, most subjects have been able to adjust their curriculum so that they cover their programmes of study successfully in the time available. However, in Key

Stage 3, there is insufficient time to teach both French and German to the higher attaining pupils. Currently, this is done in three periods a week, which is the same allocation that other pupils have to study just one language. In the expressive arts programme the division of time among the various subjects is not equitable or efficient. In design and technology the balance between designing and making is not consistently maintained across the different courses provided, and this restricts the rate of progress that some pupils make.

37. At Key Stage 4 imaginative planning has led to more options being accommodated in the timetable by varying the time that is available for courses in Year 10 compared to Year 11. The curricular provision at Key Stage 4 is enhanced by the inclusion of a GNVQ vocational course in manufacturing. Pupils who have studied French and German to the end of Year 9 can opt to continue to take two modern foreign languages

to GCSE level. However, in practice, most pupils drop one of their existing language courses and start Spanish as a new language. This is inefficient and militates against progress and continuity between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The previous inspection report criticised the school for not providing an entitlement curriculum in information and communication technology in Key Stage 4. Since then considerable progress has been made but some pupils still do not receive their full entitlement. The school has addressed another issue raised in the previous report regarding the legal requirement to provide religious education teaching in Key Stage 4. All pupils now follow a short course GCSE that starts in Year 9 and is examined at the end of Year 10. However students in the sixth form do not receive religious education.

38. In the sixth form there is a good range of A-level subject courses and three established GNVQ vocational courses leading to advanced qualifications. The students also benefit from a well-established and successful key skills programme. In modern foreign languages the size of teaching groups is small and a particular strength is the development of single award GNVQ courses, which enable an increasing academic and vocational mix to be achieved. Extra-curricular enrichment is very good with opportunities for participation in activities such as debating, theatre trips, assisting with the dance club and representation on the local police forum.

39. The personal and social education programme [PASS] is taught to all years. It is very well organised and co-ordinated. In Key Stage 3, year heads and form tutors teach most of the PASS topics. This group is supplemented by a range of other teachers, outside speakers and additional personnel who specialise on certain issues. In Key Stage 4 the teaching programme is organised on a modular basis and taught by specialist staff. The PASS programme covers a wide range of important and relevant topics, including health and drugs education, sex education, citizenship, religious education and personal skills.

40. The implementation of careers education is satisfactory and it is taught as part of the PASS programme. Pupils begin a structured programme in Year 9 that is related to option choices and careers education continues through Key Stage 4 and into the sixth form and includes good opportunities for work experience. The school has suffered cut-backs in the time it has available from the careers service personnel so that not all pupils automatically receive an interview with a careers officer. The school needs to make its own internal arrangements to compensate for this shortfall in external provision.

41. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is successfully organised to ensure that pupils have access to the same range of subjects, activities and clubs that is enjoyed by the rest of the school. These are suitably adapted for individual pupils' needs, and there are appropriate, accredited alternatives to GCSE at Key Stage 4. The recently introduced behaviour link programme is a positive development that seeks, with some success, to ensure that pupils with behavioural difficulties remain actively involved in relevant courses. The school has also introduced a highly relevant, community based programme for disaffected pupils in Key Stage 4. Further development is required to ensure that the small minority of pupils involved have appropriate access to the full breadth of the curriculum at Key Stage 4.

42. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good, particularly in debating, drama, art and a variety of sporting activities and musical groups. In addition to these regular events, however, the school provides very good opportunities to enable pupils to develop qualities of self-reliance and of successful team working. The learning resource centre together with lunchtime and after-school access to computers provides excellent conditions for independent study and research. Visits abroad to support learning in modern foreign languages and day and residential field trips in geography and science improve pupils' social skills and their ability to contribute as a member of groups. Pupils are encouraged, therefore, to contribute and succeed both individually and socially as members of the school community. In addition the school provides curricular support facilities such as the revision day in Manchester for mathematics and the GCSE coursework room, where pupils are helped to catch up on or to improve their

individual projects.

43.Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are effective. A clear and detailed whole-school policy reflects an emphasis on improving teaching and learning. Systems of moderation within departments are of satisfactory quality. There is a good awareness of the limitations of assessment measures, for example - in over-reliance on assessment data. Appropriate professional development has been provided for staff on aspects of assessment including the identification of value added performance among pupils. A range of assessment measures is used effectively but self-assessment is under-developed in many areas of the curriculum. Assessment requirements in respect of National Curriculum are met, though the school recognises the need to make further progress on the use of National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3.

44.The school makes sound use of an extensive array of information on pupils in monitoring progress and assessing attainment. Under - performing pupils are quickly identified and parents promptly informed by letter. The co-ordination of assessment and the monitoring of progress are effective. The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team and teaching staff are well defined. There are guidelines of good quality for shaping assessment policies and tracking pupils' progress within departments.

45.Very good procedures are in place for assessment and review for all pupils on the school's special educational needs register, particularly in respect of those pupils with statements of special educational need. These procedures meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. However, targets identified at annual reviews and on individual education plans, though relevant, are often imprecise, with the result that learning support teachers are often unclear as to the best way that individual pupils' needs might be addressed. Similarly subject teachers are often unaware of opportunities which may exist in lessons to address those particular needs.

46.The school is aware that monitoring arrangements, for example the 'Progress Record Card' system are not fully in place for every year group. The school has made good progress in meeting the deficiencies in assessment identified in the previous inspection report. Monitoring of the consistency of target setting across subjects is still required.

50. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

47.The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Provision for their moral, social and cultural development is very good, and together represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

48.The school intends that pupils should have the opportunity to take part in collective worship each day, either through a weekly year group assembly and on the other four days, as a tutor group. Only on a minority of these occasions are pupils invited to and enabled to worship. Most of the assemblies seen, and especially those for the sixth form and Year 9, promoted pupils' spiritual development very well as the 'Thought for the Day' was considered and the period for reflection was observed. In many tutor groups, however, this opportunity is not used effectively. Since the previous inspection

the school has tackled the provision for spiritual development through the subjects of the curriculum vigorously and effectively. All subjects have identified opportunities and many of them are taking them. In mathematics, for example, pupils are encouraged to consider the wonder of number as they pursue the Fibonacci sequence. The belief tree prominently displayed in the learning resource centre typifies the school's provision.

49. The school's programme of personal and social education [PASS] provides very well for pupils' moral development. Younger pupils learn how to respect the rights of others, and older ones receive clear teaching on ethics, with a focus on the Five Precepts of Buddhism. They know that all actions have consequences. This provision is well supported by many subjects, notably English, through studying texts such as 'Of Mice and Men', and religious education, in which the GCSE course taken by all pupils includes the religious response to a variety of moral issues. Teachers and non-teaching staff provide good role models for pupils to emulate.

50. Pupils' social development is encouraged very effectively. They learn about citizenship through PASS, in history the struggle for and the importance of suffrage, and in A-level sociology how society works, putting this into practice in year group and school councils. In most subjects they work in groups, and the many visits undertaken, residential and day, home and abroad, give pupils the experience of learning how to get on well together. Through drama and music they are given the experience of performing in public. The school provides a multitude of opportunities for large numbers of pupils of all ages to take on significant responsibilities. For instance, younger pupils work in the learning resource centre and the school office. Older ones operate the invaluable pupil support service, and through the sixth form volunteering system, work is undertaken in the local community.

51. The very good provision for pupils' cultural development includes both white western culture and Asian and Afro-Caribbean culture. Visiting musicians, theatre groups and artists enrich the quality of educational provision for pupils. Last year's cross-curricular Chinese night is followed by this year's South American night. Visits are made to galleries and theatres. The Comenius Project brings pupils into contact with those in other European countries across a variety of subjects, not just modern languages. Many subjects of the curriculum support this provision, through texts from different cultures in English, and music from across a number of cultures, for example - the use made by the school of its teachers of Asian origin promotes a wider cultural understanding among the pupils.

55. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

52. The school has continued to operate a pastoral system of very good quality which is appreciated by parents. The system is well managed and supported by the dedicated and hard working year heads and tutor teams. Continuity of tutors during a pupil's time in the school enables the pastoral staff to develop very good relationships with pupils, who find them both supportive and approachable. Pupils are also well supported by academic staff and many departments offer extra classes for revising and catching up with coursework prior to GCSE examinations.

53. The PASS programme offers pupils comprehensive health education and guidance.

Although the careers education programme is of a satisfactory quality it has limited curricular time. A significant number of pupils do not take the opportunity to have a careers interview and some pupils are both inadequately informed and undecided about their future at a crucial stage in their education.

54.The system of monitoring pupils' academic progress is well established in the sixth form but is very new in Key Stages 3 and 4. The procedures are of good quality and allow the school to identify those pupils who are underachieving.

55.At present many pupils have limited understanding of their levels of attainment either in terms of National Curriculum levels or predicted grades at GCSE. Although pupils at Key

Stage 4 are supposed to be involved in target-setting most have little idea of how to achieve their targets. The mathematics department is an exception to this. It uses National Curriculum levels and encourage pupils to set well-focused targets for improvement. Pupils have recently started to attend parents' evenings to discuss their progress. The school recognises that both pupils and departments have to become more familiar with National Curriculum levels of attainment so that pupils can understand their levels of attainment as compared to national expectations and so that clearly defined targets for improvement can be set. Similar issues were identified in the previous inspection report.

56.The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. Many but not all pupils bring with them good standards of behaviour from home. The high standards of behaviour seen are a result of the very good relationships between teacher and pupil and the fact that the vast majority of teachers are very skilled at managing behaviour in the classroom. Effective measures are in place for the rare occasions when difficult pupils challenge the authority of the class teacher. The school works hard to support those pupils who exhibit emotional and behavioural difficulties and takes steps to remove them from situations which trigger their challenging behaviour.

57.The school strives to discourage bullying and neither parents nor pupils identify bullying as a significant problem. Parents feel that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately. There is also a pupil support system by which pupils can talk to older pupils about their worries.

58.The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Year heads carefully monitor the attendance of pupils within their year group. Despite their best efforts the school has a small but significant number of pupils who have become disaffected and no longer attend school regularly. The school tries hard to meet the needs of these pupils through their involvement with 'Youth Action', a charitable scheme which offers an alternative style of education for those pupils who experience difficulty in following GCSE courses. Some pupils are offered places on the 'CARE' scheme, which offers vocational college courses, work experience and some limited GCSE work.

59.The school has good arrangements in place to deal with issues of child protection. The school follows locally agreed procedures and has suitable links with social services and other support agencies. It is concerned for the welfare of its pupils and to equip

them with the knowledge and skills necessary for adult life.

60. The very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils with special educational needs, together with the staff's knowledge and understanding of pupils, ensure that the support and guidance available for those pupils are readily available, sensitive and very effective. The school's arrangements for reviewing statements of special educational need are appropriate and reflect the Code of Practice. Pupils are invited and encouraged to attend their own reviews and the careers service makes an appropriate contribution to the transitional reviews of those pupils. The school's provision is further enhanced by the involvement of professionals from external agencies, such as visiting support teachers, behavioural support teachers and educational psychologists, who are able to make a positive and valued contribution. Annual reports are concise but informative, and the school actively encourages parents and carers to attend and contribute to the review process.

61. The arrangements to promote health and safety are satisfactory. A health and safety committee has been established but it has not yet completed a whole-school risk assessment. Effective departmental risk assessments are in place for physical education, science and design technology. No significant health and safety issues were identified during the inspection apart from the problem of overcrowding on stairs and corridors which the school is well aware of. There are regular fire drills and testing of alarms and lighting.

65. Partnership with parents and the community

62. Most parents are very pleased with their relationship with the school. They find the school very easy to approach should they have problems or questions relating to their children. They are confident that their problems will be dealt with efficiently and many parents commented on the sensitive help and support they received from the headteacher who they felt was especially approachable.

63. The majority of parents support their children's work at home and are keen to support the school. Parents check pupils' journals and are aware of the amounts of homework set. There is a 'Parents and Friends Association' consisting of a small but dedicated core of people who organise social and fund-raising events.

64. The quality of information that parents receive is good. The prospectus and the governors' report to parents are of good quality and provide all the information required by law. Pupils produce regular newsletters which give a good flavour of the work of the school. There are regular parents' evenings including tutor evenings, subject based parents evenings and options and careers evenings. The school has recently rearranged the timing of parents' evenings and the issuing of reports in an attempt to resolve the issue of wide gaps between parents' evenings in some year groups. The school has recently started to involve pupils more fully in parents' evenings and is hoping to involve both parents and pupils more fully in setting targets for improvement.

65. Written reports to parents are unsatisfactory and there are significant weaknesses in Key Stage 3 reports. Many subjects, including English, geography, information and communication technology and mathematics, do not provide sufficient detail of pupils' attainment to parents. Most subjects give some indication of the level of a pupil's attainment compared with that of fellow pupils at Calder High School. However, some subjects do not use National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 3 or predicted GCSE grades to indicate a pupil's attainment compared with national expectations and to give an effective measure of progress. The school's timetable arrangements for teaching some subjects in Key Stage 3, such as dance, drama, art, music and the different elements of the design and technology curriculum, result in some pupils not getting reports on all the subjects they have studied during the full academic year. Not all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 receive information on the progress they are making in information and communication technology.

66. The school is well aware of some of the current deficiencies in the quality of reports, including the failure of some subjects to focus on attainment and progress and to set well-defined targets. There are plans to change the format of reporting, but these plans are still at an early stage of development.

67. The school has excellent links with the local community. These links make a significant contribution to pupils' academic attainment and personal development and also result in the school being an integral and important part of life in the local community. There are many valuable community links. For example - the school works well in partnership with the local Asian community and a significant number of sixth-form students from different ethnic origins volunteer to provide regular support at the 'Himmat' project in which Asian youngsters are encouraged to develop socially and academically. The school is also closely involved with the more immediate community; and sixth-form students help to organise the local gala and many pupils have been involved in improving the local environment.

68. The Heptonstall Educational project is well established and there is a close link between the school and the congregation who attend the historic Methodist chapel in Heptonstall. This has provided a base for work in the religious education and history curricular. The geography department also makes very good use of the rich and varied local landscape.

69. There are excellent working relationships with a good range of supportive local businesses which results in good curriculum links with local businesses especially for GNVQ courses.

70. The school has established professional working relationships, of very good quality, with its primary schools. The school has recognised the importance of the continuity of the curriculum from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 and has worked hard in partnership with its feeder primary schools to try to address this issue. At present work in English, mathematics and science is started at primary schools and continued during the first term at secondary school.

74. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

74. Leadership and management

71.The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The headteacher, governors and senior management team are committed to raising standards and expectations. They fulfil the school's aim of 'to aim high to create an environment for success, security and happiness in partnership with parents and the community'. There is a very good ethos within the school and most pupils respond positively to the opportunities provided to achieve high standards.

72.The headteacher gives the school outstanding leadership. He has particular strengths in providing the school with a clear vision for its future and in the high quality of relationships he has with pupils, parents, teachers and governors. He is ably supported in providing outstanding leadership by his senior management team. New appointments at the school have made it possible to restructure the composition and roles of the senior management team. The members of the senior management team undertake their individual areas of responsibility skilfully and they work well together as a team. They are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, through the systematic programme of monitoring and evaluating.

73.The quality of middle management in providing effective pastoral and curriculum leadership is mainly very good. There is good practice in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning by most heads of department and members of the senior management team. The learning support department is very well managed, and the special needs co-ordinator is vigilant in ensuring that all pupils with special educational needs have access to appropriate provision. All statutory requirements for special educational needs are met.

74.The governors are very knowledgeable and supportive of the school. Their attendance at the full meetings of the governing body is good. Governors are kept very well informed by the headteacher in his reports to the governing body. Governors are well placed to evaluate the work of the school from the detailed knowledge provided for them. They are clear why GCSE examination results dipped in 1998 and about the strategies put in place to raise performance in 1999.

75.The school's ethos is very good. In both school and departmental planning there is a clear commitment to achieving high standards. Relationships within the school are very good. There is a very high level of respect for most teachers from their pupils. They appreciate the dedication and support which most teachers and non-teaching staff provide to enable pupils to succeed.

76.Statutory requirements are not being met in certain areas. Not all pupils are receiving their entitlement to information and communication technology at Key Stage 4. Students in the sixth form do not receive their entitlement to religious education and the requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not being met. The quality of reports to parents does not meet statutory requirements. Teachers are not receiving their entitlement to appraisal.

77. There are four main priorities within the school's development plan: to provide an effective staff development and training programme; to review the structure of the curriculum; to improve the physical environment and learning climate; and to develop information and communication technology. For each priority there are detailed strategies which have been identified. However, there are poorly defined success criteria and the strategies have not been fully costed. Departmental planning effectively reflects the school's priorities.

78. The school has made good progress on most of the key issues arising from the last inspection. Clear targets are now set for pupils and faculties, especially at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The strategies to help pupils reach these targets are less well developed. There have been significant improvements in ensuring that the work set matches pupils' abilities. Progress has been made in developing a long-term development plan. Significant progress has been made in increasing the opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. All pupils are now entered for the short course in GCSE religious education at the end of Year 10 but the provision in the sixth form fails to meet statutory requirements. The school has made some progress in providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils but still fails to meet statutory requirements. All the health and safety issues identified in the last inspection report have been effectively tackled.

79. Given the positive and energetic response to tackling the key issues from the previous report and the high quality of management within the school there are very good systems in place to continue the school's improvement.

83. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

80. Teaching staff are well qualified and have appropriate specialisms to implement the curriculum. There is a good balance of experienced and new staff, and of male and female teachers in a range of responsible positions. There number of support staff for technical and administrative purposes is generally appropriate. The number of education support staff is satisfactory. There are clear job descriptions. Staff are generally well deployed according to their specialisms, but some lessons in modern foreign languages and religious education are taught by non-specialists.

81. Since the last inspection there have been extensive developments in staff development and training. The school has gained an 'Investors in People' award. Training increasingly relates to the school improvement plan. Teaching and support staff are fully involved, and their training and development are supported through a range of measures such as professional development planning and peer mentoring. Evaluation of in-service training takes place and is continually being refined.

82. There is an effective formal and informal programme of support for newly qualified teachers. Whilst there is no formal structure whereby teachers can receive their statutory entitlement to appraisal, there are good systems in place which will form the basis of an effective appraisal system.

83. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Until four years ago the priority of the governing body had been the renovation of the exterior of the building. This has been very effective. However, the internal programme of refurbishment has been restricted by the amount of available funds. There are significantly more pupils in the school than the buildings were designed for and there are substantial difficulties in providing appropriate accommodation for all subjects. Improvements have been made for information and communication technology, English, special educational needs, modern foreign languages, art, and music. However many areas are still poorly accommodated; for example - many history and geography lessons are not taught in specialist rooms. The accommodation for modern foreign languages limits the range of

teaching and learning activities. One music room is too small for the number of pupils in some of the teaching groups. Science laboratories are in serious decline and the grassed areas for physical education are frequently unfit for use, which restricts the range of activities for pupils. The senior boys' toilets are bleak and unpleasant. There are additional weaknesses in accommodation for English and design and technology.

84. Most staff endeavour to make existing facilities bright and interesting. The impact of art work around the school, together with displays of pupils' work, does serve to stimulate and to 'paper over some of the cracks', but that does not obscure the considerable problems that the school faces. There are some issues such as overcrowded corridors and a mismatch between group size and the area of room available, that will not be easy to resolve.

85. The school improvement plan lays emphasis on improving the quality of teaching areas. Most departments are adequately resourced, although some subjects, including geography, art and science have insufficient access to computers. New computers have been bought but the overall ratio of computers to pupils is below the national average.

86. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory. Outstanding provision is made to support the quality of education through the development of the learning resource centre. This is an imaginative, significant and stimulating learning environment. It is well staffed and provides excellent opportunities for independent and group learning. The centre is heavily used from early in the morning until early evening. Pupils read and access information and communication technology programmes. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere and the centre plays a pivotal role in the school's literacy strategy. The learning resource centre makes a significant contribution to improving the quality of educational provision within the school. There is a lack of books in English, especially at Key Stage 3, and a lack of textbooks for pupils to take home to support homework for modern foreign languages.

90. **The efficiency of the school**

87. The school has a total income of approximately £3 million. The income per pupil is just above the national average and the expenditure per pupil is just below the national average, expenditure on staffing costs is at the national average. In the last financial year the school carried a deficit of approximately £17,000, which it plans to turn into a slight surplus by the end of this financial year.

88. The school funds special educational needs at a level considerably above that indicated in the local education authority budget allocation, but this is efficiently and effectively spent and pupils move off the register of special educational needs as a result of the progress they make. Staff in the learning support department are deployed to good effect and in particular the attachment of special support assistants to departments is very effective. The school is careful to ensure that the local authority funding available for supporting pupils who have statements of special educational need is used both appropriately and with some imagination.

89. Financial planning, administration and control are effective at departmental level

where heads of department and faculties make careful spending decisions on allocating resources in consultation with their teams. At school level, financial planning is less effective. There is a lack of detailed costing for the priorities identified in the three year school development plan and the one year school improvement plan. The annual budget plan is not targeted to meet the school's priorities.

90. Since the last audit took place there have been changes in the financial management structure, and there are some weaknesses in the present systems. Satisfactory procedures are in place, but these are not formalised to ensure that key roles and levels of discretionary authority are clearly known at each level of management. The school is beginning to explore ways of moving administrative and data processing tasks away from teachers and this is creating a more efficient use of staff and more effective use of data to inform management and curriculum planning.

91. The school makes good use of teaching and support staff, learning resources and accommodation. According to its level of income and in terms of the quality of education provided and the educational standards achieved the school provides good value for money.

95. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

95. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

95. **English**

92. Attainment is in line with national levels at the end of all three key stages. Although levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, measured by 1999 National Curriculum tests, are below the national average, 1998 results indicate that levels last year were well above. Taking into account average results over the last three years and attainment in lessons, levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 reflect the national picture. Pupils' performance in the English tests was well above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Pupils' results in the English test is lower than their performance in mathematics and science. Key Stage 3 pupils express their thought and feelings clearly in group discussions and they are usually confident and fluent speakers when participating in class presentations and performances. Most pupils read fiction for enjoyment and are comfortable when reading aloud in class. Pupils of all attainment levels respond to demanding pre-twentieth century literature. Key Stage 3 pupils write descriptively and persuasively in a range of forms, including character studies, diaries, dramatic scenes, essays, poems, letters and stories. They sometimes word-process their work. Higher attaining pupils are able to sustain good quality writing, for example a Year 9 pupil's lively adventure story, 'Smugglers' Arrest', which exceeded 5,000 words.

93. At the end of Key Stage 4 levels of attainment are above the national average. However, the 1999 GCSE results in English, are in line with national averages; measured by results in English literature they are above national average. The proportion of pupils failing to gain a GCSE pass grade in English language is in line with the national figures. In relation to their performance in other subjects pupils in 1998 performed slightly better in English. Amongst Key Stage 4 pupils standards of speaking and listening are generally high. They are flexible speakers and attentive listeners, responding sensitively and appropriately to the requirements of different situations. They read difficult literary and media texts and understand some of the techniques which writers use to achieve effects. Their own writing is well structured and takes account of audience and purpose. There is real enthusiasm in some work, as seen in Year 11 pupils' analysis and evaluation of films. Drafting and re-drafting are part of the writing process. At the end of the sixth form levels of attainment, as measured by GCE A-level English literature and A-level English language results are in line with national averages. Students are articulate and communicative in lessons. Their written work is carefully researched and well constructed. Essays are persuasively argued.

94. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There is good liaison between subject teachers and the special educational needs department. Individual education plans are used effectively and the quality of in-class support is high. However, unsupported lower attaining pupils make more variable progress. The under-achievement by boys, reported in the last inspection, has been successfully addressed. For Key Stage 3 pupils long term progress does not fully reflect generally good progress in lessons. Pupils extend speaking and listening skills

through regular group work and class discussion. They acquire knowledge of works by modern and pre-twentieth century writers and refine their reading through well-organised and progressive support programmes. They write with increasing confidence and learn to structure their writing through effective paragraphing. Lower attaining pupils develop their continuous writing supported by well-devised teaching strategies.

95. Key Stage 4 pupils further refine discussion skills and become more fluent in formal speaking situations. They begin to read for implied meanings beneath the surface of texts and draw comparisons between short stories and poems by different authors. Sixth form students make good progress in the supportive environment created by staff. Language students quickly come to terms with the knowledge-based rigours of the course and extend their learning beyond the classroom. Literature students become confident in their evaluation of literary texts. Growing confidence leads to focused and perceptive class discussion on both courses. Written work is also assured.

96. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is good and levels of motivation are high and pupils often work with enthusiasm – especially where oral activities are involved. Frequent group work and sensitive teaching encourage pupils to work independently and accept responsibility for aspects of their learning, for example, when working out of the classroom in the learning resource centre. Pupils are very supportive when others speak, read aloud or perform and lower attaining pupils feel encouraged to contribute to lessons. Work on display is respected but some exercise books are neglected in appearance and contain badly presented work.

97. Teaching in the department is a strength. Teaching is always satisfactory and in eight lessons out of ten it is good or very good. In a quarter of all lessons teaching is very good. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and confident in their subject. They provide good role-models for pupils. Classroom management is very good, founded on positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Lesson objectives are clearly stated and focus upon the gains to be made in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Homework is given high priority and marking is conscientious – usually with positive comments, some of which indicate how pupils may improve. The best lessons have a brisk pace and offer challenge to pupils of all levels of attainment. The over-dependency upon the teacher noted in the previous inspection has been largely eliminated. Where teaching is satisfactory there is usually some lack of thought in the structuring of the lesson or lack of pace in its delivery.

98. The department is well led and has a shared educational direction. Documentation is focused and responsibilities are clearly delegated. Assessment procedures, though generally sound, need more rigour at Key Stage 3 to ensure that pupils and their parents are clear about the progress being made, especially in terms of National Curriculum levels. The sharing of good practice in lesson strategies and learning materials is increasing. The revised Key Stage 3 schemes of work have clarified teachers' thinking and helped them to provide balance and continuity to lessons over the year, although there is not yet a structured programme for teaching information and communication technology skills through the English curriculum. Ongoing liaison with feeder primary schools is helping pupils to make better initial progress. Extra-curricular activities such as the debating society, theatre visits, revision sessions and study days are a valuable additional stimulus to progress. The learning resource centre continues to provide a valuable means for

enhancement of the English curriculum. Accommodation is rather shabby and more could be done to improve the quality of the learning environment through imaginative display and refurbishment. Book resources, especially at Key Stage 3, are thin and provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to take class books home.

99. Across the curriculum levels of literacy are generally above average, improved since the last inspection by initiatives such as the 'Reading Trees' programme which now extends to all three Key Stage 3 years. In all subjects pupils reading levels enable them to cope with textbooks and worksheets. Good reading standards are evident in science, history, geography and GNVQ lessons – although opportunities for reading are limited. Standards of writing are now generally good. There is extended writing in mathematics, history, geography, science and music. Good presentation and accuracy are features of work in mathematics, music, modern foreign languages and geography. There is evidence of cross-curricular work on literacy, and most teachers are consistent in applying the whole school spelling policy.

103. **Drama**

100. Attainment is above national levels at the end of all three key stages. At the end of Key Stage 4 and at the end of the sixth form levels of attainment are well above the national average, as measured by 1999 GCSE results in drama and GCE A-level results in performing arts. Over half the pupils who took the GCSE examination achieved grades A*-C and all the A-level students gained grades A or B. Results have been consistently above national average over the last three years. Pupils learn to work individually and in groups through improvisation and role-play. They begin to evaluate their own and others' work. From basic knowledge of theatre and increased confidence in the use of voice, expression, gesture and body language at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils develop their understanding of dramatic techniques and conventions and become comfortable in a range of performance situations. They learn to construct their own sustained dramatic responses to given stimuli, working collaboratively towards an effective final performance. The high quality of teaching noted at the last inspection has been maintained. Throughout the department teaching is very good. Teachers are confident in their subject and mutual respect between staff and pupils is evident in all lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Work is challenging and the pace brisk. There are good extra-curricular activities, including frequent productions, a lower school drama club and regular theatre visits and touring companies' performances in school. The school's organisation of the annual Pace Egg Play provides valuable links with the local community. The department is well led and drama has a major impact on educational standards throughout the curriculum.

104. **Mathematics**

101. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment in Key Stage 3 results is close to national averages, and well above average when compared to that of similar schools. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' performance in the 1998 Key Stage 3 tests in mathematics was just below that achieved in English but above the performance achieved in science. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C in 1999 is in line with the national average and these results show a marked improvement from 1998. In 1998 pupils' performance in mathematics was below the level they achieved in their other subjects. The department has effectively tackled the issues from the last inspection of the underachievement of higher attaining pupils. Boys perform better than the girls at GCSE. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-G grades are in line with the national average. Attainment in the sixth form is good with an increasing number of students obtaining the higher grades at A-level.

102. By the end of Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils are able to draw histograms using frequency density, and explain why they were doing it. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 make good progress with their algebra. Average attaining pupils are able to calculate the areas and perimeters of compound shapes involving parts of a circle. However, the use of diagrams was poor in Key Stage 3 and they were seen by the pupils as a teachers' aid rather than a problem solving tool. Lower attaining pupils in Year 8 were able to use a desktop publishing programme to work out transformations and relate the language of the computer to that of mathematics.

103. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is above the national averages. In Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils are well above national expectations. For example they are

able to work on the ambiguous case of the sine rule and use the cosine rule with understanding, work with cumulative frequencies and compound probabilities. Lower attaining pupils are able to calculate angles on a straight line and apply the angle properties of triangles to solve simple problems. Their number work is generally sound. This is true of average attaining pupils, who have also mastered basic algebra and powers, and can draw and interpret line graphs. They can calculate the volumes of solids and work competently with basic fractions.

104. Pupils with special educational needs in mathematics work at appropriate levels to their ability with the aid of support and materials designed to meet their needs.

105. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. The rate of progress is restricted in Years 7 and 8 by the failure to build upon pupils' prior knowledge. There is much repetition of work learnt at Key Stage 2. In Year 9, and among higher attaining pupils in Year 8 progress is faster when teachers begin to take greater account of what pupils have already learnt. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 4. All students make good progress in the sixth form.

106. The attitudes of pupils to their work are good or very good in the vast majority of lessons. Most pupils show good sustained concentration, they change smoothly between activities and not only answer questions but also ask them, and in upper sets particularly, initiate discussion with the teacher to clarify their learning.

107. The quality of teaching is a strength of the department. In most lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and usually good. In the sixth form all teaching was at least satisfactory and in over three-quarters of lessons it was good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject, and their lessons are characterised by good class management and high expectations. Teachers plan their lessons effectively and have clear objectives, although these are not always expressed as statements of what pupils will know, understand and do by the end of the lesson. They assess pupils' work frequently during the lessons and use this information to plan their teaching. Work is marked according to the department's guidelines and teachers often provide written comments. However, not all teachers, consistently provide advice on how pupils can improve their work. Teaching is less effective when teachers do not build on what pupils have already learned. Insufficient emphasis is placed upon the value of pupils using good quality diagrams as the starting point for exploring many mathematical problems. Homework is set regularly.

108. The curriculum is carefully planned and the scheme of work is detailed. Pupils are beginning to use information and communication technology to support learning but this area of work needs further development. The firm and thoughtful leadership of the department is a strength. An example is the good system of monitoring teaching, which has led to the match of teacher expertise to classes, and this is having an impact on standards as is the departmental ethos of continual improvement and self-evaluation. The department is supported by good documentation and there is a good induction process for new teachers. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved and the under-achievement at higher grades in Key Stage 4 has been addressed.

109. The levels of numeracy in the school are generally good at all key stages including

the sixth form. In Key Stage 3, there is a consistent approach to calculation. The use of calculators is sensible with appropriate emphasis being placed upon pupils' ability with paper and pen methods. Pupils of all abilities are able to do calculations effectively in other subjects, for example in science in force, speed, acceleration according to their attainment level. All pupils are able to use data handling methods to support work in other subjects, for example frequency distributions, pie charts and bar charts effectively in science and geography. The good progress that higher attaining pupils in Year 9 make with algebra enables them to apply their knowledge in chemistry in manipulation of chemical formulae, and these pupils are able to use their powers of analysis to good effect in finding patterns and connections from scientific results. Similar strengths are found in Key Stage 4. In the sixth form students' levels of mathematics support science well, for example in doing extended calculations in chemistry and physics and in developing arguments to support an hypothesis, for example in the bounce of a squash ball. In geography students use advanced statistical methods, which not only takes advantage of the work they do in mathematics, but also extends their knowledge in that area.

113. Science

110. Standards of attainment, according to external tests and examinations are above national levels at Key Stage 3 and slightly above national averages at Key Stage 4. At the end of Key Stage 3 the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above in National Curriculum assessments is above the national average. It is above average when compared with that of similar schools. Girls' and boys' attainments are usually similar. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 6 or above, is close to the national average. By the end of Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in GCSE double award science has fluctuated over recent years. In 1998, results dipped but in 1999 they rose to a level which is above the national average. Girls usually out perform boys. A significant feature of attainment levels over recent years is the number of pupils entered for three separate science subjects and gaining good GCSE grades. A significant number of pupils taking double award or triple science have gained A*/A grades in these subjects. A*-C grades in triple science are good as pupils of a wide range of attainment opt for this alternative. In double science, all students are given the opportunity to enter for GCSE and the results represent a considerable achievement especially, for lower attaining pupils. At A-level students achieve good results. In 1999, the grades students achieved were particularly good, especially in biology and physics.

111. At Key Stages 3 and 4 attainment in lessons and in pupils' work is usually above national expectations. By the age of 14, pupils have a proficient grasp of terms and concepts. Practical work enhances their understanding and the skills with which they explore many topics using scientific methods. Pupils make reasoned predictions, conduct fair tests and observe and record results accurately. Many make straightforward conclusions. Pupils can apply their understanding to, for example - e-numbers as alternative forms of generating energy. Oral and practical work offer particularly good ways for all pupils to demonstrate their achievements. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate show this to considerable degree in their written work, for example - using a newspaper report style when explaining features of the weather. By the age of 16, pupils grasp of concepts has deepened, and they effectively carry out extended investigations. They demonstrate their grasp of the subject through oral, practical and written work. Higher attaining pupils often respond in extended accounts, for example - dealing with the effects of excess nitrates on the environment, and with reports on investigations that contain pertinent conclusions and evaluations. Lower attaining pupils find such writing more difficult. It is often briefer, and many find it difficult to formulate a sharp summary of their findings. Pupils in all years use calculations, and graphs are well used to convey results and to depict information. Higher attaining pupils develop the use of chemical formulae and equations. The use of sensors and data-logging is well understood by all. Pupils' expertise in planned science investigations enhances their grasp of content and concepts, as well as providing valuable experience of scientific methods. Sixth form students demonstrate their considerable attainments through, for example - meticulous investigations, good analysis of salient issues, sophisticated statistical treatment of topics.

112. Pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 3, and this is especially evident in Year 9. They show gains in knowledge and understanding. They put this into practice by setting aims, devising predictions, planning and conducting experiments. They record results accurately and make a good attempts at formulating conclusions and

some evaluations. This is particularly marked with higher attaining pupils; for example - in a lesson on chromatography, pupils made good gains not only in understanding the process, but also in analysing the outcomes. Whilst lower attaining pupils often make briefer written responses, often with the help of staff, their oral work shows understanding of terms and concepts. Practical work clearly shows progress in understanding science investigation as well as in the development of knowledge, for example- in a lesson using a clockwork helicopter, pupils engaged in a very interesting and probing discussion about the best way to measure the distance travelled. Many made cogent and valid suggestions.

113. Good progress is also evident in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Higher attaining pupils relate practical observations to underlying theory. They show confidence in handling numerical aspects, and in using formulae. In a lesson on limestone, many explored equations relating to reactions going on. Notably, in a lesson on how the body regulates its internal chemistry, pupils were able to make good connections about the size of molecules that could pass through a membrane, and the way in which the kidney functions. Extended investigations show good development in formulating conclusions and evaluations. Lower attaining pupils do find some difficulties with fluently handling difficult vocabulary, but persevere in doing so. With support they can make connections between the properties of substances and their chemical composition. Their facility in dealing with longer investigations is more limited. Conclusions and evaluations often lack focus. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages. They do so through activities that are well matched to their needs, close planning between the staff involved, and the provision of appropriate worksheets. Progress is particularly good in oral responses and practical work. Overall, good progress is made because pupils enjoy science. The busy pace of lessons stimulates interest, makes them use technical language, and helps them to consolidate and extend their understanding.

114. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Their behaviour has a positive impact on attainment and progress. Responses are usually robust and active. Pupils are keen to take part, show a positive interest and concentrate well. They usually behave well in laboratories, treating equipment and chemicals with care. They work well with each other, and are responsive to others' contributions. There are particularly good levels of collaborative working, and many work well independently. This is evident in class, and in examples of extended writing in which they have made very good use of the learning resource centre and of other sources.

115. Teaching is usually good and often very good. This has a positive impact on standards achieved and is a strength of the department. Teachers' good subject knowledge is used so as to stimulate interest. Pupils are often enthused and keen to 'get going'. Teachers use language very effectively to enhance the clarity of exposition and explanation, for example- the analogy of key and locks was used to good effect when discussion of enzyme action at given temperatures. Questions make pupils think hard, as well as requiring the recall of facts. This is a specially good feature of many lessons. Pace and demands are sustained, and with this, a range of activities and phases are well used. This means that lessons have variety and focus; pupils are faced with many challenges to think and work hard. The emphasis in the schemes of work on the use of investigative work is effectively carried forward into teachers' planning and lessons. This is a distinctive and well used strategy, consolidating and extending pupils'

thinking and skills, enabling them to develop expertise in scientific methods, and providing many opportunities for staff to give feedback to small groups and to individuals. In this matter the department has come a long way since the previous inspection. There is an important emphasis on getting pupils to apply their understanding. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils gave a series of presentations on alternative energy generation. They presented coherent and interesting accounts containing much 'good science'. The way in which sixth form students undertake long and complex investigations involves critical understanding and application of scientific knowledge and procedures.

116. The curriculum is well planned. Each unit or module has learning objectives, details core and extension work and outlines timing, content, resources, books and possible homework. Risk assessments are well delineated. Investigative science is given due emphasis within each area of the subject and independently. There are effective assessment and recording procedures. These are linked with the monitoring of pupils' progress. This is being especially well developed at Key Stage 4, where teams of teachers review progress at regular intervals and follow this up, where necessary, with pupils and parents. Target-setting, involving pupils, has been initiated but is not sufficiently sharply developed or implemented. Leadership and management are a strength in this faculty. There are purposeful directions set, effective planning and strategies, and much hard work. The quality of accommodation is very poor. Although one laboratory is partially refurbished, furnishing and conditions for teaching and learning are bad. Storage space is limited and often confused with preparation areas; moreover there is no separate provision for paper-work or for administration. Teachers and pupils have done their best to make stimulating and attractive displays of current work. Since the last report, strategies to focus on the attainment of boys and girls have been introduced, and much more emphasis is now given to scientific investigations. Assessment procedures have been refined and target-setting introduced.

120. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

120. Art

117. Pupils' attainment in art by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form is above national expectations. The National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show that the majority of pupils reach or exceed national expectations. Girls' results are a little better than those of the boys in the school, but the boys' results are well above the expectation for boys nationally. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have mastered a range of skills and techniques to produce work of good quality. Year 8 pupils made some attractive terracotta decorated clay tiles. The decoration was applied using their own drawings after studying South American designs. Most of the pupils can name some contemporary and past artists. Pupils in Year 7 know some of the characteristics of Lowry's style. In a printing exercise, some Year 9 pupils could describe the process and problems encountered when printing a string design on paper with ink.

118. At the last inspection, GCSE results were reported to be around the national average. The school's results in 1998 and 1999 for A*-C grades are above national averages. By the end of Key Stage 4 most of the pupils can analyse why they prefer

certain styles of art and they are willing to experiment with a range of techniques. Model-making, sculpture, photography and many forms of painting and drawing are used effectively to interpret GCSE project themes. Portfolio work and the very good work displayed around the school show imagination and creativity where one theme is illustrated in a variety of ways. Increased use of descriptive language in the discussion of art work advances pupils' attainment in literacy.

119.A-level GCSE results in art and design are above the national average in 1998. In 1999 the results are below the national average for the highest grades but above for all the pass grades A-E. Work seen during the inspection week was of a high standard. Students discuss their work, drawing on their first hand experience of visiting galleries and exhibitions, and show a sound knowledge of artists and their styles.

120. Most pupils make sound progress by the end of Key Stage 3, including pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' sketch books and portfolios show good development of skills which provide a sound basis for Key Stage 4. Portfolios and sketch books also show good progress at Key Stage 4. Some work needs annotation if it is to be of use at a later date. In the sixth form the scale of work is ambitious. Research and independent study contribute to the good progress made.

121. Pupils' attitudes to art are good. Their response to art work is very positive throughout the school. Pupils work with evident enjoyment, take a pride in their work and respect the work of other pupils.

122. Most of the teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and in the sixth form very good. The teaching promotes high standards of attainment and good progress. Teachers are aware of pupils' special needs and give full support to ensure that they reach a satisfactory level of attainment. Teachers' careful planning and subject expertise encourage pupils to respond well to lessons. The skills of investigating and making are well integrated with methods to increase knowledge and understanding of art. Assessment schemes are clear and are understood by the pupils, who take part in their own assessment and target setting.

123. Art contributes to the spiritual and cultural development of pupils. Good use is made of the wonderful environment in which the school is situated. The guided discussions of artists' work increase the pupils' awareness of many social and moral issues. Pupils in Year 8 used good design and painting techniques to make a poster on the theme of 'Peace'. The art department plays a major role in the multicultural exhibition run each year by the school.

124. The department has good leadership and the staff work as a strong team. The departmental handbook is comprehensive but does not contain specific safety guidelines. There is little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support learning. Pupils can only use computers for art work in their own time and if they can work independently. They do not have good opportunities to use art and graphics programs.

125. The limited time for technician support means there is no time available for the preparation, care and maintenance of materials and resources. Whilst accommodation is adequate the two main rooms are separated from each other, which makes it difficult

for the department to operate as a unit. All the issues identified in the last inspection report have been effectively tackled except for the use of information and communication technology.

129. Design and technology

126. GCSE results in 1999 for all technology subjects taken together are above the national average and indicate a rising trend. Results in graphics products and short-course textiles are well above the national average. Full-course textiles results are above the national average. Resistant materials results are at the national average and have been steadily rising. However, short course results in resistant materials are well below expectations in 1999. Food technology results are below the national average and show a downward trend. In the 1999 short course results, however, are a little higher and inspection evidence indicates that there will be continued improvement. Results at A- level are good.

127. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 matches national expectations for pupils aged 14. Pupils generally acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to design products effectively and gain the practical skills needed to realise their designs. Some practical projects are supported by minimal graphic work and provide limited opportunities for pupils to contribute to the outcome of their work.

128. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is at the level expected nationally for pupils aged 16. Pupils generally have a good understanding of the process of designing and making and can use a range of sources to gather information for their projects. Pupils employ independent learning skills to produce work which best represents their abilities in food technology and textiles. Many project folders have high standards of presentation and use a variety of techniques to represent information including data processing using computers. Folders in resistant materials groups are less well organised and do not give a clear picture of a pupil's knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in a Year 11 resistant materials group were unclear about the sequence of events they were engaged in and lacked a clear focus for the lesson. Pupils of all abilities would have benefited from clearer short-term goals.

129. Attainment in the sixth form is good. Students display good graphic skills and have a clear understanding of the nature of design. They can work independently, speak articulately about their projects and are willing to experiment with materials and techniques. For example, a Year 13 student was successfully interpreting his major project through fashion and textiles, an area new to him.

130. At Key Stage 3 progress is mainly satisfactory. Pupils make most progress when lessons are structured to meet clearly explained targets. For example, pupils of all abilities in a Year 8 textiles lesson met the targets for the lesson and developed a clearer understanding of the importance of colour by completing a colour wheel using card and threads. Progress at Key Stage 4 is mainly good. Pupils generally build upon previous experiences to develop a deeper understanding of designing and making. For example, pupils in a Year 11 food technology lesson were able to use their prior knowledge of sensory testing procedures to test different types of bread from different cultures against a wide range of criteria. Progress is less evident when lessons lack a clear focus and appropriate challenges. For example, in a Year 11 graphics lesson, worksheets on the preparation of flow charts required insufficient involvement from pupils to maintain their interest. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. For example, a small group of Certificate of Achievement pupils in a Year 11 food technology lesson clearly benefited from working with a learning support assistant to prepare a lasagne dish. Progress in the sixth form is good. Students are highly motivated and can exercise responsibility for maintaining their own progress.

131. Attitudes to work are good. Pupils are generally attentive and keen to participate in lessons. Occasional lapses of concentration are effectively dealt with by teachers. Pupils undertake practical work in a sensible and orderly manner. They take care with their work and have pride in what they do. Behaviour is generally good and pupils show respect for staff and other pupils. They can co-operate well when asked to work in groups. Attitudes in the sixth form are very good. Students come into lessons in a purposeful way and with a clear idea of what they want to achieve.

132. In food technology, textiles and child development, teaching is good and occasionally very good. In other areas of technology it is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teaching is most effective when clear targets are set and teachers' expectations of pupils are high. For example, in a Year 8 textiles lesson the teacher made clear what she expected of the pupils and used a variety of effective strategies to manage pupils' activity and maintain pace. Time limits were set on each activity and targets were reaffirmed at each stage. A good balance was maintained between direct teaching and class activities. Teaching is less effective when it lacks pace and variety in both teaching method and the range of activities set. Pupils' experience of following a design and make process is not, however, consistent across the whole faculty area. In some teaching areas balance between 'designing' and 'making' is not maintained. Teachers throughout the faculty have established good relationships with pupils. Teaching in the sixth form is good.

133. Leadership in the faculty is sound. The lack of a curriculum co-ordinator for resistant materials, graphics and electronics has hindered the development of appropriate teaching strategies in this area but recent appointments are set to remedy this. Good progress has been made in revising schemes of work to provide pupils with a more worthwhile technological experience. Electronics and control technology are becoming established as a permanent feature of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and are to be developed further at Key Stage 4. Child development has become a valuable and successful part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. The assessment procedures now in place should be applied consistently across the faculty to ensure that pupils are fully aware of the level they are working at and what they need to do to make progress. The department is involved in a number of extra-curricular activities which enrich pupils'

learning. The well maintained and equipped accommodation is enhanced by appropriate displays. However, one resistant materials area is drab and in need of decoration. Resources are adequate and include computer controlled machines. The limited access to computers restricts their regular use in pupils' work.

134. Since the last inspection the school has made some progress towards improving opportunities for design based activities in food technology and textiles; involving pupils in more independent learning activities; making more effective use of support staff and making projects more relevant and worth while. Inspection evidence is that these improvements are set to continue.

138. **Geography**

135. The standards achieved by pupils in geography are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 standards achieved are in line with national expectations. The quality of GCSE coursework is higher than the standard of work seen in lessons. In the sixth form the standard of attainment is very high in lessons whilst excellent results are obtained by candidates in A-level geography examinations. In the 1998 GCSE, results in geography at the higher grades A*-C were well above the national average. The grades obtained by candidates in the subject were also significantly higher than those obtained in their other subjects. The pass rate at the higher grades in 1999, however, was nearly ten per cent lower than in 1998. It was also below the national average, but analysis by the school indicates that the candidates' results in geography were marginally higher than those obtained in their other subjects. In 1998 and 1999 most candidates who sat the GCSE examination were successful in obtaining a pass at grades A*-G. The performance of geography students in the A-level examinations over the past three years has been outstanding. Nearly two-thirds of the passes have been at the highest grades A and B, a figure that is nearly twice the national average.

136. Most pupils make satisfactory progress over the course of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Some pupils, however, especially in Year 7 do not heed their teacher's advice and persist in making the same errors in their work. Progress in individual lessons is generally good. Much written work is in the form of worksheets or exercises from textbooks, particularly in Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, pupils do learn to write for a variety of purposes and they write at length in some major assignments though they are given insufficient opportunities to use creative writing. Students in the sixth form make good progress.

137. In Key Stage 3 pupils use information and communication technology in their classwork but in Key Stage 4 they do not use it enough. The last inspection report stated that the improved use of information and communication technology in the geography curriculum was a priority. Progress has been made but further development is needed. As they move through the key stages pupils develop very good enquiry skills in their fieldwork. In Key Stage 4 and particularly in the sixth form the progress they make in this aspect of the subject is very good indeed. The quality of the presentation of fieldwork is helped by the acquisition of good skills in numeracy and graphicacy. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the subject at Key Stage 3, good progress at Key Stage 4 and very good progress in the sixth form. Subject staff devise tasks and worksheets appropriate to the abilities of these pupils and there is good liaison between classroom teachers and specialist support staff.

138. Pupils' attitudes to geography are good. In geography lessons pupils are very well

behaved and they are courteous and considerate to others. The quality of classroom relationships both amongst the pupils themselves and between pupil and teacher is very high. Most pupils take pride in the quality and appearance of their work. They concentrate well and show a determination to succeed with the tasks that they are set. They respond quickly and politely to the instructions they are given and to the questions that they are asked.

139. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The standard of teaching is particularly high at sixth-form level. All teachers have very good skills of classroom management and very sound relationships with their pupils. They ensure that their classes are well behaved. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to include a variety of activities. They give clear concise instructions and in the best lessons good pace is maintained by setting strict time limits for each section. In very good lessons all pupils are challenged. For example, in a mixed ability Year 7 class the teacher skilfully posed questions that helped even lower attaining pupils to use atlas maps of the British Isles to identify patterns and relationships between relief and climate

140. The department is well led and managed. There is, however, a shortage of specialist classrooms. Consequently, a lot of geography teaching, particularly in Key Stage 4, has to take place in other subject areas. Although the quality of teaching in these non-specialist rooms is good, the variety of teaching strategies is more restricted. This inhibits the drive to achieve higher standards; ways of tackling this problem need to be found.

144. **History**

141. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in 1999 was in line with the national average both in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 and Level 6 and above, as was the case in 1998. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 was average in the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE, and above average in respect of grades A*-G. This has been the trend in recent years. Results at A-level were outstanding, all students obtaining A or B grades, an improvement on the previous year when 11 candidates obtained results well above average. At no key stage is there a consistent, significant, difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

142. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of both key stages and in the sixth form attainment is above average. Improvements made to the courses and the developing confidence and expertise of recently appointed staff are having an effect. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

143. Pupils in Year 9 have a good knowledge of the main people and events of the periods studied. Their good grasp of chronology allows those of above average attainment to realise that if the population began to rise rapidly about 1800, then the medical improvements made in nursing after the Crimean War and the discoveries of Jenner and Simpson could not of themselves be the cause. In their study of the slave trade pupils demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can use their detailed knowledge of the period to account for, rapidly, in class, the rise to power of Hitler and the Nazi party. They evaluate a range of sources,

including, in their work on the American West, the film 'High Noon', as evidence. Their coursework on the accuracy of the simulation of medieval life at Conisborough Castle demonstrates both an effective use of a variety of sources to gain a realistic view of what life was like for rich and poor in medieval England, and also the skill of evaluating as history the interpretation they witnessed. Students in Year 13 can interpret difficult documentary evidence and handle a mass of information in marshalling an argument. Through their work on the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm I they show that they understand that history can be written from perspectives other than the political. The personal studies of the higher attaining students demonstrate significant research skills. Since the previous inspection there has been a distinct improvement in the acquisition of history skills.

144. Pupils make good progress through all key stages in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the development of skills because of good teaching and very good attitudes. Work done in Year 9 on the industrial developments in Calderdale builds successfully on work in Year 7 on local history. Pupils develop a deeper understanding of issues and processes. In turn, GCSE pupils have a more sophisticated understanding of medical developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than they had in Year 9. Progress in lessons is almost always good and occasionally very good. Pupils of higher attainment make good progress in most lessons because tasks are demanding, as was the activity in Year 10 when groups had to add successively to the reasons for Hitler's rise to power already given. They were asked demanding questions and had their own answered by knowledgeable teachers. Pupils of below average attainment and those with special educational needs make good progress because they have tasks effectively matched to their levels of attainment, and especially so when they are taught by teachers with expertise in special educational needs.

145. Pupils' attitudes to history are very good. Pupils respond very well to history. They enjoy it and show a good deal of interest, as the rapidly increasing take-up of examination courses demonstrates. Pupils work hard with a high level of concentration, and they can work together on a group task effectively. Because their behaviour is so good much is achieved in a very pleasant atmosphere. Especially marked is the ability of pupils to undertake their own research, using the learning resources centre effectively, and producing coursework and personal studies of high quality.

146. The teaching is good and has very good features in about a fifth of lessons. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. All teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and teach with authority. They ask searching questions, such as, 'Did everyone go with the Goebbels line?' and use pupils' questions to increase understanding very effectively. All teachers manage their classes very well and in the best lessons teach at a brisk pace. Expectations are uniformly high. For example, a Year 9 class was expected to be able to decide, by undertaking independent research in the learning resource centre during a lesson, the extent to which the medical improvements of named individuals caused the growth in population during the nineteenth century. Their homework was typical of the best - 'If medical improvements were not the cause, what was?' Tasks and resources are matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment. In the best lessons teachers use informal assessment to ensure that pupils understand and are ready to move on. Lesson planning does not always focus on what it is intended that pupils should learn, and there is a predictability about the teaching methods used.

147. The department is very well led and sits happily in a faculty that is very well led. There is a strong drive for high standards. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection by clearly identifying the skills that should be taught in each study unit. Assessment procedures that identify for each task what pupils must know, should know and could know, give a precise indication of pupils' attainment. The fact that all teachers of history are specialists is a strength. Good resources are enhanced by a good programme of visits to sites that improves pupils' learning.

151. Information and communication technology

148. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and is in line with the expectations of pupils of this age. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. While the trend is clearly upwards over the last two years the average number of pupils gaining grades A*-C on the long course remains well below the national average.

149. At Key Stage 3 pupils are making satisfactory progress. They are able to use computers to communicate and handle different information. They show increasing skill in editing text and creating better quality presentations. Pupils in each year are able to create spreadsheets. Pupils in Year 9 plan their projects in detail. They refine their searches and draw information from a range of sources, for example in their fashion/ design/ advertising project. There is little evidence of work on control and this remains a weakness from the last inspection. Pupils are making gains in filing and data-handling. They are gaining in confidence in the use of new machines and facilities, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

150. At Key Stage 4 pupils are making satisfactory progress. They make good progress with their project, having designed a database for second hand cars. They are able to explore the variables competently and use several criteria for each of their selections. They have designed a user guide for their data-base. There is good attention to language, to information and to lay-out for the wider public. Pupils are unable to apply knowledge and understanding of control. The record of work covered overall by pupils during Key Stage 4 is thin.

151. Pupils have some opportunities to practise their skills in information and communication technology in other classes. In mathematics, for example, pupils use spreadsheets and use tools to illustrate rotation. In history, religious education and English, pupils use word processing and in design there is effective application of graphics. There is good use of CD-ROM in the learning resource centre and learning support software is used effectively. While work stations are put to good use, older machines are unreliable and some pupils find it difficult to transfer their skills using different computers. In modern languages and science less sophisticated machines make some tasks slow. In science there is insufficient use of data logging. The computer skills taught across the curriculum are not recorded or collated and this continues from the last inspection to be a missed opportunity.

152. In the sixth form students following a programme in key skills are achieving good standards. They have created and loaded a spreadsheet to explore and develop information on overtime working. They are also able to present and exchange information. Students are making good progress, developing and tracking their own skills and building a portfolio for assessment.

153. Pupils' attitudes to information and communication technology in both key stages and in the sixth form are good. At Key Stage 3 pupils are positive in their approaches, they listen to their teachers and they show a keenness to move onto the computers to develop new skills. At Key Stage 4 pupils co-operate well with staff and they concentrate in their lessons. Year 11 pupils benefit from encouragement and are gaining in confidence. Lower attaining pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs, do well in this subject. Pupils across both key stages concentrate well when they use computers. They have good relationships with the teaching staff. They work often in pairs at a work station and sometimes guide one another through new skills. Behaviour is good generally in all classes. There are good examples of sixth form students giving classroom support to younger pupils in the subject. Pupils handle equipment sensibly and follow procedures well when opening and closing down their work stations.

154. Teaching is at least satisfactory and mainly good across both key stages and in the sixth form. At Key Stage 3 teachers use the technology confidently and their lessons are well organised. Their knowledge and understanding are good. New schemes of work and lesson plans were introduced at the start of the academic year and are carefully followed. In some lessons there is some loss of pace, for example, when the teacher is arranging which pupils should work together at a computer, or while pupils are trying to master a new skill. At Key Stage 4, the management of pupils and their discipline is very good. Relationships in class are positive and good use is made of humour to encourage the pupils. Homework is set in most lessons but not in all. Written work is marked with only brief comment and good use is made of self-assessment and

tests at the end of units. Very good co-operation exists between the teaching and support staff to help provision for pupils in the classroom

155. Information technology contributes to the personal development of pupils. It helps them to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy working with the computers and are pleased when they perform a new skill successfully. The subject encourages moral development; for example, pupils learn ethical principles about the use of information and the importance of data protection. Pupils are taught to relate socially with others in class. The subject attracts pupils outside lesson times to come together to study. Access to CD-ROM gives pupils the opportunity to gather information about other cultures. There is no defined policy in place to ensure the subject's contribution to these aspects.

156. All pupils at Key Stage 3 are taught information and communication technology. At Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils are working towards an examination but there are still some pupils who are not taught information and communication technology and thus do not receive their entitlement to this subject. Curriculum organisation has improved through the selection of a good scheme of work. Controlling and measuring are weak areas of provision at both key stages. The taught elements meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and this provision is well supported. The precise work covered by each pupil, especially when they change modules from one teacher to another, is not carefully monitored. An improved system of reporting to parents has been introduced but not all parents receive reports at the end of the key stages and this is a weakness.

157. Good subject leadership ensures that teachers are following the new scheme of work. Staff are encouraged to be involved in information and communication technology. The number of pupils making use of information and communication technology across the school has increased. The investment in new systems, machines and software has improved the ratio of machines to the number of pupils to 12:1 but this figure remains below the national average. Some recommendations named in the last inspection report have not been met, for example, the aim to establish links with other departments through named representatives. This omission is limiting the development of information and communication technology across the subjects. The department maintains a positive and hardworking ethos which reflects the aims of the school.

158. The staffing in the department is adequate in number, qualification and experience. Most of the lessons are taught by the co-ordinator and ably assisted by other members of the department. Enthusiastic teachers in other subject areas also make an important contribution to the provision and the department provides training for staff. The department is very well served by the technician. Recent upgrades in hardware and software, in development and maintenance have greatly improved access across the school. Efficient use is being made also of older machines. Heavy demands are made on the department for the development and maintenance of information systems across the school. The department has received some help and support from a small number of sixth-form students.

162. **Modern foreign languages**

159. Achievements by end of Key Stage 3 are slightly above national expectations. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in GCSE in French was above the national averages. In German the figure was below the national average. In 1998 the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in French was well above the national average. Most pupils achieved grades A*-G which is in line with national averages. In German the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C were well above the national average. Boys, especially in German, do better than the national expectation. Over the last three years French results for pupils achieving A*-C have risen consistently. The German results rose significantly from 1997 to 1998 but declined in 1999. This was mostly due to staffing and timetabling difficulties. At A-level in 1999 over half the candidates gained the higher grades A and B.

160. By end of Year 9 pupils are able to understand spoken instructions in the foreign language and their listening and speaking skills are quite well developed. Pupils' ability to read and write in the language is not as good. For example, pupils can read a range of language concerned with holidays but their writing often has grammatical errors and spelling mistakes

161. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are achieving standards which are above national expectations. They have increased the range of topics they are familiar with but the length and range of their reading is limited. They are able to listen to reasonably long passages of more complex language and understand these but they do not always use a range of tenses accurately when writing.

162. The number of pupils entering A Level French and German is low. Pupils achieve grades in line with their ability. They acquire a sound knowledge of many topics, for example the problems of young people in today's society and on the dangers of driving.

163. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. By the end of the key stage most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have progressed in their ability to use French or German in everyday situations such as talking about their leisure interests or dealing with a lost property office. In Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress in French and German. They can understand and give information about themselves and they make good progress in speaking because teachers provide regular opportunities for them to speak and regularly correct pronunciation. A minority of pupils continue to make the same grammatical errors they were making in Key Stage 3. Most pupils, however, do not make sufficient progress in their ability to read longer texts, as there are insufficient resources for this. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress but still require support to produce writing of any length. By the end of the sixth form students have made satisfactory progress in the range of texts with which they work and have developed many ideas on, for example, the difference in the educational systems in England and France. They can speak and write at length on a range of topics but there are elements of inaccuracy in their work.

164. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory at all key stages. They behave well and respond courteously to teachers and to each other. Most pupils concentrate well on the tasks set and many high attaining pupils are very enthusiastic. Very few pupils take initiative, as there are few opportunities to do so. They rarely use dictionaries without being prompted and do not have well developed strategies for working independently of the teacher. Exchanges and trips to France and Germany are very well supported and pupils return with improved speaking skills and positive attitudes to the foreign culture. They take part with great enthusiasm in school language events such as Bastille Day when they join in with activities that include everything from trying their hand at impressionist painting to playing boules.

165. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach, especially when teaching their first language. Most teachers use the language well for everyday classroom instructions but pupils rarely use French or German to ask for help or to clarify meanings. Teachers' expectations of the quantity and quality of work to be produced by pupils are satisfactory overall and are good for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4. In the good lessons pupils were very clear about what they had to do and worked individually or in groups on a range of well designed tasks. The opportunity to work independently of the teacher on activities such as individual listening or reading is not a regular feature of classroom practice. Some pupils have no textbook to take home so they have no means of working independently on what they have learnt in lessons. There are often many tasks to challenge the more able but support for less able within a class is not always planned, although there were good examples in the use of worksheets at different levels in Key Stage 3. Homework for top

sets is regularly marked and is related to the work in lessons. There are instances of homework not being set to lower sets. Most work is corrected for grammatical errors but marks are not always awarded. Pupils are sometimes given comments in their books about how they might improve their work but they are more often given verbal advice on how they might improve.

166. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear educational direction for the subject and the induction of new staff is very good. Insufficient time is allocated to the second foreign language in Key Stage 3. This is causing pressure on teachers and pupils, who have to complete the same course in less time, and it reduces the range of teaching and learning styles possible. The use of information and communication technology is in its infancy and although some classes have been using information and communication technology in their language learning, it is not well integrated into the curriculum. Not enough use is made of assessment information to adapt future teaching, especially in Key Stage 3. Although pupils have been given some guidance on their performance according to National Curriculum levels they do not generally have a good understanding of what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve.

167. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Examination results have improved and speaking skills in particular are much better. Pupils continue to develop good listening skills but they do not read as widely as they might. Leadership continues to be good. Accommodation is generally appropriate, although a lack of space means some lessons are still taught in non-specialist rooms so that access to items such as an overhead projector is difficult, which makes it hard for teachers to vary their teaching styles.

171. **Music**

168. In the 1998 GCSE results in music were above comparable averages for similar schools. In 1999 results improved three-quarters of GCSE candidates gaining grades A*- C. Results for A-level performing arts in 1998 were well above comparable averages. In 1999 A-level performing arts results were at a similar level to the previous year; candidates in 1999 gained either grade A or grade B.

169. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is a little above average in performing and by the end of Key Stage 3 is above average in composing and performing. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to use electronic keyboards and vocal skills with competence, for both performing and composing. Pupils build on their vocal expertise and sing with assurance. In Year 7 they are able to select and manipulate vocal sounds to enhance group compositions. Throughout both key stages pupils sing with confidence and are willing to use their vocal skills, with or without accompaniment, both solo and in ensemble. Appraising skills are often near average. However, there is some variable attainment in appraisal and aural skills. In part this is a result of the uneven distribution of lesson time across the expressive arts. Within any one year this can have a detrimental effect on attainment and progress for those pupils who have an insufficient number of music lessons. Attainment for pupils with special educational needs is slightly above average, especially where classroom support is available and where pupils receive an adequate number of lessons. Variable attainment and quality of learning were mentioned in the previous report.

170. At Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are above average in composing and performing. Appraising and aural skills are average. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make some use of computers for composition. Individual vocal and instrumental skills are strong. In work on folk song pupils are confident in both solo and group singing. They are

conversant with a range of music and musical techniques, and often perform at a high standard. In the sixth form, standards in performing arts are often very high, students developing their work from appropriate practitioners. Overall standards in music compare very favourably with general attainment in the school. There is no significant imbalance between boys' and girls' attainment. Pupils had, until this year, the opportunity of continuing their musical studies in the sixth form as part of the A-level performing arts course.

171. Many pupils make good progress in levels of achievement across both key stages and in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3 progress is often good in instrumental work and singing but only average in listening skills. At Key Stage 4 progress is good in performing and composing. Progress in appraising skills is a little above average. Pupils achieve good progress in relation to their levels of attainment on entry to the school. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is sound, particularly where the allocation of time is satisfactory. At all stages pupils have opportunities to develop most necessary musical skills.

172. Pupils' attitudes in music lessons are broadly satisfactory. Their response is often attentive, with appropriate levels of interest, co-operation and behaviour. However, some pupils find sustained listening difficult and there is occasional lack of focus in aural work. Music teachers are aware of the need to improve listening skills in order to maintain the present high standards in GCSE music. Pupils work well individually and with enthusiasm in instrumental groups. At Key Stage 3 they co-operate in group composition and are enthusiastic in performing tasks. Pupils enjoy performing and recording their compositions. Classes often respond to this by listening attentively to each other's performances. Independent learning skills are developing at Key Stage 4, where music is a popular subject. The number of pupils who opt for music at Key Stage 4 is quite high, and increasing.

173. The teaching is satisfactory and has elements of very good practice. Expertise and skills are used to good advantage in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Teaching embodies commitment, good planning, a range of interesting work, and a very supportive approach. There is much emphasis on vocal work. Particularly notable was a Year 7 project using information and communication technology for the accompaniment to pupils' unison and two-part singing. There are novel uses of singing and assessment; for example, in a 'call and response' sung register taken at the beginning of music lessons when pupils' vocal accuracy and invention are assessed. Pupils are given opportunities to explore their own culture and World cultures. Music teachers have sound computer expertise and help pupils to use this to produce high levels of presentation in coursework. Pupils are also helped to consolidate their word skills; teachers routinely refer to the spelling of technical terms. Homework is set which supplements the work done in the classroom and has a positive effect on pupils' progress. In aural skills lessons class management is occasionally unsatisfactory. Teachers take great care, however, with the selection of recordings used for aural work and present pupils with a high quality of musical illustration. Instrumental teaching is good. The visiting instrumental teachers make a valued contribution to the curriculum and their work is well managed and integrated into the work of the department. Pupils have the opportunity to take instrumental grade examinations and have a record of success.

174. The department is well organised and has suitable administrative processes in place. The long-term monitoring, assessing and recording of pupils' work are sound. Careful analysis of examination results and assessment is used to develop the work offered to pupils. Accommodation is quite good, the main music room providing a suitable environment. However, the smaller music room causes some logistic difficulties and is unsuitable for a full range of musical activities. The lack of space in the second music room was also mentioned in the previous inspection report. The department has modest instrumental and general resources. The limited computer and information and

communication technology resources are used to very good advantage but are insufficient for current needs, at both key stages. The department is aware of the need to develop and enrich computer work at Key Stage 3 so that all pupils can receive full entitlement to information and communication technology in music lessons. Reference was made to limited resources in the previous report.

175. The department provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, such as the brass group and samba band (much in demand for outdoor performances). Such activities, together with other instrumental, performing arts and vocal groups, considerably broaden the music curriculum within the school. The performance and composing work of pupils is appropriately celebrated in the school and in the community, within a regular calendar of musical events. Such opportunities to perform for the many committed pupils involved, have an impact on the kudos of the department and help the school to consolidate links and forge new connections with the community.

179. Physical education

176. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. In the performance of practical activities the level of physical skills, catching, throwing, tackling, passing and striking is good among many pupils. Most pupils are active and well co-ordinated, and have good balance and mobility. Pupils attainment in planning, performing and evaluating practical work, and their knowledge of health related fitness, is also at about the nationally expected level in most instances. The large majority of pupils, both boys and girls, know the basic rules, laws and tactics of all the major games. They are familiar with safety routines, and they co-operate well together in gymnastics, athletics and outdoor activities to develop particular skills.

177. Standards across Key Stage 4 remain at the expected levels, for both boys and girls. Pupils' theoretical knowledge of many aspects of the subject matches their levels of performance. Higher attaining pupils are able to plan and execute a good range of advanced defensive and offensive strategies, in addition to complex and highly skilled activities. The large majority of pupils are able to analyse and evaluate performance, and are confident enough to suggest or make improvements. All pupils are aware of the health related aspects of sport and know how to maximise their impact. The overall standard of attainment in the 1999 GCSE results is well above the national average. This level of attainment is continued in the sixth form, where the majority of students achieve good A-level results.

178. The progress of pupils with differing levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs is satisfactory at both key stages and in the sixth form, the result of a broad and balanced range of activities, which includes high profile opportunities in dance for all pupils. Across Key Stage 3 knowledge and skills develop rapidly, and progress in planning and evaluating physical performance is always at least satisfactory or better. At Key Stage 4, and particularly in GCSE courses where pupils learn more advanced skills in soccer, hockey, basketball and netball, the rate of progress of most pupils is good. Levels of understanding and practical performance of both boys and girls improve at broadly similar rates. All pupils are aware of the necessity for warm-up and warm-down, and are expected to take notes on lessons

when not actively engaged.

179. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are good. Most pupils enjoy physical education and respond well to the enthusiasm and high expectations of their teachers. Attitudes in lessons and behaviour in general are good. Pupils wear appropriate clothing, rates of participation are high, and relationships between the pupils themselves, and between pupils and staff are relaxed and respectful. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers, respond promptly and accurately to instructions, and answer questions thoughtfully and confidently. They collaborate well in pairs, groups, and teams both in practice and in games.

180. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and in the large majority of lessons good or very good. Teaching is very good in the sixth form. Teaching is consistently very good in the teaching of dance. Where the teaching is good teachers, make effective and efficient use of time and space, engage pupils with challenging physical and intellectual activity, make full use of correct technical terminology, and conscientiously reinforce good practice. In all lessons teachers have high standards of discipline and they generate a positive atmosphere of co-operation and learning. When there are weaknesses in otherwise good teaching, teachers allow the pace of the lesson to slow, use space inappropriately, or underuse positive feedback to celebrate pupil achievement in the planning, performance or evaluation of activity.

181.The overall management of the department is good. Policies and procedures are in place and are followed, team meetings are held regularly, and provision for pupils with special educational needs is well organised. There are up-to-date schemes of work, and systems exist for their review and further development as appropriate. Clear and concise assessment and recording procedures have been established throughout the large faculty, and these are used diagnostically and to inform curriculum planning and form the foundation for accurately reporting to parents. There is a strong and shared ethos within the department, and staff provide good role models for pupils.

182.The programme of extra-curricular activities is extensive and varied and enables many pupils to be involved in collaborative and partnership experiences, to achieve high standards of performance, and to be involved in representative sport. The resources and specialist staffing available for physical education are barely adequate for a school of this size. The provision of equipment is adequate, the two gyms are well used and cared for, changing accommodation for pupils is spacious, and there are extensive fields, but the impact on standards of this last facility is reduced owing to problems originating in substandard drainage at the Brearley site. Without remedial work, this could lead to failure to meet pupils' entitlement and make the maintenance of current standards in physical education difficult to guarantee.

186. Religious education

183.The re-marked 1999 GCSE short course papers indicate that pupils' attainment is well above the national average. Public examination results in 1998 were above average for pupils achieving grades A*-C and A*-G. In 1998, the first year that candidates were entered, girls did significantly better than boys. In all aspects of religious education there has been an enormous improvement since the previous inspection.

184.Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is higher than the Agreed Syllabus requires, largely because at the end of Year 9 pupils are half way through the GCSE course that concludes with the public examination at the end of Year 10. No religious education is taught in the sixth form, and the school fails to meet a statutory requirement. At the end of Year 10 pupils' attainment is higher than the national average. This is a substantial improvement since the previous inspection.

185.Pupils in Year 9 have a good knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Christianity and Islam on moral issues concerning family life, and use the technical terms accurately. Those of above average attainment can apply those teachings to specific issues, like the circumstances under which divorce is permissible. By the end of Year 10 pupils have a wider and deeper understanding of the responses of those two religions to moral issues and can argue from evidence, including quotations from the New Testament and the Qur'an, as well as from emotion on issues as sensitive as abortion and euthanasia. Because so little time is available, pupils of average and below average attainment have a relatively superficial knowledge of many aspects of faiths other than Christianity and Islam.

186.Pupils make good progress at both key stages because of good teaching and good

attitudes. In Year 7, for example, they learn what religion is and the nature of faith, which is built upon in Year 8 when pupils learn how Jesus' words and actions made enemies and ultimately caused his death. With a sound basic understanding of the teachings of Jesus, pupils in Years 9 and 10 can apply them to issues of morality. Pupils of above average attainment make good progress because they respond well to demanding tasks, whether grasping the relationship of the multitude of Hindu deities to Brahman in Year 7 or of applying their knowledge of morality to difficult case studies in Year 10. Pupils of below average attainment and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are effectively supported by the teacher or support assistant, and have resources that match their attainment. Progress has improved enormously since the previous inspection.

187. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good. They respond well, especially to imaginative and lively teaching, exemplified when a Year 7 lesson began with the scissors game. Pupils show a good deal of interest, judging by the number of questions they ask and observations they make. Most pupils work consistently hard with a high degree of concentration. Behaviour is always very good and pupils show a great deal of respect for the beliefs and feelings of others. Pupils can work collaboratively, and they have good research skills. Although some old textbooks have been defaced, pupils show respect for property.

188. The teaching is good, with occasionally very good features, which represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. In the best lessons teachers provide activities that interest as well as challenge, such as the revision quiz in Year 10 and the scissors game in Year 7. The variety of activities provided, which includes making a totem of what one holds dear, engages pupils' attention and promotes progress. When specialist knowledge is very good, links can be made between pupils' own experiences and the idea being taught. For instance, the way in which the two basic school rules are broken down into many more detailed ones parallels the way in which the Ten Commandments became the 613 rules of the Jewish Torah. Class management is always good, and at its best can allow a Year 8 class to act out in small groups the particular quarrels the Pharisees had with Jesus. When the aims of the lesson are shared with the pupils learning becomes a joint responsibility and more effective. In otherwise good lessons there are some weaknesses. The lack of detailed knowledge on the part of non-specialist teachers means that some opportunities for extending learning are lost. The pace of lessons is occasionally too slow, though in one lesson it was too fast for the effective consolidation of learning. Occasionally too much talking by the teacher inhibits learning.

189. The department is well led by a person who has responsibility for A-level sociology and psychology. It has the help of one other specialist teacher, herself with responsibilities in two other subjects. With the support of the faculty, a coherent and challenging curriculum that meets the requirements of the Calderdale Agreed Syllabus has been put in place very quickly, and all pupils take the short GCSE course at the end of Year 10. The time allocated to religious education is insufficient to cover the Agreed Syllabus in sufficient depth. In all, nine teachers, of whom only two are specialists, teach some religious education, and this has an adverse effect on standards. Resources have improved since the previous inspection and are now adequate. As planned and taught, the subject makes a considerable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

193. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

193. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

190. The inspection team consisted of 15 inspectors. During the five days of the inspection, and a total of 57 inspector days, 212 lessons were inspected. There were several observations of extra-curricular activities, and assemblies and 34 visits to registration periods. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and most several times. Fifty-five planned meetings were held with members of staff and there was a meeting with members of the governing body. All the available written work in each subject of a sample of six pupils from each year group was inspected. Planned discussions were held with these pupils and informal discussions were held with many more. A total of 191 hours was spent observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and discussing with pupils about their work.

191. Documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 37 parents; 130 parents completed a questionnaire giving their views on the school. Meetings were held with the headteachers of local primary schools, the careers officer and the education welfare officer.

192. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1302	42	194	162

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	74.97
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.37

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked each week	560

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	75.3
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	26
	KS4	22

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	2 847 776
Total Expenditure	2 870 536
Expenditure per pupil	2 232
Balance brought forward from previous year	5 225
Balance carried forward to next year	(17 535)

Figures in parenthesis indicate negative values

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	1302
Number of questionnaires returned:	130

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	29	54	11	3	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	51	46	1	1	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	31	39	22	5	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	22	52	18	6	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	33	49	10	5	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	49	4	2	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	28	58	10	2	2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	27	53	10	9	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	35	49	12	2	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	26	52	18	2	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	38	51	8	2	2