

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKBANK SCHOOL

Keighley

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107441

Headteacher: Mr J Roberts

Reporting inspector: Mr T Feast
3650

Dates of inspection: 5th – 9th March 2001

Inspection number: 185605

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 19 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Oakworth Road
Keighley
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Scarborough

Date of previous inspection: 22nd November 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3650	T Feast	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9039	B Eyre	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils?
30941	K Brammer	Team inspector	English	
30699	A Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27050	V Blackburn	Team inspector	Science	
4757	D Morris	Team inspector	Art and design	
12331	V Grigg	Team inspector	Design and technology Special educational needs	Learning Support Unit
3827	J Knight	Team inspector	Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
22849	R Catlow	Team inspector	History	How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8672	M Roberts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
16950	C Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Equal opportunities	
31660	M Young	Team inspector	Music	
18888	J Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education	
10807	P Quest	Team inspector	Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakbank School is a mixed foundation comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 19 years with 1878 on roll. There are more boys than girls. The school is over-subscribed. In September 2000, the age range of the students changed from 13 to 19 to its current position following re-organisation of education in the local education authority (LEA). As a result, in September 2000, half of the 1878 students were new to the school, as were a quarter of the teaching staff, many of whom were from former middle schools. For the academic year 2000-2001, the school is housed on two sites whilst an extensive building programme is underway on the main site. The school should be on one site from the start of the academic year 2001-2002.

The proportion of students eligible for free school meals (16 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Approximately eight per cent of students in Key Stages 3 and 4 come from long-established Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities within Keighley. This is higher than in most schools and nearly all have been identified by the school as requiring additional English language support. At the time of the inspection, the Muslim communities were celebrating Eid and nearly all the students with English as an additional language were absent for most of the inspection period. The school has identified about 16 per cent of all students as having special educational needs, broadly in line with the national average. Sixty-four of these students have been provided with statements of special educational needs by the LEA, which is above the national average. Over half of these students are in Years 7 and 8. Since September, the school has had a designated Learning Support Unit for disaffected students at risk of exclusion for emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Over 40 students are attached to the unit for parts of the school week, whilst being in mainstream lessons for the rest of their timetables. The school's intake contains a wide range of ability but overall students' attainment on entry is below the national average, with well over half the students recording scores below the national average in standardised tests administered shortly before admission. The school has Sports College status and a number of the school's schemes such as Gifted and Talented Students, Learning Mentors and the Learning Support Unit are provided through the Excellence in Cities initiative.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oakbank is a good school. Students make good progress in Key Stage 3 to reach standards broadly in line with those nationally. Standards are improving in GCSE examinations. The school has a successful work-related provision. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The school has been faced with the major challenges of re-organisation into an 11 to 19 school as well as other local authority and government initiatives and has met them successfully. Leadership and management are good. The overall effectiveness of the school is good and it provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in design and technology, art and design, humanities and information and communication technology are high.
- The quality of teaching and students' learning is good.
- It makes very good provision for students with special educational needs.
- It provides a very good range of activities outside lessons.
- It offers very good work-related provision.
- It has very good relations with external agencies, the local college, local schools and the local business community.

- It uses specific grants excellently.

What could be improved

- Standards in modern languages, English and mathematics.
- The adoption and implementation of a whole-school strategy for literacy.
- The consistency across all departments and years by which whole-school policies and initiatives are implemented, for example assessment, homework, information and communication technology, behaviour management and curriculum opportunities for spiritual and cultural development.
- Levels of attendance and the reduction of the incidence of exclusions.
- Meeting statutory requirements in respect of collective worship.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in November 1995. Since then, it has improved its analysis and assessment of specific learning difficulties and has taken a number of actions including the provision of extra English sessions, and the progress of students with special educational needs is good. Attendance has improved but not to the national level. The number of exclusions was reducing but has increased this year, mainly due to the problems associated with the LEA re-organisation. The school has reviewed its curriculum policy on examination entry and taken steps to increase the number of examination entries for individual students. With school re-organisation, curriculum continuity across Key Stage 3 has improved and is reflected in the school's schemes of work. Leadership and management roles of senior and middle managers have been developed but there is still the need for further development of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision. The requirements for staff appraisal have been met, as have those for religious education in the sixth form. The curriculum coverage of information and communication technology at Key Stage 4 has improved but is not yet satisfactory. The school does not meet statutory requirements in respect of collective worship and has not made sufficient progress in providing students with opportunities for spiritual development. Standards in relation to students achieving five A*-C grades have risen considerably. The quality of learning in lessons has improved. The quality of teaching has improved, especially in relation to the quantity of very good and excellent teaching. The long-term financial planning has improved. The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16- and 18-year-olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	E	E	D	E*
A-levels/AS-levels	B	C	C	

Key

well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The school's average points score is reduced by significant numbers of students taking work-related courses which do not count in this table

At the end of Key Stage 3, standards in mathematics and science are in line with the national averages and in English they are below. Standards at GCSE in 2000 show a significant improvement and are above the targets set by the school in the number of students attaining five A*-C grades. The school's results for A*-G grades are not so good in comparison and this is because many students take courses which are work-related rather than GCSEs. Above average standards in GCSE in 2000 were achieved in biology, chemistry, combined science (double award), design and technology, humanities, business studies, art and physics. In English language and literature, mathematics and German and combined science (single award), they were below average. At A-level in 2000, results in art, design and technology and physical education were above average and in computer studies and history they were below. Standards in GNVQ advanced vocational courses were well above average. The standards attained by students with English as an additional language are well below those attained by the school but they make good progress in relation to earlier attainment. In the work seen, standards were well above in humanities, design and technology and information and communication technology and above average in art, business studies and in mathematics at A-level. Standards in modern languages at Key Stage 3 were well below standards expected. Standards in English were below average at Key Stages 3 and 4 and they were below in mathematics at Key Stage 4. Standards in science were in line with national averages. Students with special educational needs make good progress in relation to targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs).

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall with many students demonstrating good attitudes but this positive picture is undermined by the attitudes of a small cohort of students.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The incidence of exclusions has risen this year and is unsatisfactory, but behaviour in class is good and it is satisfactory around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The quality of relationships in lessons and around school is good and students have a good understanding of the impact of behaviour on others and show good respect for their feelings.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. It is improving but is still below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the lessons observed. It was very good or better in 34 per cent of the lessons. In five per cent of lessons, the teaching was unsatisfactory or poor. Much of the best teaching was seen in design and technology, art and design, information and communication

technology, history, drama and physical education. Of the small number of lessons with unsatisfactory teaching, a number were seen in modern languages and mathematics where the lesson was not being taken by the regular teacher. The teaching of English at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. The teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 3 is good and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. The teaching of science at Key Stage 3 is good and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. The teaching of literacy across the school is satisfactory. The teaching of numeracy across the school is unsatisfactory. The teachers' subject knowledge and their planning are good. They have high expectations and use resources well. The learning support assistants are used very well. The use of ongoing assessment consistently to inform teachers' planning is unsatisfactory. The teaching meets the needs of all students satisfactorily. Students' learning is good. They show interest, work at a good pace and with good effort and there is a good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Students work well collaboratively and often are very inquisitive when researching projects. Students with special educational needs learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Broad, balanced and relevant. Very good vocational provision. Very good range of extra-curricular activities. Insufficient provision of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, both in withdrawal sessions and when in-class support is provided and students' achievement is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. In withdrawal sessions, in providing in-class support and also working in the communities, resulting in students' achievement being good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour are good, as are those for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. There is good educational and personal guidance for students.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school has identified priorities for development and supported these priorities through good financial planning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all the statutory requirements other than that relating to collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. It applies the principles of best value very well.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and other senior managers. Governors play a good role in shaping the direction of the school and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for development. Specific grants are used excellently. The school uses new technology well. The shared commitment to improvement is good and the school has demonstrated well its capacity to improve. There is some inconsistency in the way that school priorities are tackled and the way that progress in respect of these is monitored and evaluated. Given the current upheavals resulting from the re-organisation, the position regarding staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory. Overall the school gives very good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects their children to work hard.• The teaching is good.• Their children make good progress.• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working more closely with parents.• Their children getting the right amount of homework.• The leadership and management of the school.

The inspection team agrees with the parents that the school's expectations of the students are high and that overall they make good progress. The quality of teaching is good and in over a third of lessons, very good or better. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team disagrees with the parents' views on leadership and management, especially in the light of the considerable pressures brought on the school in terms of the local education authority re-organisation and the resulting extensive building programme. While homework is set, there are inconsistencies between subjects and the school's homework timetable. The inspection team does believe that the school could take greater steps to provide the parents with more information and guidance so that the parents could be more actively involved in their children's education.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards in mathematics and science are in line with national averages and in English, they are below. This is much the same picture as was found in the national tests at Key Stage 3 in 2000 and given their attainment on entering the school, the progress the students have made in mathematics and science is good and in English it is satisfactory. Students achieve better in mathematics and science because their progress is less affected by below average standards of literacy, especially in writing. Girls do better than boys overall but not as much as they do nationally. The improvement overall since the last inspection has been broadly in line with the national trend.
2. In other subjects, students do particularly well in information and communication technology and design and technology where standards are either above average or progress is very good. These achievements reflect the high quality of teaching in these subjects. Students also achieve well in geography, physical education, history and music. Students' attainment in art is in line with the national average and they make satisfactory progress. In religious education, where standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and in modern languages, where standards are well below the national average, students make satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.
3. Standards at GCSE in 2000 show a significant improvement, and above the targets set by the school, in the number of students attaining five A*-C grades. Standards are above the similar school average and in line with the national school average. Standards are particularly strong in biology, chemistry, physics, combined sciences (double award), design and technology, humanities, business studies and art, where results are above the national average. Sometimes, as in the single sciences, it is partly a reflection of the selection of these subjects by high attainers. In the others it is also related to the high quality of teaching, where the high expectations and very good subject knowledge particularly lead to these above average results. English language and literature results are below the national average and below the results the students achieve in their other subjects. This reflects their standards of literacy which affects their ability, for example, to analyse texts. German and combined science (single award) results are also below the national average but this is linked to the ability of the students taking the course. The relative performance of boys and girls overall is much in line with the national picture, with girls outperforming boys.
4. The school's results for A*-G grades is not so good in comparison with the national average. This is because many students take courses which are work-related such as the RSA Initial Awards rather than GCSEs and their performance in these subjects does not count towards national figures. Students do well in many of these work-related courses, such as GNVQ units in business and health and social care, one reason being their positive response to the use of realistic vocational contexts. Standards seen in the present Year 11 are in line with last year's achievements.
5. Results at A-level were close to the national average both in 2000 and for the past three years. The average points score has declined since the last inspection but the school has encouraged more students to take A-levels and has succeeded in increasing the number of students taking two or more A-levels by nearly 50 per cent. The average

points score for students entered for less than two A-levels has been above the national average in all but one of the last five years.

6. In 2000, A-level results in design and technology, art and physical education were above the results nationally and those for computer studies and history were below. In other subjects, results were broadly in line with national figures. Students following GNVQ advanced vocational courses achieved standards significantly above national figures. The school has maintained consistently high standards in this area since the last inspection, partly as a response to the high expectations the staff have of these students. Students on intermediate and entry level vocational programmes achieve standards close to the course average.
7. Students with special educational needs make good progress towards targets set in their individual education plans. Some students who make very good progress move down the stages or off the register altogether. In lessons, students make good progress with the help of the support assistants and class teachers in tackling tasks which challenge them, especially in relation to improving literacy. Many other students need to improve their literacy skills which are low on entry to the school but there is not yet a whole school strategy to tackle this and many, especially at Key Stages 3 and 4, do not make the progress of which they are capable, especially in writing skills.
8. The standards achieved by students with English as an additional language are below those achieved by the school generally. In 2000, far fewer students achieved five A*-C grades at GCSE. Standards achieved by students taking GCSEs in their community languages such as Urdu and Bengali are more in line with the school's results. Their standards have been lower partly because of the standards of literacy and for some students also, because of their pattern of attendance, but until relatively recently the school did not attract any additional support for these students. Now with the help of support staff and class teachers, standards are improving and last year's students outperformed their targets considerably. The targets for this year aim to close the gap in performance and the students are well on track to meet the new targets and make good progress.
9. The school's programme of support for its gifted and talented students is now part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. There is evidence of the programme beginning to have a positive impact on standards, for example, the linguists taking two languages, students taking history as an additional GCSE and the work produced in art and design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall, the attitudes of students towards school are satisfactory. The majority of the students have good attitudes and this is shown both in and out of lessons. Currently, there is a somewhat unsettled situation, especially with some of the students who joined the school last September. The school admitted half its current roll at that time. Two-thirds of the intake were housed off the main school site. The school established a Learning Support Unit for students who were at risk of exclusion or returning from exclusion and others admitted to the school had poor attendance and behaviour records. The school has good policies to manage behaviour and to guide students who find school difficult. For the vast majority of students, they work well. Despite this, the number of exclusions has increased during the current school year. These have been deemed necessary because the disruptive conduct of individuals has been in defiance of the school's behaviour rules and the teachers' efforts to restore order. The problems currently experienced are made more difficult by the interim position the school is in,

working on two sites. These temporary difficulties are overshadowing an overall positive picture. Nonetheless, unacceptably low levels of attendance and anti-social behaviour from some confirm that a small cohort of students lack enthusiasm for the school. This has a severe impact on their attainment and learning.

11. Across the subject areas, the attitudes of students do vary. Often they are very good, for example there was a real buzz in many lessons where the teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm fully engaged the students' interests. This was evident especially in art, drama, music, information and communication technology and design and technology. In physical education and sixth-form studies, many students demonstrate mature attitudes and they benefit from their teacher's good relations with them. Learning is hampered in some subjects by the poor attendance and disruptive attitudes of comparatively small groups of students. There are occasions when immature attitudes or disrespectful and challenging behaviour, for example in mathematics and modern foreign languages, makes the pace of lessons unsatisfactory. However, where students were fully engaged in their activities, they made good progress. In practical subjects such as design and technology, some fine work was being produced and in information and communication technology lessons, the mature attitudes and helpfulness of students towards each other and their teachers were impressive.
12. The behaviour of the students at break times was usually good; they mix together freely and comfortably. Inspectors observed no incidents of racist behaviour although the school's behaviour records indicate that these occur from time to time. The principles of tolerance and understanding are promoted well. Students understand that bigotry will not be tolerated and they speak of their school with a measure of affection. Some teachers discuss moral values during the registration periods and these contribute to a good understanding of right from wrong.
13. Students with special educational needs respond well to the very good level of support that they are given. Support assistants are very effective in their role, they are responsive to the individual need of the student and are able to recognise the occasions when students can be left to their own initiative. When help is needed, it is quickly and quietly provided, thus helping students maintain concentration and effectively supporting the progress they make. Students who find the classroom environment stressful can be referred to the Learning Support Unit to calm down. Good supervision ensures that work, either academic or therapeutic, is done during these periods in the unit.
14. Students with special educational needs have a positive attitude to learning. In both lessons and in the Learning Support Unit, they are generally keen to work and try hard. These students behave well in class and around the school, with the exception of a few for whom behaviour has been identified as their special educational need. Most work hard towards the targets set on their individual education plans. These students play a full part in the life of the school.
15. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall but it is improving and now for almost half of the students, attendance is at or above the national average. Absence from school for some students is closely linked to their lower achievement and disaffection. The poor attendance of these students can also affect others because lessons slow down when teachers have to go over work to help these students to catch up. Whilst the majority of students are punctual, punctuality remains a problem. Of the students who arrived late for lessons, few showed any urgency in getting to their classrooms.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the lessons observed. It was very good or better in 34 per cent of the lessons. In five per cent of lessons the teaching was unsatisfactory or poor. Similar good standards of teaching were seen in Years 7 to 9, Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. The high incidence of very good teaching or better in some curriculum areas is reflected in the high standards that students achieve in those subjects. In most lessons, the students' learning is good and this also reflects the good quality of the teaching provided.
17. Much of the best teaching was seen in design and technology, art and design, information and communication technology, history, drama and physical education. Of the few lessons with unsatisfactory teaching, a number were seen in modern languages and mathematics, where the lesson was not taken by the regular class teacher.
18. The greatest strengths in teaching are in subject knowledge and understanding and this was apparent in all subjects. Many staff display an enormous enthusiasm for their subject and such interest and enjoyment are apparent to the students who are then motivated to succeed. Planning for individual lessons is good and the learning intended made clear to students. Staff have high expectations and use resources well. There is often a good recap of previous learning at the start of lessons and a good consolidation of the learning achieved in the lesson at the end. The learning support assistants are used very well.
19. The few weaknesses in teaching often resulted from an inability to manage the behaviour of a minority of students and the outcome was unsatisfactory learning. On occasions, the learning planned for the lesson was not made clear to the students and the level of challenge was not sufficient for the ability of the students in the class. There is insufficient consistent use of ongoing assessment to inform teachers' planning of future work, for example in geography, history and modern languages, but where it is done well, for example in design and technology, music and art and design, it plays a significant role in the drive for high standards. Whilst much good homework is set some inconsistency was evident in the quality and its frequency according to the school's timetable. The teaching meets the needs of all students satisfactorily. Students' learning is good. They work at a good pace with good effort and there is a good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Students with special educational needs learn well.
20. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. In a number of departments, the use of correct technical vocabulary is emphasised, for example in science, humanities and design and technology. Many staff involve students in talking about what they have learnt in response to questions or in presenting their findings. Across most subjects, students are expected to use research skills and the quality of presentation is emphasised. There has been too little progress in the development of a whole-school policy for literacy. This results in students' work, for example in information and communication technology and media studies, being marred by errors of grammar, spelling and style. Many departments are still unsure or have not planned how they can consistently support the work done in English.
21. The teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is no whole-school numeracy policy. Where numeracy is in evidence, it is where departments use skills important to the subject, for example in science where graphs were used to display data logging and in geography with the use of statistics with examples of

scatter diagrams and comparison of data. In Years 12 and 13, more advanced statistical processes are required but staff are not necessarily confident in teaching the technique themselves. In physical education, measuring, counting and recording are frequently encountered, for example, in terms of pulse rates in health and fitness. A-level physical education students make full use of diagrams and graphs for representational purposes when recording data results. However, there is little evidence in a number of the schemes of work or in teachers' planning in many subjects of the identification of appropriate ways to support the development of students' numerical skills.

22. The teaching of information and communication technology skills is good in many areas with the result that many students use it effectively, although there are still gaps in its usage across the curriculum. In media studies, students are taught to use video facilities for supporting the presentation of projects. In physical education, students are taught to use the computers to record achievement in fitness modules. Students are taught to use the Internet and this is seen to good effect in research conducted in art and design. In music, history and geography, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology. In the best vocational teaching, learning in all the key skills is enhanced by the use of realistic vocational contexts.
23. The quality of teaching of students with special educational needs was never less than good when they were withdrawn for specific programmes, and half the lessons were very good. In the very good lessons, the programmes had a high level of challenge which moved students on in their learning. The teachers kept an eye on the progress of all students, encouraging them and directing them to attempt additional and harder tasks. Students responded positively to these high expectations and wanted to achieve. Planning is detailed so that the individual needs of the students are met and their targets are taken into account. Questioning was very good to make students think and to give them the confidence to respond. Feedback to students was always positive and very effectively targeted to enable the student to make progress in the task they were doing. In lessons where students were supported in their learning, the individual teaching was good or very good. For example, in a science lesson, the class teacher clearly indicated the role that she expected the support teacher to play. A student was helped with the manipulation of a microscope, and others were kept on task with the result that all achieved well in that lesson. Teachers know the targets set in students' individual education plans, and consider them when planning and organising the support teachers and assistants.
24. There is good use of different tasks with different degrees of challenge overall to meet the needs of all groups of students. Underachievers are identified very well, for example in humanities and art. In design and technology, there are special courses for the lower achievers, they are put into small groups and follow a GCSE short course. In science, names of candidates are displayed prominently. This is done so that students can recognise their potential as well as their targets. In comparison in modern languages and in some vocational courses, there is less evident support given to the lower achievers.
25. In the majority of subjects, teachers' style of teaching and their questioning techniques meet the needs of all students. In mathematics and humanities, this aspect of teaching is good and in design and technology and information and communication technology, it is very good. In history, questioning is used well to check previous learning. In religious education, questioning techniques are satisfactory, but in science, questions can be too general and not targeted sufficiently for students to understand the real point of questions. Most teachers effectively challenge stereotypes and stereotypical attitudes towards their subject, for example in religious education there is open and sensitive discussion of these issues.

26. The school identifies the gifted and talented students and their needs are met well through the teaching in a wide range of subjects. For example, in design and technology, these students are given more complex assignments and special projects. In science, they go to special scientific events. Art has an enrichment policy for these students and in history, geography, music and modern languages, they are given extension work.
27. The proportion of satisfactory or better teaching is higher than that reported at the last inspection. Many more very good and excellent lessons were observed. Strengths in areas such as teachers' subject knowledge, high expectations, effective planning and the quality of relationships have been retained and built upon in many subjects and this has had a good impact on students' learning.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

28. The school provides a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant at all age ranges, promoting a wide variety of learning opportunities. Students have good access to the curriculum and the school supports this well where necessary, as for example with the provision of individual instrumental tuition. The school has specialist Sports College status and is also part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. These support the school in giving emphasis to both vocational and academic courses as appropriate for individual students. Currently, the provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, particularly in Key Stage 3, mainly because of the split site accommodation this year. However, there has been much improvement since the last inspection and the school is planning to continue this in the future. The school provides some limited provision of religious education in the sixth form and follows the spirit of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
29. The school's curriculum provision is broad, balanced and relevant at Key Stage 3. All students study the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, dance, drama and personal and social education. The curriculum offers further breadth in providing an opportunity for some students in Year 9 to include German in their study of languages. The English curriculum receives an extra time allocation in order to concentrate on enhancing and reinforcing work on reading and writing skills. There is a lack of consistency in providing information and communication technology across the curriculum, mainly due to the need to provide resources on two sites and variations in the level of staff expertise. Across Years 7 to 9, students are placed in a full range of teaching groups such as sets, bands and mixed ability classes. This reflects departmental preferences as well as some staffing constraints and the challenge of a split site. The teacher with responsibility for students with English as an additional language works very hard and effectively to ensure that these students are put into the correct sets. Time allocation to subjects is broadly in line with national averages. Students receive good guidance in Year 9 as they make their option choices.
30. The breadth and relevance of the curriculum the students follow in Key Stage 4 is enhanced by additional GCSE subjects, vocational courses and certificates of achievement. Students are offered a good range of National Curriculum subjects including a choice within technology and a choice for those studying modern foreign languages, for example French and German. Some students with English as an additional language take GCSEs in their community language. Further choices include business studies, drama, dance, media studies and child development. Vocational courses offered lead to GNVQ units in business and health and social care and RSA Initial Awards. These courses are organised in association with Keighley College. The

school's position as a Sports College provides students with very good opportunities for participation in sport and as a consequence, the amount of time for physical education is above the national average. All students receive a tutorial programme that includes careers guidance plus two weeks on work experience. The careers department is well funded and managed and is a strength of the school, forging effective links with local colleges, local industries and training providers. The shortcomings in cross-curricular information and communication technology provision are still evident in Years 10 and 11 but this area for development is less marked than in Years 7, 8 and 9 and has improved since the last inspection. Humanities, including religious education, are a compulsory element for all students. Personal and social education is provided through a rolling weekly programme.

31. The courses provided in the sixth form are very flexible and offer a wide choice depending upon individual performance at GCSE. Those students studying academic courses select from a wide range of subjects that lead to GCE A-levels/AS-levels. They include English literature, mathematics and further mathematics, design and technology, French, German, history, geography, art, music, physical education, dance, computer studies, physics, chemistry, biology, sociology and media studies. Those students who opt for the vocational route of study, pursue an entry-level award or GNVQ at intermediate or advanced level in business and health and social care. These courses very successfully provide students with alternative routes to employment and both further and higher education. The range of courses offered is enhanced by the partnership with Keighley College, which supports the provision of A-levels such as psychology and law as well as vocational elements of the curriculum. These arrangements broaden the curriculum still further and exemplify very good relationships with partner institutions. All students receive a general studies and tutorial programme which includes careers education and guidance. The careers programme in Year 12 includes work experience; in Year 13 the majority consider options in higher education. The minority who move to employment are offered advice on career opportunities by the careers service. A social issues day is offered annually. The strength of the school's physical education provision enables games to be a compulsory element for all students in Year 12 and a comprehensive recreational sports programme is offered to all sixth-form students. Post-16 education within the school is an asset providing full inclusion for a wide range of academic abilities.
32. All students in the school follow a course in personal and social education. It contains all the elements expected from such a programme. Visiting speakers include the police liaison officer. The school nurse covers aspects of contraception. The formal policy on sex education reflects the Bradford Guidelines on Health Education. Whilst staff work very hard in terms of the overview of personal and social education, the development of this aspect of the curriculum is hampered by limited funding and the lack of systematic training in this area for all staff.
33. The curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is very good. Of particular merit is the high quality support of staff recruited as learning support assistants. The school provides a vocational curriculum for some of the older students with special educational needs at Key Stage 4. This is successful, although as a consequence, these students may not experience a modern foreign language or design and technology. Students with special educational needs are very well prepared for employment or the next stage of education, either in the school or in the local college, with whom there is very good liaison. The gifted and talented scheme is focused to promote excellence wherever there is potential to do so. There are seven co-ordinators in a range of subject areas promoting the development of this particular emphasis to the curriculum. The development is not yet consistent across all the areas

and in some lessons, teachers' planning does not take account of the needs of identified students. However, good progress has been made in enriching the curriculum on offer to these students, although currently much of it is outside of the normal curriculum time. The programme for the gifted and talented students provides very good enrichment extra-curricular activities. For example, dance runs extra weekend workshops on occasions. Art has provided two artists-in-residence sessions for GCSE students. A successful course in thinking skills was run for Year 8 students, and from the whole 'cluster', 48 students took part in a demanding leadership skills course in Cumbrian snow. The monitoring of these activities and the rate of participation by students is improving, as is the whole programme of activities for Years 7 and 8. Five other local schools are linked to this project in a 'cluster', allowing the students to benefit from contact with equally gifted and talented students from different areas and backgrounds. The Learning Support Unit at the school primarily focuses upon those students at risk of exclusion, or encouraging those who have been excluded back into school. The unit is designed to work in partnership with the student, parents/carers and where appropriate, outside agencies. The students' entitlement to the whole curriculum is paramount and the unit encourages students to overcome difficulties whilst remaining within the educational environment. In this it has had a great deal of success.

34. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, with excellent provision particularly in physical education and music. Sports College status helps to provide opportunities for girls' football, badminton, table-tennis, dance, inter-house five-a-side football, cycling as well as the more usual sporting activities. There is a comprehensive sixth-form recreational sports programme which involves off-site and accredited courses. The school possesses its own outdoor pursuits centre in Scotland which is used extensively, particularly from April to October. There are regular education visits abroad and a number of subject areas offer after-school study skill sessions. In music, there are extra-curricular instrument groups including flute, clarinet, saxophone and guitar. There is a string band and string group which rehearse and perform concerts and other musical events regularly. There is a junior choir of about 20 members. These groups provide links with other performing arts when annual productions take place.
35. Curriculum planning is good and schemes of work are detailed and helpful in guiding teaching and learning. There is a lack of consistency across the schemes in tackling whole-school issues such as literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology across the curriculum and provision for students' personal development.
36. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory but there are significant weaknesses in some areas. A lack of planning results in school assemblies and tutor time not being effectively used to promote students' spiritual development. Whilst some tutors do try to use the tutor time positively, there is considerable variation in the way in which it is used. The school does not comply with the legal requirements for a daily act of worship.
37. Subjects such as religious education, music and history include material which promotes spiritual development. A Year 10 class explored the awe and wonder that can be experienced through the music of the harp. In a drama class, a teacher effectively used the light of a candle to create an atmosphere of tranquillity and reflection. Religious education provides students with an awareness and understanding of the beliefs of others. A Year 7 class considered the importance of the five K's for Sikhs. Other subjects have not carefully audited their provision for this aspect and much that happens does so by default rather than by design. Consequently, opportunities are missed. The provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

38. The school ethos promotes good moral development. The teachers provide good role models for students to follow. In the main, relationships are non-confrontational and supportive, with students being provided with a framework of values which helps them apply the principles of right and wrong. This is reinforced in many subjects. Examples can be found in a variety of curriculum areas. In a Year 10 humanities lesson, students were sensitively considering the question of prejudice and persecution. The school policy on such matters as bullying and racism is constantly reinforced through the programme of personal and social education. The provision for moral development is good.
39. Opportunities for social development can be found throughout the school. A good example can be found in the sixth form where students are trained to play a leading role as peer counsellors in the personal and social education course. Students are encouraged to work in pairs and groups in a number of subjects. The physical education department makes a very good contribution to both the moral and social development of the students. They are taught co-operation, fair play and sportsmanship through the frequent pair and group work in lessons and in the many teams, clubs and practices. Talented students are encouraged to join local clubs and they are further supported by the regional initiative. Social development is reinforced through a wide range of activities that encourage participation and involvement in the school community, but a formal consultative body such as a school council, is not provided to increase the opportunities available to students. Several subjects include course material that encourages students to examine relevant social issues and the school is actively involved in several local community projects such as the Clock Tower project. Students with special educational needs make very good progress in their social development, becoming confident young adults. The provision for social development is good.
40. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. In subjects such as music, art and humanities, students have opportunities to study their cultural heritage and that of others. In English, there are many occasions when students tackle literature which is drawn from a range of cultures. Students in Year 10 humanities examine the Brazilian culture. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including trips to European countries, broaden students' horizons. Religious education includes material from all the major religions and both art and music draw examples from other cultures. Although the school acknowledges the diversity of local communities, opportunities are missed to fully celebrate the festivals and customs that are part of those traditions.
41. Since the last inspection there has been considerable improvement of the curriculum on offer to the students. Most of the issues have been tackled, some more successfully than others. Movement to one site will help the provision of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Schemes of work and other whole-school policies do not identify where the opportunities for students' spiritual and cultural development are to be provided.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students are satisfactory. There is good educational guidance. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and assessing students' attainment and progress are also good. The support for students who have statements of special educational needs is very good.
43. The school has a clearly laid out code of conduct and its rules are well understood and heeded by the majority of the students. They are fully aware of the consequences of

their actions. During the previous inspection, behaviour management was commended, this good feature has been sustained. Evidence of its cumulative effectiveness is confirmed by a careful scrutiny of the school's exclusion records. These show that the frequency of violent acts or abuse towards adults has reduced over time. The heads of year stay with their year groups from Year 7 through to Year 11, this helps to ensure that trust and confidence develop. This is beneficial to the students who are provided with stability and security in their relationships. When students have to be removed from a lesson, they are invited to spend time in a well-run unit. This, together with other support arrangements, combine to hold in school students who might otherwise become disaffected. When students return to school after a period of temporary exclusion, their re-entry is carefully managed with the involvement of parents when necessary. Students are given every opportunity to redeem themselves by reflecting on their actions.

44. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. There are two fully trained members of staff who work together to ensure that students are protected from harm. The information parents receive about the school's policies does not include details about school policy for child protection and no recent formal whole-staff training has been undertaken. The school nurse, first aid staff and attendance assistants are alert to the welfare needs of students. Training has been given to ensure that students with specific physical conditions are well cared for.
45. When the last inspection took place, the monitoring of students' academic performance and personal development was an area identified for development. Some subjects have made good progress in both monitoring students' standards and progress and providing specific targets against which further progress is measured, for example in design and technology and art, but it is not consistent across the school. The evaluation of work against National Curriculum levels is not consistent across the school, although some departments, for example design and technology, science and information and communication technology, use the outcomes well. This helps students to make sensible choices when planning their careers.
46. The assessment of students with special educational needs is very good. Students are tested regularly to ensure that their individual need matches the progress they are making. This high quality support enables students to be removed from the register as soon as their need has been realised. This boosts their confidence and academic performance throughout the remainder of the time they spend in school, including, on occasions, sixth-form studies. The very good records of test results for these students makes it possible for teachers to evaluate the progress they are achieving and for appropriate consultation to take place with support staff and parents.
47. The school provides well for the needs of students of all abilities including those who have a gift in academic subjects or a talent for art, music or sporting excellence. Girls and boys are treated equally. Physical education is taught in separate gender groups, thus enabling all students to participate irrespective of their religious beliefs. During the week of the inspection, the school made arrangements to take into account Eid celebrations. Some members of staff discussed its relevance with students at registration periods, thus helping students develop a proper understanding and respect for other beliefs. This was not tackled consistently across tutor groups and there is insufficient guidance to staff in the planning of the celebration of the diversity of the whole-school community.
48. Some parents expressed worries about bullying in the school. There are incidents of this nature but they are managed well. During the inspection, several incidents of wilful

disobedience were observed in the classrooms. Teachers handled these incidents well. The removal system is used on occasions when a cooling-off period is deemed appropriate. The use of foul and abusive language is not tolerated and when this happens, the school telephones home to insist that the student repeats what was said. Teachers could cite several incidents where this approach had secured a beneficial effect. Incidents of racism within the school are well monitored. These incidents are not referred to the local education authority for regional monitoring. Most incidents take the form of verbal abuse. The school has also recorded several incidents that occurred outside the school. The school has dealt very well with these incidents and works very well with external agencies in such cases.

49. The school's procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. The work of the attendance assistants is effective, although the electronic registration system is unreliable. Consequently, this slows down the speed with which information about attendance can be collated. There is good rapport with parents who are contacted by telephone and by home visits. When a student's whereabouts is not known, every effort is made to locate the individual and to collaborate with parents and guardians to ensure safety. Support is provided by education social workers, current funding difficulties have reduced the time available to support the school and some momentum has been lost in recent weeks.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is satisfactory. It works hard to involve parents in all aspects of their children's education.
51. Parents have essentially positive views about the school. Of the 313 responses of parents made to the pre-inspection questionnaire, there is strong agreement from the majority that their child likes school, is making good progress and is expected to work hard. The vast majority feel that the teaching is good and would feel comfortable about approaching school with a question or problem. They mostly agree that the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible and provides an interesting range of activities. A significant minority expressed some concerns about behaviour, the amount of homework students receive, the lack of information about how their child was progressing and whether the school was well led or managed. Inspection findings support this mainly positive picture. Inspectors support the view that more information could be provided to parents about how their child was progressing and ways in which they can help their child's learning. Inspectors found that behaviour was satisfactory, although pockets of misbehaviour were found, it was not exclusively as parents feared in one particular year group. The intention of the leadership and management to raise standards is strong and in a period of considerable challenge, has been good.
52. The range of school events such as information and consultation evenings are well attended by parents, as are social events when organised. The Friends of Oakbank have organised events to raise funds and support the school. A small group of parents has met to discuss such issues as bullying, induction evenings, parental use of planners and gifted and talented students. Some parents assist with providing transport for students to external events such as inter-school football matches. The governing body, staff and students appreciate the work put in by parents.
53. The impact of initiatives and the involvement in the work of school by parents are satisfactory. The quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory. Parents receive quarterly a good quality newsletter which keeps them well informed of the activities and successes of the school. Consultation meetings provide good

opportunities for parents to meet teachers to discuss their child's progress and option arrangements when they need to be made. Written reports to parents spell out clearly what pupils are achieving academically and where appropriate, levels of achievement and how they need to improve. Parents do need more information on what the levels their children have achieved mean and how to assist with helping their children to improve their work. The parents of children with special educational needs are appropriately involved with all reviews, including annual reviews. The school has consulted parents extensively about many aspects of the re-organisation, although on some issues such as school blazers, some were not happy with the final decision.

54. The use of students' planners to record homework and pass information to parents was satisfactory during the inspection. Some new parents indicated that they are accustomed to planners being used more systematically and consistently as a means of home-school communication. They have not been used consistently since September across the whole school as a medium for improving home-school communication and relationships. The school goes out to members of the ethnic minority communities, either to homes direct or by using facilities provided by organisations such as the Bangladeshi Community Association. Through these facilities, it encourages families, for example, to support their children doing homework. The school contacts parents when necessary in respect of their child's absence or truancy. The attendance assistants and other staff work well with the vast majority of parents and there is evidence of both the parents' appreciation of the efforts of the school and that the efforts are having a positive effect on raising levels of attendance and reducing truancy. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory.
55. The school has begun an ambitious programme of improving its links with the community. It has already started its out-of-hours provision for its cluster primary schools with school sports, which includes help from a local Premier League Football Club. It supports gifted and talented athletes and intends to offer summer camps for sport and outdoor activities for local children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good; together they share a clear commitment to raising standards and the quality of education provided. They have achieved this quality despite the difficulties arising from local reorganisation, recruitment and redeployment of staff and a major building programme. It is against this difficult background that the school's progress in relation to the key issues raised by the previous inspection should be judged. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, a substantial minority of parents expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with leadership and management. The inspectors' overall judgement does not support this minority parental view.
57. There has been a considerable drive to improve literacy, but English examination results have not improved appreciably and the school has yet to introduce a whole-school literacy policy. The plans for introducing a whole-school numeracy policy are due to be implemented this year. Although there has been only limited improvement in attendance levels, the school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are beginning to bear fruit. The quality of whole-school development planning is good. The school improvement plan is linked appropriately to raising standards and the change of status to an 11 to 19 school. The plan carefully identifies priorities appropriate to the needs of the school and builds well upon the findings of the previous inspection.

58. The quality of management of curriculum areas is variable. It is good in English, mathematics, design and technology, art, music, humanities, information and communication technology, science and physical education. It is least satisfactory in modern foreign languages, and in the overall management of personal, health and social education. The quality of management of the special needs provision is very good. Classroom assistants are deployed effectively and subject teachers are well informed of students' needs. Changes in the lines of responsibility in the senior management team this year have caused some discontinuity in links with middle management. This lack of continuity is partly responsible for a lack of consistency across the school in the implementation of some school policies. The linking of whole-school and departmental planning has improved, but the quality of linkage is variable. There has been an increase in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Full-scale reviews have been carried out in the English, mathematics, science and modern language departments. It is too early yet to determine whether they have had a significant effect on raising standards. Reviews are planned for the remaining departments. In the meantime, they conduct their own internal reviews with varying degrees of thoroughness. Standards achieved in the classroom are now monitored and evaluated more precisely, although more could still be done to disseminate good practice from the more successful departments. Strategies for the teaching of gifted and talented students are being developed in most departments; this is an emerging strength of the school. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is good. A performance management policy has been negotiated with staff and confirmed by governors. Over three-quarters of the staff have already had planning meetings and agreed their targets.
59. The school's vision and aims are comprehensive and appropriate. The mission statement, 'To work together to provide the best opportunity for all our students', informs all planning and decision-making. The aims and values that spring from this mission statement are generally well implemented. Good working relationships between staff and students, and between students and the very good provision for students with special educational needs, are all positive features. The presence of high quality displays, often of students' work, helps create an environment conducive to learning in school buildings of differing quality. There is more to do in developing students' opportunities for spiritual and cultural development. Teachers are sensitive to students' individual circumstances and needs. There is detailed analysis of results.
60. The governors are well informed about the school through the information given by the headteacher and regular meetings of the full governing body and its subcommittees. They hold the school to account and act appropriately through being actively involved in proposals from an early stage. They invite staff to their meetings to give presentations about their subject areas, but individual governors are not formally linked to departments. Appropriate provision is made for the specific responsibilities related to special educational needs and health and safety. They are anxious for the school to improve and are supporting the headteacher strongly in implementing the changes necessary for a successful transition to the new status under reorganisation. All the staff share this commitment to improvement. Governors carefully monitor finance, staffing, examination results and progress with the action plan from the previous inspection. The governing body meets its duties in relation to the majority of statutory requirements, but does not comply with the law in relation to collective worship. There has been some improvement in the provision for the teaching of information and communication technology across the curriculum, but weaknesses remain in this area. The good management of the school noted at the last inspection has been maintained in very challenging circumstances.

61. The finance officer manages the school's budget very efficiently. Expenditure is monitored monthly by the headteacher and the finance officer and every half term by the finance sub-committee of the governing body. Consequently, financial control is secure, the management of general funds and designated grants is very good and expenditure against them is very effectively recorded. This shows clearly that designated grants are used properly for their specific purposes. The school makes effective use of a computerised management system. This includes the SIMS finance module, which has only recently been introduced, but which now supports the management of the finances. The school has a very thorough procedure to help in getting best value for any expenditure especially on services. The unit cost per pupil is well below average and the school provides very good value for money.
62. The special needs department is very well managed. There is an additional special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) for the lower school site, who has full responsibility for those students. There is a very clear rationale to the allocation of support assistants, which is to first meet the assigned needs of the statemented students and then to allocate where the need is greatest in subject lessons. The SENCOs recognise the need for flexibility in the system to meet the changing needs of the individuals. The policy is excellent, with detail that adds to the understanding of the needs of these students. Termly reviews ensure that targets are set to meet the current needs of these students. The annual reviews of those students with statements are carried out in accordance with the Code of Practice. There has been a considerable improvement in the area of special educational needs since the time of the last report, with the exception of making individual education plans subject-specific. There are good practices within the school which could be disseminated, for example specific targets related to individual education plans in the planning of physical education teachers.
63. The school has a sufficient quantity of experienced and suitably qualified staff to enable it to meet satisfactorily the demands of a broad and balanced curriculum. Relatively few teachers teach outside their area of expertise and in recent years there has been a small turnover of staff, making for stability. Some subjects such as physical education benefit from a high level of teacher expertise. The school also benefits from a large number of support and administrative staff who are generally well deployed, for example in information and communication technology. The number and expertise of support staff working with students with special educational needs contribute to the good progress in learning made by many of these students. There are several newly qualified teachers in the school and they receive satisfactory levels of support, enabling them to develop their own professional skills well. The professional development of staff as a whole is good: it is tied closely to the developmental priorities identified by the school. Arrangements for performance management are securely in place. In contrast, some supply teachers do not receive sufficient support and consequently, a minority experience problems of discipline in the classroom.
64. The previous Ofsted inspection found that staffing was good. Since then, one of the biggest challenges facing the school has been the effective induction of new staff, and in particular, the effective integration of staff from the existing two sites. Support staff on one site have already had the opportunity to shadow their opposites on the other. Plans are in place for teaching staff to develop their skills on both sites, so that teachers who have previously had only experience of middle schools or of a 13 to 19 school will develop the expertise to teach across the entire 11 to 16 or 11 to 19 age range.

65. The school's accommodation contains several strengths and weaknesses, although it is satisfactory overall. Accommodation is excellent in physical education and contributes to good standards. It is good in information and communication technology. There are differences in the quality of accommodation between the two school sites. The previous inspection report found that accommodation was sufficient and that it was used well. It is expected that when the accommodation is consolidated on one site many of the existing discrepancies will be resolved.
66. The school's learning resources are satisfactory overall, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The extensive facilities for physical education which have been improved since the school gained Sports College status have a positive impact on learning, for example, when the students use the table-tennis and astro-turf facilities. They are very good for those students following courses in information and communication technology, but there is less provision of computers for use in information and communication technology across the curriculum. Resources for students with special educational needs and for personal, social and health education are inadequate. The library is a good learning resource, although the library stock is not extensive. On-site resources are effectively supplemented by those elsewhere, such as the study centre in Scotland.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. The governors should include in their post-inspection action plan the way in which they are going to respond to the following issues in order to raise standards in the school. The governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Improve the standards achieved in modern foreign languages, English and mathematics by:
- all departments successfully adopting the strategies that they have identified and where appropriate, using ones already trialled by the more successful departments to raise standards.

Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 24, 68, 69, 84, 86, 139, 140

- (2) Adopt and implement a whole school-strategy for literacy by:
- a whole-school agreement as to ways in which standards in literacy can be raised and a determined effort across all subjects to successfully put them into practice.

Paragraphs 7, 20, 56, 77, 101, 134, 157

- (3) Improve the consistency across all departments and years by which whole-school policies and initiatives are implemented, for example assessment, homework, information and communication technology and opportunities for spiritual and cultural development by:
- agreeing on policies and by more consistent and rigorous evaluation of students' experiences in the classroom in relation to them by clarifying the roles of middle and senior managers in the process and including progress towards them as performance management targets.

Paragraphs 19, 22, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 44, 46, 52, 57, 58, 65, 91, 127, 130, 138, 145, 169

- (4) Raise levels of attendance and reduce the incidence of exclusions.

Paragraphs 10, 11, 15

- (5) Meet statutory requirements in respect of collective worship by:

- providing for this daily in assemblies and tutor periods.

Paragraphs 35, 59

THE LEARNING SUPPORT UNIT

68. The unit is very well managed and organised. Its purpose is to improve the attendance and behaviour of students who are at risk of exclusion and to encourage attendance from students who have been excluded in the past. The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory, and in half the lessons seen, it was good or very good. Behaviour management is fundamental to the inclusion of these students and it is very well used. Students take the opportunity to explore issues and their own feelings and values. Within the unit, there are high expectations of good behaviour, and with constant reminders, students respond, and behaviour is generally good. Relationships are good and students view the unit as a haven where they can achieve without undue pressure. They take great pride in their work and make good progress. The unit and subject teachers liaise well to ensure that students have sufficient relevant work to move them on in their learning. This was seen when students settled quickly to prepare their folders for external moderation using the unit's and departmental resources to best advantage. In this moderation, the students achieved high standards. The success of the unit to the students in the unit is measured by those students who state that without this facility they would be unlikely to attend school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	213
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	69

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	29	38	22	5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1616	262
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	298	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	62	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	303	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	169

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	59

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	184	164	348

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	83	120	118
	Girls	110	94	89
	Total	193	214	207
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (72)	62 (61)	59 (56)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (26)	33 (31)	31 (20)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	120	109	79
	Girls	131	90	73
	Total	251	199	152
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	73 (58)	58 (53)	44 (53)
	National	64 (64)	64 (66)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (18)	33 (24)	19 (26)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	203	146	349

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	80	155	175
	Girls	68	130	136
	Total	148	285	311
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	42 (33)	82 (81)	89 (90)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	32
	National	38.4

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	38	65.8
	National		N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	2000	34	36	70

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	15.5	16.5	16.0	0	3.9	3.0
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	19	89.5
	National		73.2

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	N/a
	National		76.5

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	95
Bangladeshi	68
Chinese	0
White	1703
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	11	1
Bangladeshi	1	1
Chinese	0	0
White	31	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	111.92
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	55
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1445

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 2	
Key Stage 3	23.8
Key Stage 4	20.8

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3,404,804
Total expenditure	3,506,779
Expenditure per pupil	2,756.90
Balance brought forward from previous year	526,105
Balance carried forward to next year	424,130

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1878
Number of questionnaires returned	313

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	54	12	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	34	58	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	44	16	5	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	57	18	7	2
The teaching is good.	22	63	4	2	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	54	20	7	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	51	8	3	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	48	4	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	15	49	24	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	19	48	14	6	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	53	12	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	44	6	4	9

Other issues raised by parents

Parents commented on the impact of the local education authority re-organisation and their perception of differences between the school's two sites, especially in relation to behaviour.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

69. Results in national tests for 14-year-olds were below average in 2000 and not as good as 1999, when average, and 1998 when above average. Boys' performances are lower than the girls' and to a greater extent than that reported nationally. In 2000, the school's statutory teacher assessments for both boys and girls were higher than the actual results achieved and show a low correlation with their National Curriculum test results.
70. The percentage of students achieving grades A* to C in GCSE English has declined since a peak in 1998. In 2000, standards were below average in both English and English literature. The latest figures need to be seen in the context of a new department policy, introduced in 1999, which encourages examination entry for a greater number of students for both these subjects than before. There has also been a significant rise in the A*-B grades in both subjects. Literature results in 2000 were better than in any of the last four years. Boys' results improved on the previous year and were very similar to those achieved by girls in the school, but students' results in English were not as high as the results they achieved in their other subjects.
71. Standards in the sixth form are average. There was a 100 per cent A-E pass rate in 2000, but the percentage of students awarded the higher grades A-B in 2000 was well below the figures for the past four years. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Poor attendance by some students in Year 13 and a staffing problem at the same time have been identified by the school as possible causes for the lower than usual examination results.
72. Attainment seen in the inspection at the end of Year 9 is below average but students make satisfactory progress in relation to their earlier attainment. Initially almost half of Year 9 needed reminding and had to practise their basic skills frequently. Higher attaining students in Year 9 are now starting to adapt their style effectively to the audience and purpose of their writing and to develop their critical and analytical skills, particularly when writing about literature, but even these students have difficulty incorporating quotations into their essays. By the end of Year 9, most students have produced a piece of extended writing and all know the difference between standard and non-standard English forms. In Years 7 and 8, students of all abilities make satisfactory progress in both the accuracy and the presentation of their work. The recently introduced extra English classes in basic writing skills in these years are developing students' greater knowledge about the rules, structures and conventions of successful writing and are helping to give them the confidence to write in a variety of different forms. Lower attaining students can write simple stories, descriptions, interview questions and diary entries, whilst higher attaining students show a growing willingness to use complex sentences and are able to attempt successfully a much wider range of writing, including play scripts, letters, advertisements and newspaper articles.
73. Attainment seen during the inspection at the end of Year 11 is below average but students make satisfactory progress in relation to their earlier attainment. Students' coursework folders and books show a wide variety of writing, discursive and argumentative, creative and original, as well as responses to media, Shakespeare and other literature texts. There is also a general improvement in the presentation and accuracy of writing and most students are able to use word processing skills to plan,

draft and write their coursework. The quality of the writing varies considerably between the fluent, lively and mature, written by those who have a good vocabulary and the ability to develop and illustrate argument and ideas, against the simple, less technically accurate and largely narrative style of the lower attaining students. Students in the higher sets are able to make useful notes in their lessons and marginal notes in texts without being prompted by their teachers. However, many students of all abilities have difficulties with the analysis of literature texts, frequently offering paraphrases rather than the incisive comments on the effect of a writer's language or imagery which are required for high grades.

74. In both key stages, students with special educational needs make good progress and because of good support from teachers and support assistants, some of them are able to produce writing of a sufficient standard to be entered for GCSE English and, in few cases, English literature.
75. Attainment in the sixth form is average. Coursework and other writing in the sixth form is done conscientiously and thoroughly. Students usually express themselves clearly, take care with the accuracy and presentation of their writing and have a good vocabulary. By the time they enter Year 13, most are able to analyse literary techniques but some still place an undue emphasis on plot and characters, occasionally seeing them as real events and people. The result is that they find themselves writing about what happens in a play or novel rather than investigating the writer's themes and style, and thus fail to develop fully the analytical skills which will earn them the top grades.
76. Reading comprehension varies considerably over all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 3, most can follow simple instructions, including those in external examination papers, and make some inferences and predictions based on their reading of fiction, media and other non-fiction texts. All students are given many opportunities to read for enjoyment and to read aloud in class; most readily volunteer, both boys and girls, regardless of ability, and are listened to patiently and helped by the rest of the class, if necessary. In Years 7 to 11, students have a personal reading log in which they record what they have read. Some teachers, particularly at Key Stage 3, have adopted the good strategy of allowing up to ten minutes silent reading at the beginning of lessons since the introduction of the new literacy initiative last year. This practice is not yet consistent across the department, neither has the keeping of reading logs been extended to the sixth form to track and encourage their wider reading. There is also a very useful Year 9 individual reading project, undertaken by all students with a good degree of success, which requires them to read and then write on a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Students' research skills are also tested within this project and are further developed by the information and communication technology development.
77. As a result of departmental targeting, standards of speaking and listening are higher than those in writing and reading and show improvement since the last inspection. Students are given a wide range of opportunities and all are taught and can quote the ground rules for successful group work. Most are able to use talk to problem solve, negotiate, share and extend ideas and make collective decisions, and to use discussion to develop and consolidate learning at all stages. One strength of their group work is that students of all abilities usually listen carefully to each other and work collaboratively, whether discussing Macbeth's motives for killing his king, or assessing the symbolic significance of Stephen Blackpool in Dickens's *Hard Times*. Students in all years are also able to evaluate their own and others' performances in groups and presentations and to make positive and constructive criticism which will help improvement. The supportive atmosphere which exists in most lessons is helping all to make effective progress.

78. Standards of literacy are low on entry to the school. The department has recently had some training in teaching literacy and has adopted strategies to improve this situation, but standards remain below average across many subjects. There has been too little progress in the development of a whole-school policy and many departments are still unsure how to support the work done in English. Although many of the more gifted students have few difficulties with literacy, and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive appropriate support and targeted teaching, large numbers of students, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4, are not making as much progress as they should. Good contributions to the standards of literacy are made in humanities and music, and they are appropriate in science but they are inconsistent in other subjects.
79. Most students have positive attitudes and are effective learners by the time they reach Year 11. They are co-operative, willing to participate fully in lessons and want to do well, although there is sometimes an over-reliance on teachers as providers of knowledge and resources at all levels of ability and key stages, including the sixth form. There are some opportunities for them to develop as independent learners through discussion, research and project work, but such opportunities, especially for the middle and lower ability sets, are not common. Students' learning is helped by the good guidance they receive through teachers' marking. Comments are usually positive and encouraging and tell students what they must do to improve. The quality of short-term improvement target setting at Key Stage 3 is good as is that of the individual goals and action planning for students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, which are based on their performance in the earlier tests and examinations. Their learning also benefits from activities including theatre trips, the visits of theatre groups and outside speakers, the GCSE Poetry Conference, participation in National Poetry Day and World Book Day and lunchtime drama, creative writing and GCSE revision sessions.
80. Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. In 32 per cent of lessons it is very good or excellent. Teachers have a good command of their subject and are committed to helping students make the maximum progress. Generally, teachers' expectations are high, lessons are well planned, appropriate resources are provided and homework is used to reinforce and develop learning. In the most successful lessons, teachers often make good use of the students themselves as valuable learning resources, drawing upon their own experiences and knowledge, and building upon them. Teachers also use a wide range of strategies and teaching styles to stimulate students to progress. Particular strengths lie in the use of praise, the good questioning to challenge and guide students' understanding, good classroom management to keep students on task and an awareness that students have different learning styles, needs and concentration spans and therefore the need for some flexibility in lesson planning. However, in several lessons, the needs of the gifted and talented were not always fully met because extension activities were neither identified in schemes of work nor in teachers' planning.
81. It is good departmental practice to make clear the lesson objectives at the beginning of lessons and to draw together what has been achieved at the end to consolidate learning. However, lesson objectives are sometimes a summary of what is to be done rather than what is to be learned. In a few lessons, the challenge for the students is inappropriate and occasionally, students are asked to attempt assignments without being fully aware of the complexity of the task.
82. Leadership in the department is good. There is a full understanding of present and future needs and appropriate action planning, particularly for the improvement of students' GCSE grades. The timetabling of much of the second in department's

teaching on the top site enables appropriate and effective monitoring and support to be available there.

83. Teaching overall has improved. The composition of teaching sets has been reviewed and the policy changed to ensure that students are provided with work and activities suited to their abilities, wherever possible. Curriculum opportunities have been improved with a greater number of students now entered for both English and English literature at Key Stage 4, and the study of Shakespeare introduced in Year 8. Strategies have been introduced to develop and support reading and to overcome 'low standards of oracy', and the needs of the least able are now effectively met through the planning and close co-operation between teachers and support assistants.

MATHEMATICS

84. In 2000, results in the national tests for 14-year-olds were average compared with all schools and with similar schools. The results overall show a slight incremental improvement since 1997 and are an improvement since the last inspection.
85. GCSE results at A*-C in 2000 were below average but the percentage of A*-G grades was close to the national average. The numbers entered for GCSE is below average but improving. However, entry levels for boys remain particularly low. The overall results during the past three years are similar and in line with the results at the last inspection.
86. All who sat A-level mathematics, including further mathematics, achieved pass grades A-E and these included two students who gained passes at grades A-B. All students who took the AS-level achieved pass grades between A and D. The number of students who sit A-levels varies from year to year, overall the numbers are relatively low and statistical comparisons are inappropriate.
87. Standards seen in the inspection at the end of Year 9 are average; in some high attaining groups they are well above average. For example, students in a Year 9 class confidently dealt with the introduction of trigonometry. They independently spotted connections and understood that the Pythagorean theory might be used to discover links with certain trigonometrical identities normally used in A-level mathematics. In a Year 7 class, students' understanding of three-dimensional shapes was impressive. They spontaneously used technical language such as 'faces', 'sides' and 'angles' and could recognise and classify a range of shapes. They linked ideas by association and were articulate when discussing mathematics. Whilst in some higher attaining groups, standards are above average, overall standards at the end of Year 11 are below average. This is generally related to a lack of application by students and insufficient challenge in the work for them to attain well. An example of this was the use of a computer program where the number work was relatively unchallenging and failed to engage the attention or interest of the students. In Year 13, and more particularly in Year 12, students represent a fairly wide range of ability. The four students in the Year 13 further mathematics group have gained grades A and B in the main module tests for aspects of their A-level studies, this is well above average. The students' understanding of work is secure and the quantity of work seen in books covering calculus, trigonometrical relationships and complex numbers was impressive and of good quality.
88. Students with special educational needs were well provided for with appropriate lesson programmes. Support assistants work well within lessons and students enjoy and anticipate their support, and make good progress. This was clear in one Year 9 class where all students by the end of the lesson had technically mastered the linking of percentages, fractions and decimals. Elsewhere, in a Year 11 high attaining set, the

students studied the connections between theoretical and experimental probability. At the conclusion of the lesson, in response to questioning, they were successfully able to articulate any variation of results between theory and practice and grasped the reasons why this was so.

89. The quality of the teaching was good and examples of very good teaching were observed. In the best lessons, preparation is good, students are involved in open discussion, the starting point being their own knowledge and praise is given to appropriate participation. Time is invariably well managed with appropriate changes in lesson development as the topic unfolds. Teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of the subject, specifically in terms of how students best learn. In one particular lower attaining Year 11 set, the work focused upon drawing curved line graphs. The lesson began from first principles and the difficulties of squaring values using negative numbers was anticipated well and any resultant issues effectively covered.
90. The students work very hard because of effective teacher-student relationships and supportive individual teaching. In the few instances where teaching was unsatisfactory, the lessons were generally characterised by a teacher-dominated and textbook-driven presentation. In one such instance, the classroom style clearly replaced teaching with instruction, student participation became largely passive, or when active, was only a response to closed questioning. The lesson failed to capture the interest of the students, they wasted time in idle chat and progress overall was impaired by the weak presentation. Teaching at A-level is good. In one instance, in Year 12, the lesson was very carefully tailored to the needs of the students. This was because the class included a wide range of ability which imposed issues upon both students and teacher, relative to style, pace and presentation of work. However, the topic of growth functions was understood because it was explained thoroughly with reference to previous knowledge and understanding. Effective teacher-student dialogue took place which underpinned the emerging confidence of most of the students and supported the eventual aim of a greater level of independent study. This independence is displayed with Year 13 where a more informal style of teaching is in evidence.
91. Most books are frequently marked but often lack appropriate comments on how improvements may be achieved. In many instances, a greater insistence on detailed note-taking would ensure that the exercise books become more useful for revision purposes. This remains particularly true for the higher attaining students.
92. The large department is effectively managed with appropriate delegation of responsibility. The department has much strength, in particular a core of talented and committed teachers. Preparation of initiatives is well advanced and includes the National Numeracy Strategy and information and communication technology; both having been adequately researched and resourced. These initiatives are currently underdeveloped or inconsistently implemented in the school. Most mathematics lessons have an element of time devoted to numeracy but it is not sufficiently formalised. In addition, the assessment, recording and target setting of students are insufficiently developed, in particular communication of the information to students and making this a very real part of their learning programme. The department's priority to improve GCSE results to match those gained in the national tests at age 14 has resulted in a strategy of laying additional emphasis on the coursework element. This is clearly of value and is underpinned by additional support during the lunchtime sessions. In all these respects, the head of department provides a good role model

with her interest clearly based upon the students' needs. The department is therefore well poised to successfully carry forward these initiatives, to continue to improve and to meet the new challenges of the new school.

Numeracy across the curriculum

93. There is no centrally co-ordinated numeracy strategy across the curriculum. In science, graphs were used to display data logging and were accompanied by a discussion of suitability of scales. Students also calculated moments of a force, where the values were restricted to whole numbers. The use of statistics is evident in geography, with examples of scatter diagrams and comparison of data, and in Years 12 and 13, more advanced statistical processes are required, but geography staff are not confident of teaching the technique themselves. Overall, numeracy is less developed than is found in many school geography departments. Measuring, counting and recording are frequently encountered in the physical education curriculum. This is shown in terms of pulse rates in health and fitness work and A-level students make full use of diagrams and graphs for representational purposes when recording data results. However, the physical education teachers do not promote numerical skills as a subject strategy and opportunities to support the development of skills of numeracy are missed.

SCIENCE

94. Standards in science are rising at all key stages in public examinations. Since 1997, the attainment of students by the end of Year 9 has been close to all schools and in line with improvements nationally. In 2000, results for 14-year-olds were in line with those nationally in all schools for those attaining as expected or better. The school's results were above average for those achieving above the national expectations. When compared with similar schools, 2000 results are better, the percentage of students attaining the national expectation was above average and those attaining above the national expectation, well above. This is a significant improvement on previous years and on standards reported at the last inspection.
95. Standards by the end of Year 11 have also improved since the last inspection. Taking the results at GCSE overall, the proportion of students attaining the higher A*-C grades has shown an upward trend, but this disguises considerable differences in the attainment of students in the different science courses. The group of students taking three separate science subjects had until 2000 produced results considerably below those attained nationally. The reduction in the number of these students to one group had a marked improvement in attainment in 2000, where all students taking the three subjects attained the higher grades A*-C. These results are above those attained nationally for all schools. Prior to 2000, results for double award science were also significantly below all results nationally. With the increased number of students taking this course in 2000, results were well above those attained for all schools. Results for the small group of students taking the single award science in 2000 were well below those attained nationally, but the progress made by these students was good in relation to earlier attainment. The department has done much work to analyse results in public examinations and identify areas where improvement could take place. This has led to strategies such as displaying marks of students in the various components of the GCSE course in the top three groups. This gives students the opportunity to develop a clearer understanding of their attainment and opportunities to discuss with their teachers' areas for improvement.
96. At A-level over the last three years, students have attained almost a 100 per cent pass rate at grades A-E in the three science subjects. In 2000, the percentage of students achieving the higher grades A-B was above the national figure in physics and below in chemistry and biology. The number of students taking these subjects fluctuates from year to year but is increasing in all subjects.

97. Attainment in lessons reflects the results of public examinations. By the end of Year 9, the attainment in lessons is in line with national expectations. As all students in the younger years are new to the school, a certain amount of consolidation of previously covered work has been needed this year, a situation which will improve in future years. Students entering the school in Year 7 show a good understanding of scientific technical language, such as that associated with sexual reproduction, and are able to use this prior knowledge to develop understanding of the detailed functions of the reproductive organs. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection where subject knowledge was less well developed in students entering the school, with many students lacking basic knowledge. In the GCSE groups, attainment was average in three-quarters of the lessons observed. In the groups containing students working for GCSE in three separate sciences, or for the higher level in double award science, attainment was above average. At A-level, within each group, there was considerable variation in attained levels, but taken as a whole, attainment is in line with the course expectation in all three science subjects.
98. Students make satisfactory progress in science. When their interest is captured by stimulating teaching, the progress they make is good. A demonstration of lasers to a higher attaining group was used effectively to consolidate and extend students' understanding of the laws of reflection and refraction so that they progressed well. Achievement below that expected occurs when higher attaining students are not challenged intellectually by the tasks set for them, such as cutting and pasting, and so progress is not as good as it should be. Lower attaining students make good progress if teaching allows them to make small but attainable steps in learning. Students with special educational needs achieve well when they are helped by support assistants or are given specific work matched to their needs, such as easy to read work-sheets or sheets to complete. Those students for whom English is an additional language are helped to achieve by placing them in groups above their assessed level. This challenges them to achieve above expectations. Students respond well to science and behaviour is generally good, particularly during practical sessions. However, there is a significant minority present in some classes who try to dominate the lesson and prevent others from learning effectively.
99. The quality of teaching is good across all three key stages. In over half the lessons teaching was good and occasionally very good. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson, this is an improvement since the last inspection. Those very good lessons seen were predominantly in the sixth form and with a GCSE group. These lessons were characterised by teachers using their very secure subject knowledge to present information in different and challenging ways. This allowed students to learn effectively and develop understanding, as for example, A-level students learning about reactions of organic chemicals through a series of practical activities, or researching data on planets using the Internet.
100. The good lessons all have similar features; teachers set and maintain a good pace, give a variety of tasks, both practical and written, to illustrate the topic and they expect a high standard of behaviour and application to work. The aims of the lessons are shared with students and a quick revision of previously covered work is used as an introduction. When teachers make it clear to students what is expected of them, then the majority respond well and want to work. Sometimes the organisation of the lessons and practical sessions is hampered by the layout of the older accommodation, which in turn affects learning. However, the very good support given by the technical staff to the practical work of the department is a key factor in the brisk start and smooth running of many lessons.

101. Where teaching is not so successful, the tasks set for students are either not sufficiently challenging intellectually for the higher attaining students or teachers do not make it clear how students can use their existing knowledge to help their understanding. One example, not capitalised on, was relating information on ultra sound scans for pregnant women to the students' understanding of wave patterns and wave lengths.
102. All teachers mark students' work regularly, awarding grades and merits. Students are not sufficiently made aware of the standard they have reached in relation to national levels and how they can improve. Homework is set regularly, most of it is written and often is to complete work started in class. There is not enough variety in tasks set to extend and develop work covered and the skills of speaking and reporting, such as the preparation of talks, or designing and carrying out a survey. Literacy skills are insufficiently developed in the classroom through group discussions and reporting back, or with increased opportunities to use writing frames and to write creatively and/or at length, this is a weakness.
103. Within most groups, the standard of written work shows too much variation, with inconsistencies often in the same book. Some work is very well presented and complete whilst other work is untidy and incomplete. Here detailed marking and high expectations set by some teachers has a big influence on what students produce. There is no standardised marking system which would support setting more short-term targets for students to achieve and this is a weakness.
104. The staff in the department, ably led by an experienced subject leader, have a shared commitment to raising the attainment of the students they teach. They work well as a team and need now to share good practice seen in the classroom and learn from one another's experience with different age groups. Whilst all staff are willing and have undergone training in the use of information and communication technology as a tool to aid science teaching, the lack of adequate hardware is hampering attempts by the department to satisfy the requirements of the National Curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

105. GCSE results in 2000 for grades A*-C were well above the national average, and for grades A*-G above. Boys and girls were above their national averages respectively, but girls were ahead of boys overall. Students did well in art and design compared with most of their other subjects. Since the last inspection when GCSE results were reported to be well above national averages, standards have remained high.
106. A-level results for 2000, with small numbers of students, were above average. All students achieved pass grades between A-D and half achieved higher grades A-B. In previous years, grades have been predominantly at grade C and below, though there were two B grades in 1999 and 1998 and two A grades in 1997.
107. In work seen during the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 is broadly in line with that expected and similar to teachers' assessments of students' work in 2000, with boys broadly in line with boys' national figures and girls well above the girls' national figures. Students have sound basic knowledge and skills, for example, the use of colour and tone and of techniques such as scraffito, scumbling and bleaching for mark making in the production of wall hangings. Sketch-books and folders show students' understanding the processes of research, exploration and trials which lead to finished pieces of art work. Three-dimensional work is well developed, for example in the manufacture of Kachina dolls or artefacts in the manner of Picasso. Students

demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of basic art vocabulary and some contemporary artists. Students with special educational needs attain similar standards to the majority.

108. In work seen during the inspection, attainment in Year 11 is above average. Students know and understand what is meant by mixed media, and are well acquainted with the process of developing their work by means of research, trials and realisation. They make use of the Internet for information about Rousseau, O'Keefe and Elizabeth Blackadder. Visiting artist, Helen Cox, inspired students' interest in collagraphs which is reflected in much of their work. Silk paintings provide another example of the wide range of experiences the students have acquired, with many delightful examples exhibited in the art rooms. They show good brush control in the application of vibrant and glowing colours.
109. In work seen during the inspection, attainment in the sixth form is above average. Year 12 coursework for AS Art shows work of a high standard, for example, imaginative prints exploring colours and natural forms, some very good flower paintings, work based on African masks and a good mural with large and well-proportioned underwater objects. Students demonstrate well-practised painting and drawing skills and a good knowledge of artists' work. Thanks to imaginative teaching, their work is unusually free and confident. Year 13 have developed very good portfolios of work for A-level. There is some very good portraiture and strong work on architectural themes. Students have examined work by Don Maitz, Miro and Henry Moore and incorporated ideas from these artists into their own work. Workshops by Tom Woods and Peter Heaton have been influential and fruitful. Students work on a large scale and have well-developed techniques, painting in oils or acrylics. Sketch-books and files show very good productivity and quality.
110. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are highly effective in teaching basic skills. Planning is exemplary and expectations appropriate. Teaching methods are very effective. Management of students in Key Stage 3 presents particular challenges in certain classes where there are students with behaviour problems, but the teachers' strategies are good. When support assistants are present, they certainly help such students to make progress. The quality and use of assessment are very good, contributing to raising standards by supporting the planning of teaching and ensuring that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The head of department provides very good leadership and management of the subject.
111. In all years, students acquire their subject knowledge, skills and understanding at a faster rate than might be expected because of good and very good teaching. Their creativity in lessons is good. For example, Year 7 students make very good progress working on pencil drawings of Egyptian motifs, showing good control of pencil line and tone and some have spelled the names of some of the objects using hieroglyphs. Students with special educational needs make good progress on this project. Year 10 students make very good progress in developing understanding of the importance of balance in composition. Year 12 students make very good progress exploring a range of mark making possibilities through non-traditional tools, and to a range of exciting musical rhythms, a joyous experience with excellent outcomes. Behaviour in lessons is almost always very good and students have positive attitudes to the subject. Older students have good independent learning habits. Very good behaviour and interest provides the essential background for very good teaching which in turn leads to very good progress and better than average attainment in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Learning in Key Stage 3 is good but more variable because of the variety of prior learning evident in the present unusual intake of students.

112. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in maintaining the standards at GCSE and raising them at A-level. Some progress has been made in the area of information and communication technology in that all teachers are undergoing training and a number of machines are being installed.
113. Students have been deprived of opportunities to experience ceramic work for over a year because the roof over the kiln room leaks making it unsafe to operate the equipment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Students entering the school in Years 7 and 8 this year had standards below national expectations, and in Year 9, standards were well below those expected. The reason is that many students in those years had not experienced the full design, making and evaluating process. Therefore, students achieve well to reach standards that are in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage. Students continue to achieve well to reach standards that are well above the national average in the GCSE examinations and to reach standards that are very high in comparison with the national averages at A-level. Standards have improved since the time of the last report and this improvement is seen in all four design and technology subjects. All students who took resistant materials, graphics or food technology gained an A*-G grade, and in textiles, the numbers gaining those grades matched the national average. These standards were evident during the inspection. At A-level, standards are very high with half the students gaining A and B grades in 2000, double that nationally. All students gained a pass grade, none below a D. These standards were seen during the inspection and show an improvement since the last report.
115. In Year 9, students use different sources of information effectively in their research. For example, they explored different types of lettering to display information, and a student explained how the gradual enlargement of the letters in 'STRETCH' conveyed the meaning of the word. They also produce clear design specifications. This was seen when they examined important features for a personal organiser. Students also work with a variety of materials and equipment, for example when analysing fast foods. This is to a satisfactory standard. In Year 11, students' research is very good, for example, they used hand measurements when designing a mini disc holder. Their knowledge of materials and their handling of equipment are very good. This was seen when they made wooden domed moulds for low voltage lighting units with an exceptionally high degree of accuracy. Students' evaluations are also very good, for example, a student explained that a wood stain would have been more appropriate for an art nouveau design. In Year 13, all areas of work are impressive. The basis for the very high standards is laid down in Year 12, when all students design and make for an outside client. Students produce their own logo first to indicate the quality of their design, and subsequently undertake the research and the making of the product to the clients' specifications. These included a poster for the Keighley Bus Museum and a metal display cabinet. The standards of research are excellent, for example, different nursery book units were analysed in detail in order to determine those that most closely matched the requirements of the nursery. The projects also show a high degree of creativity and individuality which raises the level of the projects to a very high standard that is rarely seen. For example, a student explored the old Lumbutts Mill in order to design his dream home within it and encountered the problems found in the real world of structures, and planning permission regarding old and listed buildings. This total involvement of the individual students has also contributed to the very high standards.

116. All students are very well motivated. They concentrate very hard on the task in hand and listen carefully to the teacher. This was seen when students made a Swiss roll by the whisking method for the first time. They used the many new skills involved successfully. Students clearly understand what is expected of them and work hard with little prompting by the teacher, and because of this, a high standard of work is produced of which students are rightly very proud. They explain and discuss their work using appropriate vocabulary. This was seen when Year 11 students explained their graphics point of sale displays and described the rendering that they had used when adding colour. The presentation of all students' work is of a high standard because of the early introduction to graphics. All students, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to earlier attainment. This was seen, for example, in a Year 8 lesson when a student with special educational needs was the first to answer correctly that emulsion paint was used first to seal the wood to enable the acrylic paint to cover it. Students' interests extend beyond the classroom and this is seen in their extensive research and in their voluntary attendance in the workshops outside lessons.
117. The quality of teaching is very good. In Key Stage 3, the standard of teaching is never less than good with half the lessons very good. In Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, the standard of teaching is consistently very good. In all lessons, the teachers have very high expectations regarding the behaviour of students and the high standards expected in their work. This transfers to the students who strive hard to attain those high levels. For example, Year 10 students making computer mice wasted no time in the lesson and took tremendous care in their sanding to produce a good finish. Also, students in Year 11 would not accept low standards, and sanded the wood for their low voltage lighting units again and again until the fit was perfect. All lessons are well planned and resources are used well. This was seen when circuit boards were explained with reference to the small size used today, and the older, larger ones were shown. This amazed the students and made them realise how much easier it is now to make working artefacts. The very good lessons all have a sense of urgency and a pace that motivates students so that they tackle tasks without wasting any time. Questioning is very good and with the very good relationships, students feel confident in asking for advice and help. Teachers respond by guiding students' thinking rather than telling which results in students understanding and retaining the knowledge. This was seen when soldering was explained and students were questioned about the process of heat transference in metal. This understanding is crucial to the safe handling of a soldering iron. All comments are positive and encouraging, such as 'I know you can do it', which motivates students to try. The importance of homework is given prominence in lessons and marking is thorough with clear targets for students to improve.
118. The success of the subject is due to the outstanding leadership of the head of department who has involved the second in the department and has created a committed team who strive to attain the highest standards possible. He has a very clear vision of the future of the department and has planned to change the schemes of work in Key Stage 3 each year until the present Year 7 start their GCSE course. This is because he anticipates rapidly rising standards. Assessment is excellent with all students knowing their levels of attainment and the targets set for them. The display of these levels is a great motivator to students to reach higher levels. Visits, such as to Salts Mill, considerably enhance the curriculum. The department also has an excellent programme for gifted and talented students which included a Food Day when a local chef came into the school. There has been very good improvement in the department since the time of the last inspection, primarily in standards and teaching, and all issues have been met. The food technology department has inadequate technician time to meet the considerable demands of the one-hour practical lessons.

HUMANITIES

119. Standards in humanities are very good. The GCSE examination results are well above the national average. The results indicate that students make good progress, with the A*-G results demonstrating that lower attaining students make very good progress in relation to earlier attainment.
120. Current standards in Year 11 are well above average. Students have a good understanding of the specialised terms and ideas used and are able to bring to bear good skills of analysis and interpretation when looking at different sources of information. A Year 10 group skilfully discussed the tensions that can arise when the demands of industry clash with the preservation of the environment. Their knowledge of religious beliefs and practices is sound. They have a good grasp of the interrelationship between belief and life styles. A Year 10 group demonstrated a good understanding of the teaching of Christianity on the subject of euthanasia.
121. Their skills of literacy are good. They participate well in discussions, listening attentively to other points of view. The quality of written work is good with spelling, punctuation and essay writing all being of a relatively high standard.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject which they use well to challenge and inform students. Most lessons proceed with pace and vigour, with various learning methods being used to motivate students. In a Year 10 lesson, a teacher effectively used wall charts, word banks and overhead projector slides to help students understand the key terms used when considering prejudice and persecution. Students respond well to stimulus materials, actively discussing the ideas being examined. There were no instances of disruptive behaviour in any of the lessons seen. The assessment of students' work is extremely thorough with results being carefully analysed and used to help both teachers and students receive clearly understood targets to work towards. Good, challenging homework is systematically set.
123. Progress since the last inspection is good. Standards have continued to improve and the quality of teaching and learning is now very good.

GEOGRAPHY

124. The proportion of Year 9 pupils adjudged to be at Level 5 or better in the National Curriculum teacher assessments was well above the national average, as it was in 1999. Girls' results were better than those of the boys and by the same margin as reported nationally. Results in the A-level examinations have been above the national average in terms of the grades A-E pass rate, although slightly below the national pass rate at the highest two grades. This represents a similar situation to that at the previous inspection.
125. Current standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average. Higher attaining students take accurate notes from a range of sources and produce fluent passages of writing in their enquiry work, frequently using the Internet as a source of information. In one class of higher attainers, students showed good understanding of how a variety of physical and human processes interact to produce the distinctive characteristics of the Japanese economy. One-quarter of students find any demands for long passages of writing difficult. They can describe but not explain the physical and human characteristics of places, as in a lesson on Nigeria. All students have good map reading skills and can draw and interpret climate graphs, as when comparing the climates of different holiday locations. Students show a better knowledge of where places are than

Year 9 pupils at the time of the previous inspection.

126. Evidence from completed assignments and lesson observations reveals that the attainment of Year 13 A-level students is in line with national expectations, with a small minority above. All students extract relevant information from a wide range of source material to produce accurate notes. They demonstrated, for example, a thorough appreciation of the advantages of nuclear power during a well-researched debate. In their high quality course work, they test hypotheses through statistical analysis of their gathered fieldwork data and use computers to improve the presentation of text and graphs. Most Year 13 students have yet to develop a sufficiently fluent essay style to ensure the highest A-level grades. While most Year 12 students are coping well with the demands of the new AS syllabus, approximately one-third are finding difficulty with the depth of study required at this level.
127. The overall standard of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is often very good. At Key Stage 3, it is best in Year 9 and is uniformly good in the sixth form. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge is reinforced by brisk pace, challenge and sensible allocation of time to different activities. This variety, together with good discipline, helps to sustain students' concentration in an atmosphere conducive to learning. Rare instances of poor behaviour are handled tactfully, without confrontation. Students respond positively in most lessons, stay on task and give each other mutual support when required to work collaboratively. In a Year 9 lesson on Japan, when challenged to deduce the reasons for Japan's economic success, with a minimum of initial guidance, students produced well-argued answers. Lessons start with a clear statement of aims, followed by a review of recent learning, during which students readily recall and consolidate what they have learned before. Teachers' guidance in the use of textbooks, atlases and other resources assists students to make good progress in lessons. The good tutorial style of teaching adopted in the sixth form allows students to debate issues freely. In comparatively less successful lessons, tasks are not well matched to the needs of individual students and the teachers' introductions are too long. Students with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Teachers and support staff know them well and recognise their needs. Homework provides useful reinforcement to classroom learning. Work is marked regularly but the marking is not accompanied consistently by comments pointing the way forward.
128. Most of the points for improvement raised in the previous inspection have been tackled successfully but there has been insufficient increase in planned opportunities for students to develop their information and communication technology skills. The application of number through the use of statistical analysis is less developed than in many school geography departments. Good management of the subject ensures thorough monitoring of teaching, and thorough analysis of data on students' performance, results in a more precise targeting of individual needs than previously.

HISTORY

129. The standards seen in the inspection at the end of Key Stage 3 were in line with national expectations and are similar to those recorded at the last inspection. Standards reported in teacher assessments at the end of the key stage do fluctuate, reflecting the differing nature of the intakes and the brief time they have had in the key stage at the school historically. In 2000, standards in teacher assessments were above those recorded nationally, whilst in 1999, they were in line. Most of the students at this key stage have a good historical knowledge and understanding of the period studied. Students can seek information from historical sources, asking historical questions and

using and analysing evidence well and use it both in their writing and when composing timelines. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils developed a good understanding of the events leading to the French Revolution by extracting information from a source to produce a timeline with events in chronological order and devising a warrant for the arrest of the King. By the end of Year 9, students can also use evidence well to show not only understanding but also empathy, as in a role-play exercise on slavery where they vividly re-enacted the experience of being forcibly shipped from Africa to America. Students read and speak fluently as well as confidently and this comes through in their writing, which was often extended. Students with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets laid down in their individual education plans.

130. Standards at A-level do fluctuate. In 1999, the percentage of students achieving pass grades A-E was above the national average, whilst in 2000, it was below, as was the percentage of students achieving grades A-B. Currently, the standards in the sixth form are about in line with national expectations, with some students exhibiting willingness to research a chosen topic and then contribute successfully in a class discussion. Students are rather teacher dependent and although this is providing a solid base for their progress, it is also limiting. In a Year 12 lesson on the Spanish Civil War, many students showed little evidence of having read around the subject successfully, this affected the contribution they could make to the session. In a Year 13 lesson, however, on Thomas Cromwell, the quality of the teaching and guidance was the key to students making good progress.
131. The quality of teaching is good overall. Where teaching is good or better, teachers set clear objectives for the lesson often sharing them with the students. They recap on recent work at the start of each lesson, this assists students to recall and build upon learning to make progress in their knowledge and understanding. An example of good teaching enabled Year 8 pupils to make significant gains in their learning using imaginative work to understand events leading to the French Revolution. Teachers mostly have a very good command of their subject and use that to set high expectations for their students. Tasks are well matched to needs of students and only occasionally low-level misbehaviour prevents progress. Question and answer sessions were used well to check previous learning; this was particularly evident in a Year 7 lesson on medieval life. The reading from texts was prominent and aided understanding of the work with only a few students experiencing difficulty. Homework, when used, made a positive contribution to standards achieved. Marking was regular. However, there was insufficient use of constructive comments to help students make improvements to their future work. A more detailed policy would help all teachers of the subject to mark more consistently and usefully. Students respond well to firm demands placed on them and behaviour in the classroom was generally good, and where it was not, misbehaviour was of a low-level nature. Experienced teachers use methods which they know will work, but skills are not supplemented sufficiently by the use of ICT to add a further dimension to both teaching and learning.
132. The department is well led with a strong commitment to high standards. The curriculum has been planned with parts under review to develop and reinforce key skills at both key stages. Historical visits are arranged to the Thackeray Medical Museum and the Beth Shalom Holocaust Museum at Newark. Visits are used to extend classroom learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

133. Attainment for the majority of students is well below average on admission to Oakbank, although for a small minority of students, standards are above average. At the end of Year 9, standards are well above national expectations and this is ongoing and improving. By this stage, students have become very competent users of information and communication technology. They are familiar with a wide variety of applications, all of which they can access and use in a series of business related projects. One of their modelling projects integrates geographical knowledge with computer skills. Students are able to outline on a map alternative routes for a proposed canal, cost its construction and then identify the most commercially viable route. They can use the Internet for research to support their learning and the most able students can design web pages for the Intranet. They can also use a range of equipment to import data and images into documents.
134. These skills are utilised by students in a number of subjects in Years 10 and 11 and are further developed to a high level of expertise by students who opt for GCSE or GNVQ courses. In 2000, the proportion of students obtaining grades A*-C was well above the national average and an improvement on the 1999 results. Girls' results were better than boys', but fewer girls chose the subject. Current standards in the GCSE and GNVQ classes are well above those expected, as it is in other subjects where students are able to use their ICT skills. Students evaluate carefully the software applications that are available in the school before selecting the most appropriate to meet their coursework requirements. Each student has a different project but all are commercially related and may involve the integrated use of more than one software application. Higher attaining students use more advanced program functions or include more complex procedures in their projects. A package that creates and uses a database of clients, stock, its turnover and the derived income, can be made more complex by creating payroll and profit and loss reports. Other students are using confidently an appropriate Internet language to create web pages, which are enhanced by the importing of graphics and animation. To do this, students must evaluate the available software and select appropriately.
135. At A-level, results have fluctuated over the last four years and in 2000, although much improved over 1999, the proportion of students gaining grades A-E was below the national average. Here, however, boys performed better than girls. Current standards in the sixth form are higher and in line with the course's expectations. Course work, although similar to GCSE, is more complex and students meet those additional intellectual demands well. They use Powerpoint competently and efficiently to generate commercial presentations. The slides require not only the well organised use of graphics and sound to support their animation but accurate and varying sequencing to provide an effective display. Students also apply considerable creative effort in developing the balance of text, graphics and colour tones to enhance that display, which is required to be promotionally eye-catching. At GCSE, GNVQ and A-level, students' work is marred by errors of grammar, spelling and style and although teachers correct these mistakes, students would be better supported if there were a whole-school literacy policy to tackle the problem.
136. The proportion of students achieving the higher grades at GCSE and A-level is below the national average. The lack of these higher grades is certainly not the fault of teaching because in the substantial majority of lessons, the quality of teaching is very good. In over half of lessons it was very good or excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise is extremely good, as are relationships with students. These two factors together build confidence and respect in the vast majority of students and account for

the good disciplinary control and the establishment of an environment conducive to learning and co-operative working. Lessons are well planned to take account of all abilities and the targets set for students are based on an extremely thorough assessment procedure. Work set is challenging and reflects the teachers' high expectations. Explanations are clearly given using interactive equipment to demonstrate procedures and to take students through those procedures step-by-step before they do so themselves. Much of the work undertaken, especially in Years 10 to 13, is supported by departmental web pages on the intranet, which students can follow during lessons to support their learning. These pages include explanations of topics and revision exercises and because they have been copied onto a CD-ROM, are available for students to use at home.

137. As a result of this, learning is generally very good. Students arrive at lessons ready to learn and they respond well to the challenge of the work by applying intellectual effort with a high level of sustained concentration. Progress is very good for all students, including those with special needs, and for whom English is an additional language. They benefit from good lesson support from teachers and the co-ordinated work of support assistants.
138. The quality of the teaching and the resources available for use by the teachers and students is the result of very good departmental management, in which all members have worked well together to cope with the difficulties arising out of the school's reorganisation. Their work is well supported by well-qualified technicians, who are vital to the smooth running of the department's heavily used equipment. The department's resources are deployed very well and planning is based on a clear vision of the way forward and the discussions of the ICT Strategy Group. As yet there is no systematic monitoring of teaching and although examination results are analysed carefully, the relative performance of specific groups is not.
139. Information and communication technology across the curriculum is not yet delivered systematically in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 its delivery has improved since the last inspection, but it is still unsatisfactory overall. The reasons for this are the lack of sufficient equipment and staff expertise to support its full implementation. It is starting to happen in a few subjects and, following an audit of staff skills, many teachers have already embarked on an appropriate training programme. When this and the building programme are completed, departments will be able to integrate the use of ICT fully into their schemes of work.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

140. Observation of the work in lessons and a scrutiny of students' exercise books show that standards at the age of 14 are well below those expected nationally. However, the learning is satisfactory given students' attainment in modern languages on entry to the school. The students come from a large number of middle schools, where they have had mixed experiences in their study of modern languages. The first half term in Year 9 is taken up with taster courses in French and German. Some valuable time for progress in learning is, in consequence, lost at this stage. Students then choose whether to take German or French and study in groups where there is only a limited amount of setting. There has been a recent history of short- and long-term staffing absences in the department. These factors, in combination, have affected standards adversely. Many 14-year-old students are hesitant in speaking the foreign language and lack confidence when attempting to use more than single words or brief phrases. Many students need much repetition in listening to tapes and they are slow in following instructions in the foreign language because they do not hear them often enough. They can generally

understand a limited range of familiar vocabulary but most, except the higher attaining students, are slow in recalling words they have read or heard in previous lessons. Students are not used to writing at any length and most need much support in this from their teachers. Given the opportunity, the higher attaining students can write about themselves, their families and home town with some detail and accuracy. They are, however, very unsure about using any tense except the present. The teacher assessments in 2000 gave a similar picture of attainment.

141. Standards at the age of 16 are, overall, just below those expected nationally. This represents good progress for those students who continue with languages. In Year 11, 23 per cent of students are 'disapplied' from modern languages in the National Curriculum, so that they can follow work-related programmes. This is a higher proportion of students than in most schools nationally. In 2000, GCSE results in French at grades A*-C were in line with the national average. The results in German of a smaller group of lower attaining students were well below the national average. The difference in performance between boys and girls was greater than the national average. Only 64 per cent of all students in Year 11 in 2000 took GCSE modern languages examinations, which was low in national terms. However, a small group of students successfully took a Certificate of Achievement in French and half gained a distinction. Over the past three years, examination results have changed little. Similar standards are found in the lessons and exercise books of students aged 16. Many students need much prompting and repetition when listening to, or attempting to use, unfamiliar words. They still lack confidence, except for the higher attaining students, most of whom are quite willing to take part in conversations about themselves. Most students need careful guidance to focus on key words when reading longer texts. They still need much support from the teacher to write the accounts and descriptions required for examinations. However, the higher attaining students progress well to writing interestingly and with increasing accuracy about, for example, their holidays or about themselves in letters of application for jobs.
142. In 2000, all the students entered achieved pass grades A-E at A-level. Current standards in the sixth form are, overall, in line with expectations for the new AS and A-level courses. Even so, Year 12 students find it difficult to express their ideas and opinions with any fluency and their written work often lacks accuracy in grammar and expression. With teacher help, they understand straightforward reading passages but they need much more independent practice in reading and listening tasks. Their competence in written work in Year 13 develops slowly but gains in accuracy. Students make great efforts when they are talking about themselves and their plans but they are still unsure of essential grammar.
143. Students' achievement at age 14 is satisfactory in relation to earlier attainment. Between the ages of 14 and 16 their progress is good, particularly that of the higher attaining students, working within the close framework of the examination syllabus. Year 12 students make satisfactory progress, and those in Year 13, good progress.
144. Behaviour is mostly satisfactory but the attitudes towards languages of a significant number of students, mainly lower attaining boys, is unsatisfactory. Most higher attaining students at Key Stage 4 show interest and are alert. The programme for the gifted and talented students who take two languages is enjoyed and well attended, even at the pre-school breakfast sessions.
145. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most of the lessons seen were satisfactory. Weaknesses in the small number of unsatisfactory lessons included a lack of pace and firm control of students, and too much English spoken by the teachers. The remaining

lessons seen were good or very good. Most teachers do not use the foreign language purposefully enough to promote really good development in students' listening and speaking skills. Teachers have not yet shared amongst themselves the best practice that does exist, either in this context or in the use of overhead projectors. Only a small number of teachers practise key vocabulary well with students or introduce 'fun language games' using the overhead projector. Teachers' planning is mostly effective but it is sometimes too ambitious. In a number of lessons, students were not clear enough about the exact objectives of the lesson and they lost interest and concentration in their learning. In one Year 10 German lesson, by contrast, a group of lower attaining boys were extremely enthusiastic about their learning of new vocabulary and were guided very skilfully to success in their speaking and writing. Teachers work hard to manage their students effectively but cannot always combat poor attitudes to languages. Support staff are generally used well to help individual students with special educational needs; in a Year 9 lesson, for example, two support staff led groups of students very well in practising vocabulary, while the teacher concentrated on another group. Teachers mark students' work satisfactorily but the style of marking is inconsistent between teachers. Marking of the work of higher attaining students aged 14 to 16 is good. Students are, however, rarely required to do follow-up corrections.

146. The management of the department is unsatisfactory in certain respects. Despite a good allocation of time for modern languages, the second foreign language does not have a clear and well-thought out place in the curriculum in Key Stage 3. There are inadequacies in the monitoring of teachers (especially of those who are inexperienced) in observations designed to raise both the quality of teaching and students' standards. Some important policies in the handbook are weak, for example, the policies for marking and the use of the foreign language in the classroom. However, new policies have been written which will replace these in the new handbook for September 2001. Delegation of responsibilities within the department is poor, there is, for example, no person designated for liaison with the special educational needs department. Now that the department teaches Years 7 and 8, where the teaching is mostly good, the department needs to focus its attention on raising students' standards and improving their attitudes towards languages in this age group in particular.

147. There has been relatively little improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

148. The numbers of students taking music at GCSE level remains small. Students achieved well above average results at grades A*-C in 2000. Boys and girls achieved similar results. No student has achieved the top grade in the last three years. As only a small number of students study music at A-level, it is not possible to make significant statistical comparisons. In 2000, all the students passed the examination at grades A-E. Standards in music for students at the end of Year 9, based on assessments made by teachers, were above the national average in 2000, with girls achieving slightly higher levels than boys.
149. Overall standards seen in lessons for students at the end of Year 9 were average. Standards at the end of Year 11 and at the end of the sixth form were good. These standards are the direct result of teachers' enthusiasm, efforts and high expectations. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of musical skills and concepts. There is a wide variation in students' ability and previous musical knowledge when they arrive at Oakbank School, but the music scheme quickly gives them a common base. This meant that diverse standards were seen in lessons with some students able to read musical notation and having had prior experience of using keyboards. Students

learn about the musical elements and incorporate them into their work. They are aware of the need to consider the importance of individual parts within an ensemble. Students in a Year 9 class were given very clear, targeted practical work to complete in order to contribute effectively to a class composition. These students wrote maturely about different sections of Prokofiev's 'Romeo and Juliet', and then used these concepts within their own compositions. Few students display correct finger technique when using keyboards but other Year 8 students showed good technique when practising guitar chords. Few recordings of students' work were available, regular use of these would enable students and teachers to monitor progress and evaluate work in progress. Where a recording was available, good examples of Samba rhythm patterns were heard showing sophisticated layering of rhythms and awareness of timbre.

150. Students' musical progress into Key Stage 4 and A-level is smooth. They build upon a good musical foundation. Students discuss their work confidently and use musical language effectively. Their performances are confident and musical. Compositions range from simple melodies to more sophisticated pieces with adventurous chord patterns and syncopated rhythms. Different areas of the syllabus are monitored and assessed regularly. Students studying for A-level discuss their work maturely. Their written work is detailed and covers an appropriate range of styles and traditions. Students are encouraged to develop musical ideas using composers' work as their inspiration. There are insufficient opportunities to use appropriate computer programs which would aid composition for all students and be of benefit to those who find standard notation difficult.
151. The quality of teaching is good overall. There are significant strengths in the teaching that have a very positive impact on both students' attitudes and the quality of their learning. Lessons have clear objectives which support students' learning so that they are clear about what they have to learn, especially through the use of targeting worksheets. On occasions, this can become rather too rigid and detract from students' own ideas and creativity but generally it provides a clear framework for the students. Teachers are organised, plan clearly and their subject knowledge is good. Different aspects of the curriculum are integrated well and students are given very clearly focused listening activities. In a Year 7 lesson, different students listened for different musical areas then contributed to the class discussion. In this way, no part of the music or the instrumentation was missed. Questions are phrased so that teachers are sure students understand correctly. Occasionally, insufficient time is given to enable answers to be clearly thought out and developed, especially for examination classes, because of the high percentage of practical work done in lessons. There are good working relationships within lessons, students are aware of examination requirements and have access to their progress monitoring and progress sheets. Assessment data is used well to evaluate achievement, refine tasks, to establish targets and to identify underachieving students. The variety of teaching and learning styles are at present limited by the accommodation. However, students work well in sometimes cramped conditions. Students' work is marked effectively, evaluative comments and direction being given for students to make improvements.
152. Students' attitudes to learning are good. Many are clearly interested in the subject. They listen carefully to demonstrations and behave sensibly when working independently or away from the main teaching room in small groups. This means that the atmosphere in lessons is very positive and successful learning can take place. There are good relationships between teachers and students leading to a happy, relaxed department. This situation contributes to the fact that many students attend rehearsals, including those who no longer have music lessons. The extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons are an important strength of the department. Good

musical dialogue is achieved. Regular concerts and shows are held where other departments can work together. Instrumental teaching is organised well. Students are given regular internal examinations in order to monitor their progress and set future targets.

153. Management and leadership of the department are good with a clear commitment to high standards. Teachers work well as a team and share good practice through regular reviews. Departmental documentation is clear, detailed and informative. The current review of work done in Years 7 to 9 is ensuring that curriculum revisions are being addressed and incorporated. At present, because of teaching classes at different sites, there is variation in the quality and quantity of resources but overall, it remains satisfactory. A more structured and regular use of tape recording work, both in progress and at end of units, would enable students and teachers to assess ensemble work effectively.
154. The department has continued to improve since the last inspection where only a few issues were raised. These have in the main been addressed. Students at Key Stage 4 were limited in their use of technical vocabulary. This has improved with students using mature musical language. Teaching and learning continues to be good and is now very good at A-level. Overall, this department has a clear vision and a determination to improve further, building on foundations already established.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. All students entered for A-level physical education in 2000 passed the examination at grades A-E and eight of the 13 students achieved grades A or B. These results were well above the national average and higher than in 1999 when only one of the ten students attained the higher grades. A-level dance entries have been very small and no students studied for the examination in 2000. The one student entered in 1998 attained a grade A and in 1999, of the two students on the course, one attained a grade A and the other a grade C.
156. Standards currently attained by the majority of Year 12 and 13 students are in line with national averages in both dance and physical education. Students have a good general vocabulary and are able to discuss and critically analyse the changing role of women in sport. There is evidence of student research in their personal performance analysis in physical education and in their work on alignment and posture in dance. Students do not always give sufficient exemplars in their written answers. Many students attain high standards in their practical work, both in physical education and in dance.
157. Attainment in physical education in GCSE in 2000 was just below the national average for the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C and students' relative performance was below other subjects in the school. In 2000, the percentage of students achieving A*-C grades was higher than in 1999. The attainment of students in GCSE dance in 2000 was below the national average for the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades, but better than average in the A*-G range.
158. Seventy students have chosen to study GCSE physical education in Year 10, with similar numbers in Year 11. This is just over a quarter of each year group and illustrates the keen interest students have for the subject. The majority of students are currently attaining in line with national averages. They have a sound general knowledge of sport. They understand factors relating to fitness and begin to compare and give reasons for variations in heart rate before and after exercise. Lower attaining students use technical language infrequently and weaker literacy skills adversely affects their progress. The

written work of the majority of students is well presented and they make clear, concise notes from a variety of sources. Standards currently attained by the majority of Years 10 and 11 dance students are in line with the national average. Girls in Year 10 are able to dance expressively and choreograph small group performances and in Year 11, students can successfully analyse the relationships of dancers from a video recording using dance-specific criteria.

159. The attainment of the majority of students in statutory physical education lessons at Key Stage 4 is in line with standards expected nationally and a minority of students attain above these levels. However, students are more secure in their own performance skills than in their ability to observe and evaluate their work and that of others. In basketball, for example, boys in Year 10 are competent in their ball skills and have a good understanding of the basic rules and tactics. Girls in Year 11, when playing badminton, find it difficult to improve the performance of their partner because they cannot assess and identify their weaknesses accurately.
160. On entry to the school, attainment in physical education is in line with the national expectation. Students have experience in rugby, football, gymnastics, dance, hockey, health-related fitness, badminton, table tennis, volleyball and netball. By the end of Year 9, the attainment of the majority of students is above the national expectation. This represents good achievement in relation to earlier attainment. Good teaching based on progressive units of work is responsible for the good progress made by all students. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show students' attainment to be in line with expectations and do not entirely reflect the higher attainment levels reached by the majority of students. By the end of Year 9, boys and girls have a good knowledge of fitness and can warm-up, stretch-out and use the fitness apparatus independently and effectively. Boys in Year 8 have very good stamina and show determination in their health-related fitness lessons. Students with special educational needs make good progress.
161. Many individual students and teams achieve high standards in district and county competitions in a wide variety of sports. Students play inter-house, inter-school and club competitions. One girl plays in the England Under-18 football squad and several boys represent professional clubs. The attainment of these students is well above the national average and they benefit considerably from the school's Sports College status and the accompanying opportunities offered.
162. The quality of teaching overall is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The majority of teaching at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form is very good. Learning is good across the attainment range at both key stages and is very good in the sixth form. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen during the inspection, the uncooperative, restless attitude of the boys hindered their learning. However, in most lessons, students are positive and interested and this enables good learning to take place. Students look smart and well turned out for their lessons. Students benefit in their learning from the teacher's good subject expertise and in practical dance lessons, from the excellent role model provided by their teacher. All teachers review previous work and share the lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson with their students. This is a particularly successful strategy with the lower attaining students, who often need to refine and revisit existing skills before progress can be made. All lessons include a health and fitness section at the start and the very good lessons give students the opportunities to acquire new skills, to select and apply these skills and to evaluate their own work and that of others.

163. GCSE and A-level tests and homework are marked regularly with informative and constructive comments but A-level files are not sufficiently monitored to provide an effective learning resource for students. Students at Key Stage 3 are regularly assessed but the criteria do not meet the new National Curriculum orders. Levels are used when reporting but students are not given clear targets for their learning and these are not part of the units of work. The department does not focus fully on literacy skills. Key words are displayed in the theory teaching rooms and the dance theatre and there are very creative displays in the gymnasia at top site, but these are not used sufficiently to promote literacy skills during lessons. Information and communication technology is used in the fitness units of work in Year 9 when the ten computers in the well-resourced fitness suite are used by students to record achievements. However, these machines are not suitable for researching GCSE and A-level information and there is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in these lessons.
164. The management and personnel of the department have changed significantly since the previous inspection and with the success in gaining Sports College status. The director of sport and the head of physical education provide good leadership of an increasingly large department. A few members of the department have responsibilities for running various programmes regionally and others have responsibilities in other areas of the school. Teaching, lesson planning and students' work are not regularly monitored. This is an important area for development in order to ensure cohesion across the department. Since the previous inspection, excellent progress has been made in developing community links, the attainment levels at Key Stage 3 have improved and GSCE, A-level, Junior Sports Leaders' Award (JSLA) and Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA) courses have been developed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. Students arrive in the school with a wide variation in their understanding of religious beliefs, customs and practices. They make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 9, standards of attainment are just below those set out in the Bradford Agreed Syllabus. They have a satisfactory understanding of the major beliefs and practices of all the religions that are found in our society. A group of Year 7 students were able to describe the importance of the five K's for a Sikh. Their use of religious language is satisfactory and they can identify the key points in the life of important religious figures. The written work produced by a Year 9 class showed a very good understanding of the history of Judaism. However, their understanding of the festivals and ceremonies of these religions lacks depth and is often fragmented and confused. This is particularly so with the lower attaining students.
166. They have a good understanding of the way in which religious beliefs and values influence a person's life. A Year 9 group was able to describe the problems that a Jewish boy would have growing up in a secular society. Their understanding of the interrelationship between belief and morality is good. A group was thoughtfully discussing various moral dilemmas that they might face and understood the influences that religion might have on those decisions. At all times, they approached the subject in an open and sensitive manner, showing respect and appreciation for the beliefs and life styles of others. A Year 8 class listened carefully as a Muslim pupil explained how her family had kept the fast of Ramadan.
167. Overall progress is satisfactory but for potentially higher attaining students it is unsatisfactory. The more able students do not go on to develop the higher order skills such as critical evaluation and analysis. A Year 9 group considering the relationship between the religious and scientific views of creation was not able to carefully analyse

the context of such stories or the type of language being used.

168. At Key Stage 4, religious education is part of the humanities course. This course contains just sufficient material to meet the requirement of the locally agreed syllabus. Students' understanding of religious beliefs and customs is satisfactory. Their ability to consider the impact of religion on modern ethical and social issues is good. A Year 10 group was able to discuss the problems of the holocaust in a very sensitive and thoughtful manner.
169. The school organises a one-day conference on religious, moral and social issues for students in the sixth form. This course is well received by students and it follows the spirit of the locally agreed syllabus.
170. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and in a small proportion of lessons, good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well. They use a variety of teaching methods to engage students' attention and manage classroom relationships in a friendly and positive manner. A Year 7 group were actively engaged in researching the life of Guru Gobind Singh. Most students are challenged to produce work of a high standard but the higher attaining students are not given sufficiently demanding tasks. Although the quality of marking is satisfactory, the overall assessment of students' work is unsatisfactory. Information is not used to set targets or clearly monitor students' progress. The setting of homework varied considerably with some teachers setting none at all.
171. At the moment, the staffing situation is unsatisfactory with the current head of department only teaching Years 7 and 8. Recent reorganisation has had an impact upon the management of subject. There is a lack of the clear, focused leadership required to move the subject forward. Plans are in hand to rectify this and to bring the subject into line with other aspects of the humanities department.

VOCATIONAL PROVISION

172. The vocational curriculum at both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is one of the strengths of Oakbank School with particular benefit to lower attaining and some potentially disaffected students. Some students are encouraged to complete a range of vocational modules at various levels. At Key Stage 4, the provision of these options has resulted in an increase in numbers of students staying on to the end of Year 11 and sitting both GCSE and vocational examinations such as those leading to Royal Society of Arts (RSA) Initial Awards. The attraction of these courses is having a positive effect on the overall points scores of the students.
173. In the sixth form, standards of those on intermediate and entry level programmes are close to national standards, but students on advanced GNVQ courses achieve results above the national average and as a result, a high proportion of these students are accepted for university places.
174. Vocational provision is well planned and its modular design provides students with both achievable learning targets and continuous feedback on attainment. Teachers are caring and supportive which contributes to improved behaviour in vocational lessons, better inter-personal skills and raised self-esteem. Support staff are carefully and effectively deployed. In the best lessons, students make excellent progress especially where their learning of key skills is enhanced by the use of realistic vocational contexts. For example, students improve their numeracy, communication and information and communication technology skills when planning advice for potential holidaymakers.

Similarly, projects on the media and health have provided stimulating and highly relevant opportunities for students to show higher levels of achievement than they do in more traditional parts of the curriculum.

175. Students made less effective progress in a minority of classes in the vocational curriculum. Students copying from texts, the Internet, and from flipcharts led to limited learning, and they showed little understanding of what they were doing. On the other hand, well-constructed and challenging problem solving tasks engaged and motivated students with behavioural and learning difficulties.
176. These inconsistencies in standards achieved are largely attributable to staffing difficulties. Those involved in teaching at Key Stage 4 tend to change year-by-year according to other priorities. Long-term illness has necessitated the recruitment of supply staff and the school has had difficulties in attracting suitably vocationally-qualified teachers. The school has been slow to further develop the vocational expertise of its staff through industrial placements.

BUSINESS STUDIES

177. Business studies is an increasingly popular option at Key Stage 4 and students achieve standards well above those nationally at GCSE. In 2000, 65 per cent of students achieved grades A-C compared to national figures of 53 per cent. The proportion gaining top A and B grades was 54 per cent, double the national standard. Current standards are well above those expected on the course.
178. These standards are directly attributable to very good teaching. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and a variety of teaching strategies are used to provide both challenge and interest to students of all abilities. Students showed good recall of business concepts and were able to use and extend their experiences of commercial pressures to develop a better understanding of business organisation and marketing.
179. The business studies programme is very well managed. Departmental planning is excellent, support to staff is good and there are clear plans to continually improve teaching thereby raising standards still further. Developmental planning currently lacks provision for industrial placements for staff.

MEDIA STUDIES

180. Media studies courses are offered as options to students both at GCSE and A-level. In the 2000 GCSE examination, 50 per cent of students achieved an A*-C grade, whilst all students achieved an A*-G grade. These figures were an improvement on the previous two years. Students on the current GCSE course show an overall standard of knowledge and understanding in line with national expectations, although the achievement of lower attainers is restricted by weaknesses in literacy skills. Students make good use of technology, such as computers and video facilities, when studying topics such as consumerism. Students completing the A-level course in 2000 achieved a 100 per cent pass rate, as in previous years, and 60 per cent achieved an A-C grade. Students in the current Year 13 display standards of knowledge and understanding in line with the course average nationally. They show a good ability to evaluate a range of opinions when debating the importance of media issues in the modern world. In lessons observed in Year 13, focusing on the presentation of the news by the media, the teaching was good. The teacher explains effectively the historical context of the debate about 'dumbing down' the television news. Students are encouraged to make their own presentations on the subject, and several show interest and initiative, and consequently make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding.

SIXTH FORM PROVISION

General studies

181. Several students in the current Year 13 have chosen to do the A-level course in general studies. In 2000, 70 per cent of students entered for the examination achieved a pass grade, and 21 per cent of the entry achieved an A or a B grade, a similar proportion to the year before, this is close to the national average. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one lesson where the number of students was reduced because of the Eid holiday and examination commitments. These students, studying the topic of population change in Singapore, demonstrated a level of knowledge and understanding in line with the course average nationally, and they showed a satisfactory level of skill in interpreting a range of statistical data. The teaching in this lesson was very good. It was marked by good subject knowledge effectively conveyed to students, by good relationships which motivated students and by the use of active teaching strategies which involved students having to think carefully about the data they were using and to analyse it accordingly.

Sociology

182. During recent years, a small number of students in Years 12 and 13 has opted to study sociology at AS or A-level. In 2000, three out of the four students entered for the A-level examination achieved a pass at grades A-E, whilst one out of two students achieved a pass grade in the AS examination. The pass rate at A-level was an improvement on recent years. Several students in the current Year 12 follow the AS- level course and are taught by a lecturer from the local further education college. Students attempt a broad range of topics. Overall they show a level of knowledge and understanding in line with the expectations of students nationally in following this new course. Students show a sound understanding of Marxist and functionalist views of society, whilst coursework projects display understanding of a range of topics such as crowd control in football, sexism and the relationship between gender and consumerism. Of equal importance, students display a developing ability in putting together a research project, carrying it out and then evaluating it in terms of reliability, validity and representativeness. Students show good levels of interest and commitment, as evident in a lesson on the changing nature of divorce and the family in Britain. In this lesson, students were able to analyse a range of evidence and they convincingly debated the relevant issues and their implications for society as a whole.