

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HANDSWORTH GRANGE SCHOOL**

Sheffield, South Yorkshire

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107148

Headteacher: Mr K Foden

Reporting inspector: Moira Fitzpatrick  
24326

Dates of inspection: 24 – 28 January 2000

Inspection number: 185741

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Handsworth Grange Road Handsworth Sheffield South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S13 9HJ
Telephone number:	0114 269 4801
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Ogle
Date of previous inspection:	6 November 1995



## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Moira Fitzpatrick	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			What should the school do to improve further
			How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
Daljit Singh	Lay inspector		How high are standards b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development?
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			Community Links
Clifford Blakemore	Team inspector	History	
Kenneth Boden	Team inspector	Design and technology	
Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	Religious education	
		Special educational needs	
Monica Christian	Team inspector	Information technology	
Jeffrey Cooling	Team inspector	Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
Mark Gill	Team inspector	Physical education	
Bob Hartman	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Ken Hounslow	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art	
		Equal opportunities	
Terence Payne	Team inspector	Music	
Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English	
		Drama	
Ian Waters	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
		English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:



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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time students:	947 (about the same size as other schools)
Students with English as a second language:	12.5% (is high)
Students entitled to free school meals:	22% (above the national average)
Students on the register of special educational needs:	16.8% (broadly in line with the national average)
Average number of students per teacher:	18.3 (broadly average)

The school has increased its numbers since the last inspection, but the proportion of ethnic minority students has fallen. The attainment of students when they enter the school covers the full range from very high to very low, with fewer than normal high attainers and an average number of students with statements of special educational need. Overall the intake has below average attainment.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Handsworth Grange is a good school with some outstanding features. There is an outstanding sense of community at Handsworth Grange School, and this makes a significant contribution to the academic and personal development of students. Difference and diversity are celebrated and students from ethnic minority groups are very well integrated in the life of the school. The quality of relationships within the school at all levels is one its great strengths and this, together with energetic, demanding teaching, enables students to reach often better than expected standards. The headteacher's calm, consultative leadership creates a climate where all are valued and encouraged to contribute to the development of the school. Given the standards achieved by students, their good attitudes and personal development, together with expenditure per pupil which is in the lower quartile nationally, the school gives good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- The performance of students in the National Curriculum tests and in the percentage of five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C in 1999 is above that of students in similar schools and well above for grades A\* to G.
- Standards are good because there is a high proportion of good teaching which leads to effective learning by the students.
- Positive, caring leadership creates a strong sense of personal worth among the vast majority of members of the school's community and wins their active support for the school's aims.
- Sensible and mostly good behaviour and positive attitudes to work from students make a positive contributions to their learning.
- Relationships and the social development of students are very good; they underpin the school's very good ethos.
- The school has excellent links with the community which enhance the students' curriculum and support their learning.
- The school is very good at long term planning and managing its finances.

#### What could be improved

- The time allocated to and the balance of the curriculum at both key stages.
- Attainment in most subjects at Key Stage 4.
- The school's use of assessment data to improve standards.
- Line management could be improved to ensure rigorous monitoring and evaluation of planned developments.
- The provision for a daily collective act of worship.
- The attendance of a significant minority of students in Key Stage 4.

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



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected in November 1995. The average GCSE student point score has risen in the 1999 examinations. Standards have been raised to above the national average in information technology and physical education in both key stages and in religious education at Key Stage 3. The quality of department planning has improved and there is now more consistency in this aspect of the school's work. The quality of teaching is considerably better than it was and now includes a high proportion of good and very good teaching. There has been improvement in the provision for information technology. The school has taken advantage of the building programme to bring forward the networking of the building for computers, further enhancing the provision for students. Systems and structures for improvement are effective and combined with the very good team spirit and commitment of staff the school is securely placed for further improvement.

## 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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	C
Key Stage 3	D	D	D	B

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Results in the National Curriculum tests taken in 1999 are above average in comparison with similar schools, but below the national average. The strongest subject in the National Curriculum tests was English, with students' performance in line with the national average. Results in the National Curriculum tests are rising in line with the national trend. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* - C was above the average of similar schools in 1999 and below the average of all schools nationally. The proportion of students gaining five or more A\* - G grades in the same examinations was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. When comparing students' point score in GCSE examinations, as in the table above, students score below the national average and in line with similar schools. The reason for this difference is that, on average, students at the school sit fewer subjects in the GCSE examinations compared with all students nationally. The strongest subjects at GCSE are information technology, physical education, science, English, history and geography. The weakest subjects are art and music. The results in information technology are above the national average, marking a year on year rise in the results of this subject. The GCSE results for students with special educational needs show that the majority achieve at least five A\* to G grades. The trend in the school's average total GCSE / GNVQ score was below the national trend over the last six years. However, the school shows a rising trend in point score since 1996. The governors have set a realistic target of 37 per cent of students gaining five or more A\* - C passes in the GCSE examinations in 2000.

Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is in line with national expectations in English, modern languages, history, design and technology, religious education and art. In mathematics, science, geography and music it is below the national average. In information technology and physical education attainment is above the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation in science, design and technology and history and is below the national expectation in English, mathematics, modern languages, geography, art and music. In information technology and physical education students' attainment is above the national expectation. At Key Stage 3, students' learning, as judged from observation of their work in lessons, discussions and examination of students' written work, is good in science, information technology, religious education and physical education. In all other subjects it is



satisfactory. Students with special educational needs make progress at a rate similar to other students. At Key Stage 4, students make good progress in science, information technology and physical education. In all other subjects they make satisfactory progress, except in religious education, where a shortage of time hinders the progress they make. Students with special educational needs make similar progress to other students, except in modern languages where they make good progress because of the effective support they are given.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	In both key stages, most students are keen to learn. They are well prepared for lessons and apply themselves well in the majority of lessons. In a few lessons the pace slackens towards the end and a small proportion of students find it difficult to sustain concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in and out of classrooms. Students show respect for each other, their teachers and the rights of everyone to learn. Fixed term exclusions are above the national average. There were no permanent exclusions in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Students work very well together; they are eager to participate in all school activities in and out of the classroom. Older students respond well to the many opportunities for community service, enterprise and responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average overall at Key Stage 3. Attendance in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory; it falls well below the national average.

The school has maintained the high standards of behaviour and personal development found at the last inspection. Very good relationships between teachers and students support learning and help students to develop confidence and self-esteem. The poor attendance of a few students in Years 10 and 11 gives rise to some concern. The school needs to review its procedures for promoting good attendance in Key Stage 4 and to continue to develop the work begun in this area by the recently appointed Senior Learning Mentor.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	N/a

*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.*

In over sixty per cent of the 174 lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good or better at both key stages. It was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons; there was unsatisfactory teaching in only four lessons. In English, at both key stages, the quality of teaching is good or very good in over eighty per cent of lessons. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is good in over half of the lessons seen at Key Stage 3 and, at Key Stage 4 it is good or better in 80 per cent of lessons seen. In science, teaching is very good overall at Key Stage 3 and over half of the lessons seen at Key Stage 4 are good. In information technology and physical education, the quality of teaching is very good at both key stages, with all lessons promoting both students' independence as learners and their ability to evaluate what they have learned. In lessons where the teaching is good or better, teachers have an enthusiasm for their subject that they share with students; lessons are well planned and contain a variety of activities which extend and consolidate learning for the students. In some of the unsatisfactory lessons, poor class control and a failure to insist on the work being done leads to unsatisfactory progress for students. Literacy is well taught, especially at Key Stage 3. In numeracy lessons, students are given short mental activities at the start to sharpen their mental agility.



Students with special educational needs are well taught in withdrawal classes and both they and students for whom English is a second language are well supported to make good progress in the majority of lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is not balanced at both key stages because of the uneven distribution of time between subjects. The percentage of time given to personal and social education at Key Stage 4 is too high. The school does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at Key Stage 4. There is a good range and quality of out-of-school activities and these support excellent links with the community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision overall. The provision for the improvement of literacy at Key Stage 3 is effective. There are effective procedures for the identification of students with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There are effective procedures for the identification of students' needs which are well met in class. Their progress is regularly monitored by a staff mentor with special responsibility for this.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Teachers are good role models for students' moral development and take time to discuss moral issues. Opportunities for the social development of students are very good. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good systems and procedures for monitoring students' personal progress. Those for monitoring academic progress are satisfactory. Year Programme Co-ordinators play a central role in ensuring that students are known and supported by their personal tutors.

The school has particular strengths in information technology and physical education, the latter making an excellent links with the community through the Saturday Family Leisure Club. Parents, especially those with pupils who have special educational needs, are satisfied with their links with the school. They recognise their role in supporting their child's education and welcome the opportunities they are given for this.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and other senior managers lead the school effectively and succeed well in promoting and implementing the school's aims. They recognise the need to review the curriculum and this forms part of the current development plan. Their recent focus on teaching and learning is raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and fully involved. The four-year strategic plan focuses on the appropriate issues to move the school forward. The governing body has not ensured that there is provision for a daily act of collective worship or that arrangements for religious education at Key Stage 4 comply with the locally agreed syllabus.



The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, senior managers and the governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and administration are very good. The school makes good use of its limited resources. Given the standards achieved by students, the quality of teaching, the quality of provision for students' personal development and the low expenditure per student, the school gives good value for money.

The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching staff provide a good match to the learning needs of the students. There is a shortage of technician time in science. The school's accommodation is satisfactory for most subjects and the specialist areas are appropriate for teaching the different subjects. In art, sparse resources limit what students can attempt in lessons. Overall the school is well managed with good contributions to raising standards from heads of department and Year Programme Co-ordinators, as well as the senior management team. Very good financial planning and management place the raising of standards and securing the best provision within the available resources at the centre of all decision making.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value the school places on the individual.</li> <li>• The commitment of teachers.</li> <li>• The quality of relationships in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they get about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The scarcity of resources in some subjects.</li> <li>• The irregularity of homework in some classes.</li> </ul>

Inspectors' judgements support the parents' positive views about the care given to individuals in the school. The headteacher and all staff place great emphasis on caring and encouraging supportive behaviour. The range and quality of extra-curricular and outdoor activities run by the school is testimony to their commitment to develop a sense of community and personal worth in all children. The very good relationships are a hallmark of the school's ethos. Not all teachers use the student planners to communicate with parents about their children and this aspect of the school's communication with parents could be improved. There is a shortage of resources in a number of subjects and in some cases this affects how students respond to a subject. The majority of departments set homework regularly, judging from a scrutiny of students' planners, but the school could monitor this more closely to ensure that some students don't lose the habit of recording and completing their homework tasks.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. On entry to the school the attainment of students is below the national average, there is also a higher than average percentage of students with English as a second language.
2. Results in English in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for fourteen year olds show attainment close to the national average for students achieving Level 5 and above. The proportion reaching the higher levels was below the national average. These results are above average when compared with the results of students in similar schools. Girls perform slightly better than boys in the national tests. Results in the English tests show a slowly rising trend over the last four years. In 1999, results in the national tests in mathematics were below the average for all schools nationally and in line with the results in similar schools for students achieving Level 5 and above. Boys' performance, though still below that of girls, shows a rising trend of improvement. The results for all students show a steadily rising trend over the past four years. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests in science, results were below the national average, but above the average for similar schools. There is little difference between boys' and girls' results in science tests. In the past four years, there has been a slightly downward trend in science results, which has followed the national trend. Taken over the past four years, students' performance in these core subjects has been below the national average, whereas the trend in the average student point score has been broadly in line with the rising national trend.
3. In the 1999 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, 36 per cent of students obtained five or more A\* to C grades, which is below the national average of 46 per cent, but above the average of similar schools. The percentage of students obtaining five or more grades in the A\* to G grades was above the national average and was well above the average of similar schools. The average student point score in 1999 was 32.25, which is below the national average, but in line with the average for similar schools. Over the past three years, the trend in the student point score was below the national trend. However, this year's results show a rise in students' point score. The performance of boys has improved over the past three years and is now similar to that of girls, who do less well than other girls nationally.
4. The pattern of GCSE results across the subjects, between 1996 and 1999 shows an improvement in English, information technology, science and geography. Results in mathematics, history and modern languages have remained static, while results in design and technology, art and music have fluctuated. Results in physical education have improved since the previous inspection, but dropped in 1999. In all of these subjects the proportion of grades A\* to C have been below the national average, with the exception of science and information technology, where results have been in line with the national average and in history where results have been close to the national average. In these subjects the better performance of pupils is attributed to the high quality teaching in science and information technology and the prior attainment of pupils who studied history. In English, though results are below the national average, overall there is a picture of improvement in the standard of teaching and lesson planning. In mathematics the static pattern of attainment reflects the need for teachers to be more aware of how students' performance might be improved through a better use of assessment and of teaching methods more closely matched to students' learning needs. The shortage of time for the subject at Key Stage 4 also has a detrimental affect on standards. In science, the good standards achieved are due to the high quality of teaching which enthuses the students and makes what they learn in lessons memorable. The use of regular tests is another factor which contributes to students' good performance in the examinations as they learn key facts and develop good memory skills. The rising standard of results in information technology is due to the high quality teaching and commitment of teachers. The well-planned lessons, with additional opportunities to use facilities to consolidate their skills, make students enthusiastic, independent learners who are able to progress at their own rate.



5. Evidence from classroom observation and scrutiny of students' work indicates that by the end of Key Stage 3 they are achieving standards above the national expectation in information technology and physical education. In both of these subjects students are keen to learn because of the relationships and clear expectations teachers have of them. They make good progress because they are given good opportunities to evaluate and comment on their own work and to recognise what they need to do to improve. In history, students make satisfactory gains in knowledge about past eras and learn to use different sources as evidence. They achieve standards in line with those expected nationally in history, modern languages and art and their learning is at least satisfactory in all lessons where they are presented with clear explanations and a variety of activities which interest and challenge them. In design and technology, where students' learning is well promoted through the use of project outline books, they achieve standards in line with the national expectation. In geography and music, students' achievement is below the national expectation. In geography, students make the best gains in their learning when it is well supported by practical activities, such as visiting a local stream to gain first-hand knowledge of physical features. In music, students learn best when they are involved directly, either listening to or making music. In some lessons their learning is less good, as when there is too much emphasis on theory. In religious education, students reach the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus. They show enthusiasm for the subject and make progress beyond the basic understanding of world faiths to appreciate the significance of symbol and ritual.
6. Students with special educational needs make good progress overall. The school's own evaluation shows students being moved down the special educational needs register and being removed from it each year. In the last school year, 29 students were removed from the register and at each stage the numbers at the end of the school year were smaller than those at the start. A similar pattern was true for the previous year, with 61 students removed from the register. Test and examination results are further evidence of good progress at Key Stage 3. Twenty-nine per cent of previously withdrawn students gained Level 4 in Year 9 English tests last year and 24 per cent gained Level 5. At Key Stage 4, in English GCSE the majority of students who had been on the special educational needs register gained pass grades, including four students with statements and one who previously had been statemented.
7. Students with special educational needs and those with English as a second language make good progress in lessons at Key Stage 3, except occasionally in some lessons where there is no support and the work is not sufficiently modified for them. In art, they make good progress in blending colour. One statemented student made good progress in using clay in design work based on African masks. In English, Year 8 students studying "Macbeth" made good progress in identifying the ingredients for the witches' spell. In information technology, students made good progress in developing their basic skills and their understanding of a database. In geography, students made good progress in drawing maps and in measuring skills to construct a cross-section to scale. Students made satisfactory progress in lessons at Key Stage 4. In mathematics, students made gains in the skill of calculating probability. In English, students displayed confidence when participating in discussion to gain insight into poems being studied for GCSE. In physical education, students made satisfactory progress in developing trampolining skills. In religious education, students made satisfactory progress in developing study skills to select information from sources.
8. Students' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation in English, where good learning is a result of well planned lessons in which skills are well taught and students are given good opportunities to apply and consolidate them. By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is below average, though students are developing and using a good range of literacy skills.
9. Teaching fully promotes good practice in speaking, reading and writing in most subjects, although there was little evidence of these skills being developed in music. In religious education, challenging lesson introductions promote discussion skills. Most students speak confidently and work collaboratively in groups, using talk to review and develop their learning, as seen in a Year 8 geography lesson. In history, they form hypotheses, analyse and make deductions and comparisons when talking about events. They listen attentively to instructions and their listening skills are sharpened when teaching provides clear explanation and interesting resources. Students follow, respond to and contribute to discussion clearly.



Sometimes teachers give lengthy discourse and students are not engaged in their learning. This limits opportunities for oral work.

10. Many students read accurately, expressively and with understanding. Subjects such as history, information technology, physical education and religious education actively encourage students to use the library and carry out research. Good opportunities for reading aloud are provided in religious education and occasionally in mathematics and history.
11. Students write for a range of purposes and good writing skills are reinforced in a number of subjects, such as geography and history. Basic grammar and punctuation marks are reinforced and key words are displayed in all subjects. The writing process, including the planning, drafting, revising, and editing of work, is practised in Key Stage 4 in history and design and technology. High attaining students in Key Stage 4 have well-developed drafting and editing skills, as seen in the assignment on political issues in Northern Ireland in history.
12. Students' attainment in mathematics is below the national average at both key stages. Students' learning is satisfactory at both key stages and they make good progress in mental agility due good question and answer sessions at the start of lessons. Students are encouraged to work independently and, by the end of Key Stage 3, their numeracy skills support the work they do in other subjects. By the end of Key Stage 4, average students are able to investigate mathematical problems and present their explanations clearly.
13. Students in all year groups have the opportunity to develop and apply numeracy skills. In science, students are able to take measurements of mass, time or length from a wide variety of scales and meters. From Year 9 onwards, calculations using Ohm's law are successfully carried out. In design and technology, students develop their geometrical, measurement and drawing skills. Simple bar and line graphs are encountered in physical education and English. The construction and interpretation of time lines occur in religious education and history. Year 10 information technology students succeed in constructing spreadsheets. This involves understanding and using algebraic notation as well as using basic number skills to test the operation of their spreadsheets. Numeracy skills are also used in geography to locate six-figure grid references in Year 9 and to interpret a wide range of graphical displays, such as pie charts, divided bar charts, line graphs and pictograms.
14. In science, students achieve standards below the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 3, but nevertheless are learning well throughout the key stage and are making good gains in knowledge and understanding. Well-planned practical lessons give students a good base from which to develop thinking and reasoning and they apply a lot of effort in nearly all lessons seen. At Key Stage 4, students are working at the expected level nationally and they show a good understanding of scientific principles and have sound factual recall. Higher attaining students have a good understanding of the variables which control electrical motors.
15. At Key Stage 4, students' attainment is above the expected standard in information technology, where they make good progress in their learning, acquiring new skills rapidly and using time well to consolidate these in lessons. In physical education, students are also achieving above the national expectation, they have a good range of skills due to the broad curriculum they follow and their enthusiasm for the subject which they pick up from their teachers. In modern foreign languages, geography, art and music students achieve standards that are below the national average, but in line with their prior achievements. In all of these subjects the standards of learning are satisfactory and students apply themselves well in response to sound and, often, good teaching. In religious education, students achieve below the standard expected of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, but the progress they make from Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. The sole reason for the unsatisfactory progress is the insufficient time allocated to the subject, which is well below that recommended to implement the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In lessons, students make good progress in response to sound and, often, good teaching, but a good depth of understanding and the opportunity for personal response are not possible in the time allowed.
16. Since the last inspection, the school has taken positive action to raise achievement. The headteacher has taken a lead in monitoring classroom practice and, this year, the school is focusing on the styles of teaching and learning it uses. There is now an emphasis on data



collection and interpretation, which is leading to the setting of targets for students. The governors have set a realistic target of 37 per cent of pupils gaining five or more A\* to C grades in the GCSE examinations in 2000.

### **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. Students' attitudes to school and learning are good, complemented, as they are, by their good standards of behaviour, which support their constructive and purposeful relationships with their teachers and peers. Opportunities for personal development are good. Most students enjoy coming to school and attendance is broadly satisfactory.
18. Most students act responsibly in lessons and collaborate effectively when engaged in group activities. In English, for example, students are motivated, confident and sustain good levels of interest and enthusiasm. Occasionally, concentration is affected by the length of lessons and a minority of students engage in disruptive behaviour. Otherwise, these positive attitudes to learning are also evident in many information technology, design technology and geography lessons. Where opportunities are provided for students to use their initiative, for example, in information technology, they respond well.
19. Inspection evidence also indicates that most students approach their learning constructively and take a positive interest in their school life. They undertake a range of curricular and extra – curricular activities. For example, during the inspection, a number of students across Key Stage 3 were observed enjoying table tennis and indoor hockey at lunchtime and after school. This complemented activities for minority ethnic students who enjoy playing and watching cricket during lunchtime.
20. Through formal and informal interviews students shared their positive perception about the school and indicated that staff were caring, sensitive and supportive. They felt that teachers offered good teaching and interesting lessons. A significant number of students felt that the school values their cultural heritage, aspirations and empathises with their differing needs.
21. During a religious education lesson on Judaism, it was evident that the school promotes respect and tolerance for other faiths and cultures. This evidently supports students' personal development and encourages harmonious relationships across race and gender boundaries.
22. Students behave appropriately around the school and to a good standard in lessons. Students are polite, respectful, trustworthy and most respect their environment. Most incidents of inappropriate behaviour are evident when there is lack of supervision. Behaviour is lively and sometimes boisterous. Although no bullying or aggressive behaviour was observed, some students and parents reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. However, students are adamant that incidents of bullying are dealt with severely, efficiently and that racism is not tolerated. The number of fixed term exclusions is above the national average. However, there are no permanent exclusions and all exclusions are made after following the school's procedures and are monitored by the governing body.
23. Relationships between students and staff are good. They are constructive, purposeful and create opportunities for students' personal development. There are opportunities for students to serve the school and community. Thus, students undertake responsibilities as prefects, as monitors in school and serve the wider community through work experience. These activities complement those of individual students who represent the school in sports and cultural activities.
24. Attendance is broadly satisfactory, but unauthorised absence is above average in Years 10 and 11. This is caused by a significant number of female students who are disaffected and do not value education and learning. However, the school continues to explore strategies to improve the levels of attendance, including the recent appointment of a Senior Learning Mentor whose role is to support students in Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, existing strategies need to be reviewed and improved. Registers are taken at prescribed times. Most pupils are punctual and lessons start on time. Absences and poor time keeping are investigated



thoroughly by the school and action is supported by the Educational Welfare Officer. Current provision complies with legal requirements.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

25. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. This successfully promotes the satisfactory and often good progress of students' learning across the curriculum. In 98 per cent of the 174 lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory. In 46 per cent it was good and in 15 per cent it was very good or excellent. Outstanding teaching seen in some science lessons and consistently good or very good teaching in information technology communicated the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and led to very good learning and above average attainment. There is consistently good teaching in English, science, physical education and information technology at both key stages, in religious education and design technology at Key Stage 3 and in mathematics at Key Stage 4.
26. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. At that time only 80 per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better. Since then there has been a focus on teaching and learning and on improving standards through in-service training courses and consideration of alternative strategies. As a result, the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons has been reduced from twenty per cent to two per cent. These unsatisfactory lessons were in science, tutorial lessons and design technology. They were mainly due to a combination of the following: poor class management and control, lack of clear learning objectives and low expectations of students' performance.
27. One of the strengths of teaching, in the majority of lessons, is the high quality of relationships and class management achieved by teachers. Teachers expect and obtain good standards of behaviour. Their skilful creation of a secure and purposeful learning environment supports students in making good progress in most lessons in English, science and information technology and satisfactory progress in nearly all other lessons. Students feel well supported to explore ideas through talk and to consolidate their learning, for example, in a Year 7 English lesson about advertising methods. They develop confidence in their formal speaking and make good gains in speaking and listening skills, as well as information about the media. In the rare lesson where discipline breaks down, the teacher's lack of firm control and clear expectations of students leads to unsatisfactory progress and little learning takes place.
28. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is apparent in many lessons. For instance in a Year 10 geography lesson on employment and economic development, where students' learning was very well developed through the range of challenges the teacher presented to them. Students quickly established relationships between cause and effect and were engrossed by the changes in land use in their town over the past two centuries. Students apply themselves well and work with good effort to develop their blending skills when producing work in the style of the artist Modigliani following a good demonstration of technique by the teacher.
29. Good planning and expectations are a feature of most lessons. In a Year 8 information technology lesson, the teacher produced very challenging work on data collection and the creation of a database required the students to work at high levels of perseverance and to acquire a very good knowledge of technical vocabulary which they quickly absorbed and used accurately. Year 9 students worked industriously and showed excellent levels of concentration in an English lesson on discursive writing. They were well prepared for the task through careful discussion and the good supporting resources that the teacher had produced, which allowed them to work independently and to apply the skills they had been taught. In contrast, the effects of less successful planning were seen in a Year 10 tutorial lesson, where the students had not been well prepared to ask questions of Year 11 students about their work experience. As a result, the majority of students failed to take the lesson seriously and made scarcely any gains in knowledge.
30. Nearly all lessons are well prepared and have clear objectives. When the aims of the lesson are shared with students, they make good use of them in assessing their progress and in



developing an understanding of their own learning. In most physical education lessons, students enjoy evaluating their own and others' performance against criteria set at the start of the lesson. Students' awareness of their own skills was very well reinforced in this way in a Year 7 dance lesson where they were asked to assess and comment on performance. Their attention while watching and concentration while performing were excellent features of this lesson in which skills and understanding developed at a very good rate.

31. The effectiveness of teachers' methods and organisation in lessons is good in most subjects. Year 9 students quickly became engaged in the task of applying the control to activate an alarm in a design technology lesson. They were able to proceed independently after clear explanation and demonstration by the teacher and this allowed the students to work and learn at their own rate. In an outstanding science lesson in Year 8, the teacher made excellent use of music resources and interesting investigations to promote very good learning about sound. The students were fully engaged throughout the lesson and their concentration when listening to the teacher and each other was exemplary.
32. The school has developed a number of strategies to support literacy, especially for students who enter the school with low levels of attainment in literacy. There is a good level of intensive support for these students. The quality of teaching in these sessions is good. Through these well-planned lessons, which form part of their English curriculum and are taught by support teachers from the special educational needs department, students make good progress in the acquisition of reading, writing and speaking skills.
33. The standard of teaching and learning is good for students with special educational needs. Withdrawal teaching in English is effective. Lessons have a clear structure and challenge, enabling students to participate confidently in oral and written work and to make good progress. Withdrawal teaching in mathematics is also effective, with the pace of lessons well suited to students' needs, allowing good learning to take place. Support staff are well used throughout the curriculum. They show sensitivity and judgement in encouraging students to achieve more. Subject and support staff work in close and effective partnership and this has a positive impact on students' progress. In one example of good teamwork, both teachers circulated during lesson activities to give support to individual students and, in another, the support teacher recorded comments on the board while the subject teacher led the class in discussion. Departments make good use of individual education plans, with useful additional subject targets being identified by some departments. Individual education plans do not, however, always contain clear targets against which progress can be measured. Various strategies, in different subject areas, enhance the learning of students with special educational needs. In information technology, technician support is a valuable additional resource and, in physical education, a wide choice of activities enhances opportunities for progress. In modern languages and history, there is good use of a variety of resources, well matched to individual needs. In geography, students tackle tasks set on the same topic, but at differing levels of difficulty. In some English lessons, students work in groups based on attainment, allowing the teacher to give specific support to students with special educational needs.
34. The use of day-to-day assessment, such as questions and short tests to assess students' understanding and recall, is satisfactory. Students' work is marked regularly in most subjects, with useful comment on what to improve. However, not all teachers make the best use of assessment data to predict realistic and challenging targets for students, neither do they always share assessment criteria with students. Where they do, as in most physical education lessons, and in a very good English lesson where Year 7 students were assessing one another's level of attainment in speaking, the knowledge of the criteria to be used was clearly informing students about what needed improvement to reach the next grade. In lessons like these students are able to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to set themselves attainable goals.
35. Students have a regular programme of homework, though, on occasion, this can falter and needs monitoring to ensure that students are not over-burdened, or in danger of losing well-established habits. Homework is used appropriately either to prepare for or to follow-up class work and to provide opportunities for research. Responses from parents indicate that they are generally satisfied with the work their children are expected to do at home.



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

36. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are unsatisfactory at both key stages. Lesson times, at seventy minutes, are long. The length of the taught week is within the recommended range for secondary schools, but the time for teaching National Curriculum subjects falls well short of the average because of the proportion of time allocated to personal and social education and tutorials. The shortage of time and the structure of the school day, with only four teaching periods, create enormous constraints when constructing the timetable. Consequently, many problems arise with breadth, balance and continuity. For example, the only two lessons in English and mathematics for Year 11 students are scheduled on two consecutive days with a gap of five days between lessons. There has been insufficient improvement in the design of the curriculum since the last inspection.
37. At Key Stage 3, the following subjects have insufficient time successfully to teach the programmes of study of the National Curriculum: religious education, modern foreign languages, art, music information technology, geography and history. Uneven time allocation over the three years in mathematics has a detrimental effect on students' standards of attainment. At Key Stage 4, shortage of time for English and mathematics also has a detrimental affect on standards.
38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. There is good provision at Key Stage 3, with withdrawal groups in English in each year group and substantial additional support for mathematics. Other areas of the curriculum also benefit from support at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, courses leading to the Certificate of Achievement are provided in English, mathematics and modern languages, and there is targeted in-class support in different curriculum areas. The school's extensive in-class support is carefully prioritised to meet the needs of statemented pupils, with an emphasis on the core subjects of the curriculum. The school's provision allows pupils with special educational needs to have full access to the curriculum. At Key Stage 3, good use is made of additional provision, such as "Reading Matters", which involves volunteers from outside the school working with individuals over a period of time to improve the students' reading skills and confidence.
39. The school has a commitment to enabling students to enter the outside world, well prepared and with the highest academic achievement. There can be no doubt that most of its students are mature, confident individuals who are well prepared for the future. The school has a full and enriching programme of personal and social education for pupils at Key Stage 4 and a satisfactory programme for Key Stage 3 students. The major problem at Key Stage 4 is that the school provides too much time for students' personal, social and health education (PSHE) at the expense of the National Curriculum. Students in Year 10 spend a fifth of their time on non-academic work and for those in Year 11 the proportion of non-examined work increases to a quarter. In the most successful subjects, such as science and information technology, the amount of curriculum time allocated is appropriate. Less successful subjects have a low allocation of curriculum time. There are problems of continuity in mathematics caused by timetable restrictions.
40. The school meets all statutory requirements, with the exception of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education at Key Stage 4.
41. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, which extend the curriculum. The programme varies throughout the year and takes place either in lunchtimes or after school. The activities on offer include academic, sporting, and the performing arts. The excellent sporting community links are a particular strength. Only a limited range of musical opportunities is on offer. The music department helps the drama department with school productions, which have high levels of student participation. The school provides students with only limited opportunities to visit museums and art galleries.
42. Overall, provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with their social development being a significant strength of the school.



43. The provision for the spiritual development of students is satisfactory. Religious education, together with several other subjects, makes a contribution to developing spiritual awareness and self-knowledge in students. In religious education, Year 7 students consider belief in God and, in Year 9, they investigate the nature of religion and worship. Modern foreign languages links with local mosques as part of its Urdu course. Students encounter spiritual aspects inherent in English and in art. Spiritual themes are also followed in history, through a study of the beliefs of native American Indians, compared and contrasted with those of Christianity.
44. The school does not meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. Students attend an assembly about once every five weeks in their year group. Assembly themes are planned, but very rarely have a spiritual dimension, or an opportunity for students to reflect. The same is also true of form periods which occur weekly, whenever a year group is not having an assembly.
45. Provision for students' moral development is good. Moral issues are well handled and students have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Teachers provide effective role models and ensure that students respect the school's code of conduct. Good opportunities to explore wider moral and social issues, such as animal cruelty, homelessness and relationships are provided in the English texts studied. The moral issues relating to slavery, to mass bombing and to war crimes arise in history. The ethical and moral issues behind some contemporary issues are studied in religious education in Year 11, as are the world's major religions. In design technology, a visit to McDonalds is used as a means of highlighting environmental issues, whilst in science, the implications of genetic engineering, nuclear power and other environmental topics are covered.
46. Provision for students' social development is very good. Relationships around the school are positive and mutually respectful, supported by the very wide range of extra-curricular activities provided to encourage students to develop socially. In science, students monitor pollution levels in a local stream and work in conjunction with the Sheffield Environmental Department. Students are able to share resources in art equitably. Students are required to work co-operatively in many subjects, for example, in mathematics, English and in design technology, where groups of students design and make badges. Physical education encourages co-operation and fair play. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular and local community recreational activities available to students: examples from a very long list include table tennis, hockey, cricket and football. These, and the others offered, are well supported. Students' social development is also aided by the programme of work experience, fieldwork trips in geography and residential band weekends.
47. The provision for the cultural development of students is satisfactory. Opportunities for cultural development are provided by trips to the Crucible Studios in Sheffield and other theatres, visits abroad to Europe and e-mail links with schools abroad. Some students contribute to a 'Radio Zone' programme in English. There are school productions in drama and a visiting playwright from the Crucible. In history, music and art, however, there are insufficient opportunities for visits. There is appreciation of the lifestyles in different countries of the world at different levels of economic development in geography. In religious education, cultural aspects of Judaism and Islam, particularly festivals, are studied in Years 7 and 9.
48. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in the social development of its students, particularly in the forging of sporting community links.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?**

49. The anti-bullying policy provides a solid foundation for good practice in the school. Bullying, aggressive behaviour, racism and sexism are actively discouraged. All known incidents of bullying and anti-social behaviour are thoroughly investigated, monitored and appropriate levels of action taken. This ensures that bullying is discouraged and students learn in a more tolerant environment. The procedures for investigating, recording and monitoring attendance



are fully observed, but strategies to raise existing levels of attendance at Key Stage 4 are insufficiently consistent or rigorous.

50. The assessment policy works well to ensure that students' academic progress is monitored satisfactorily, but the school needs to take more rigorous and consistent approach about using assessment to raise standards of students' attainment. While some departments, such as science and information technology, make good use of assessment data to plan what students will learn and set targets for them, this is not the case in all departments. In many departments, including English and mathematics, the use of assessment data to set teaching and learning targets is not sufficiently developed to raise standards efficiently. The school has a very useful database of students' attainments and needs to educate teachers in the use of this as a teaching tool. Day-to-day assessment by teachers in lessons is used effectively to check students' understanding and to determine their short term learning needs.
51. The school effectively meets the needs of its statemented pupils through withdrawal arrangements at Key Stage 3 and by ensuring that they are the first priority in the deployment of in-class support. Reviews for statemented pupils meet requirements and, in addition to an annual review, an interim review is held. Individual education plans for pupils at stages 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice are reviewed twice yearly. All reviews are up to date. Good use is made of outside agencies. There are clear procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. There is good liaison with feeder primary schools and good use is made of standardised tests on entry to the school. Further use of tests occurs at the time of reviews to inform decisions such as the membership of withdrawal groups. The placement of pupils in withdrawal groups is reviewed at an early opportunity. English groups are formed in November of Year 7 and reviewed early in the Spring Term, with some pupils being moved out of withdrawal groups and into mainstream classes at that time.
52. Since the last report, the pastoral provision has improved and continues to provide good levels of support and guidance. The pastoral provision is good and a significant strength of the school. Teachers and the senior management team work constructively as a team to provide good levels of individual support and guidance. Students' achievements are recognised and celebrated. Students with behavioural problems are offered mentoring and counselling by staff, and are supported by the school nurse, Educational Welfare Officer, senior staff and teachers who act as voluntary mentors. These strategies underpin students' individual progress, personal development and enhance their self-esteem. Most students appreciate and value the efforts of the staff and the system of rewards, both of which encourage positive behaviour and constructive relationships. However, unauthorised absence in Years 10 and 11 is an issue to be addressed.
53. The provision for child protection is good and provides the school community with a safe and secure learning environment. Health and safety policy and provision is sound, but electrical equipment is not checked regularly by the LEA.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

54. Most parents report, both at the parents' meeting and through the questionnaires, a positive and constructive liaison with the school. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school and have indicated that their concerns are dealt with adequately. Parents report that the school is well led, managed and provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. However, a small, but significant, minority indicate that they are not sufficiently informed about the progress their children are making. Inspection evidence indicates that there are regular meetings for parents and new parents to discuss their concerns and to exchange information. The school provides student planners which enable parents to monitor their children's daily progress. All parents are provided with an end of year report and parents of students in Years 7 and 10 are also provided with an interim report. However, reports do not clearly illustrate students' level of attainment and progress in all subjects.
55. The quality of information provided for parents is generally sound. Most parents appreciate the information about their children, the school and their achievements provided through the annual report from governors and school prospectus, both of which comply with legal



requirements. This information is complemented by a regular newsletter which celebrates the achievements of the school and the wider community. There is regular correspondence between the school and home to inform parents of events, students' individual progress, achievements and concerns, but occasionally, some students fail to ensure that the correspondence is delivered to their respective parents.

56. Parents are actively encouraged to support the learning of their children. The school provides a Saturday Family Leisure Club, which is very well attended. Opportunities are extended to parents to improve the environment of the school through tree planting. Minority ethnic parents are encouraged to support learning through the links with the local mosque, but few parents take up these opportunities directly with the school. The school takes the initiative to keep parents of students with special educational needs informed about their children's progress, with parents' evenings and informal contacts well used as methods of communication. Parents are appropriately involved in work at home. The parents of statemented students are kept fully informed about progress, including being invited to reviews. Parents of pupils at stages 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice are not always invited to reviews of progress.
57. The Parents and Friends group is actively involved in the work of the school and provides further opportunities for parents and the school to work together, with a forum to pursue new ideas and initiatives to improve standards of learning in the school. The Parents and Friends group arrange social events and other activities to raise funds to support learning in the school.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

58. The school is committed to raising standards and improving the quality of education for all its students. To this purpose, the head teacher provides a clear vision and by personal example motivates and encourages staff and students to contribute to school improvement. Relationships within the school are very good and team work is valued. This leads to a strong sense of community with a shared responsibility to move the school forward. The school's statements of aims and values are consistently reflected in its day-to-day work and there is a cohesion and orderliness that creates an effective environment for teaching and learning. This positive and purposeful spirit extends beyond the school into forging excellent links with the wider community.
59. The headteacher, deputy heads and assistant heads work well with each other and with the staff. There is clear delegation and, through the range of documents and meetings. There are good channels of communication and appropriate opportunities for discussion and consultation. The school has identified the improvement of teaching and learning as a focus and the strategies for achieving this are built into the school development plan and reflected in department and team plans. Since the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching has improved. Each member of the senior management team has oversight of a number of curriculum areas and this has contributed to greater consistency in planning at subject and department level. Arrangements exist for reviewing performance and progress against agreed targets, but there is a lack of rigour and consistency in the procedures for monitoring and evaluation. At subject level there are effective systems in place in science, modern foreign languages, geography, information technology and physical education. In English, art and music, lines of accountability are less effective and arrangements for monitoring and evaluating teaching and students' performance are unsatisfactory. The work of tutors is well led by programme co-ordinators who, in turn, receive good support from the headteacher and one of the assistant headteachers. Where support staff are deployed to assist the work of teachers, they have a good understanding of their responsibilities and are efficiently and effectively used.
60. The governing body has approved a four-year strategic plan (1998-2002) and the chair of governors has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body follows an appropriate pattern of meetings with agendas which focus on the priorities identified in the school development plan. Subcommittees for finance, curriculum and staffing, premises and community share the workload and each group has clearly defined terms of reference. Reports are submitted to the full meetings of the governing body each term. The



work of the governing body receives good support from the headteacher and senior staff. For example, the programme to improve the accommodation has been carefully monitored by the premises subcommittee and the effect of the building work on the day-to-day routines of students and staff has been managed to ensure minimum disruption and maximum co-operation and safety. Governors have ensured that the school has policies in place to provide a framework for the management and organisation of the school. Some of the policy statements do not include arrangements for review and updating and the whole school curriculum policies do not adequately reflect developments since the last inspection. The school does not meet the legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students and arrangements for religious education in Key Stage 4 do not comply with the locally agreed syllabus.

61. The headteacher and senior staff share the responsibility for monitoring the school's performance and reporting progress to governors and parents. A number of strategies are used to evaluate the work of students and staff. This has not led, however, to a clear enough focus on assuring that quality and standards are as high as they should be across all aspects of the school's work. Not all subject departments have arrangements for following through the impact of agreed improvement strategies and for systematically evaluating their effectiveness. While the overarching school development plan presents a framework for planning at departmental level and this has improved consistency of approach, the priorities are not always harmonised and the targets, the monitoring of activities and the criteria for measuring success, lack detail. In the departments of English, history, art and music, this weakness undermines the good intentions and, in the absence of appropriate follow up action, their effectiveness is reduced.
62. There are good procedures for supporting staff development and further training. Staff who are newly appointed or newly qualified have induction programmes to help them to establish themselves quickly within the school. A comprehensive record of in-service provision is maintained and, under the direction of one of the deputy heads, all staff have the opportunity to benefit from the well-managed funds designated for this purpose. Professional development reviews are conducted and meet most of the requirements of the system for teacher appraisal, but do not in all cases include observation of lessons. The school has good links with partner schools, the business community and further and higher education, all of which are used to enhance the programme of professional development for the staff of the school. Accreditation of the Investors in People award verifies the commitment the school makes to improving the effectiveness of both teaching and support staff. There is good provision for initial teacher training.
63. Within the school there is a growing amount of management information to help in the task of analysing students' performance and achievements. There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring students' progress, but the school does not make full use of the assessment and attainment information to set more precise and challenging targets and build these into its planning. Overall, the leadership and management of the school is sound. There is the capacity and shared commitment to raise standards and improve quality further.
64. The school is adequately staffed to teach the curriculum. The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching staff provide a good match to the needs of the students. Since the last inspection, almost a quarter of the staff has changed and there is now a good range and balance of expertise and experience. There are effective procedures to support the induction of newly appointed staff. The teaching of religious education requires a mixture of specialist and non-specialist staff to cover the work, but the overall deployment of teachers to groups is satisfactory. The teaching is well supported by an appropriate number and range of support staff. Administrative, clerical and technical staff work closely with teachers to enhance the day-to-day smooth running of the school. In science, the amount of technician time is below national recommendations. The very good working relationships between teaching staff and the wide range of support staff reflects the emphasis on team-work and is acknowledged by the award of Investors in People. In turn, this gives students a secure and caring environment in which to learn. Staff have well defined roles and responsibilities that are known to students and parents and this assists effective communication. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is clearly identified and leads an effective team of staff who support students' learning and development.



65. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory for the school's curriculum and the number and age range of the students. Indoor facilities for physical education are poor. In music, the shortcomings of the limited practice spaces reported in the last inspection remain. Most of the classrooms are appropriate in size and layout for the subjects taught in them. There is an adequate number and range of specialist rooms and laboratories for the needs of students. There is a general absence of graffiti and little vandalism. The pride taken by students, encouraged by staff, in the environment is reflected in the manner in which the accommodation is used and maintained. In many classrooms, in corridors and in the main reception area there are attractive displays of students' work and achievements. In one or two areas, such as the drama studio and the main music room, standards are below that of the school as a whole.
66. The school is nearing the completion of an extensive building programme that will increase the amount of space to accommodate the rising number of students on roll. Art and design technology will benefit from the new rooms. The building work will also improve access to the upper floor of the main block by the installation of a lift. Outdoor areas provide sufficient space for students' work and play and there are adequate signs and direction in and around the school to guide students, staff and visitors.
67. The school has identified the need to improve the range and quality of its resources for learning. At the time of the last inspection, the amount allocated from the school's delegated budget was well below national averages. It is now broadly in line with the national trend. This has led to an improvement in provision, but the level of resources, overall, remains unsatisfactory. Resources in English for the Key Stage 4 courses are barely adequate, while in science there are insufficient textbooks and basic equipment. In music, the shortage of sets of suitable song-books and classroom resources for instrumental work narrows the range of activities. There is a good stock of fiction, non-fiction and reference books in the school library available to students. Adjacent to the library there is an information centre containing a number of computers that offer opportunities for students to develop research skills. Facilities in these rooms are well used by students and staff to complement the work done in lessons. Increasingly, information and communications resources are used by students outside lesson times. The school has two main specialist rooms for computers and the provision for information technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers are well supported by technician staff and a central resources and reprographics room provides a good range of audio-visual equipment.
68. The quality of financial planning in the school is very good. The deputy headteacher, school finance and administration officer and the governing body work together to ensure that funds are targeted appropriately at the school's priorities. They are careful to review and reassess priorities when opportunities for savings arise. A good example of this in the current financial year has been the inclusion of wiring for the computer network to coincide with the school's building programme. At school and department levels, spending is carefully targeted at areas for development. Though resources are scarce and expenditure per student is in the lower quartile nationally, departments manage these very well to reduce the detrimental impact on standards.
69. All of the recommendations of the recent auditor's report have been acted upon. Day-to-day organisation and financial administration are very good. Spending is monitored by the finance and administration officer and the deputy headteacher with responsibility for finance, who provide up-to-date budget information for the governors' finance committee. The governors who form the finance committee have a good knowledge of their responsibilities and a good understanding of the school's finances and priorities for spending. They have been active in seeking best value for money contracts in all of the tenders sought by the school. In the last financial year, governors took the decision, based on the recommendation of the deputy headteacher and finance and administration officer, to employ their own cleaning staff instead of sub-contracting to another company. This has given the school increased flexibility in work schedules and the cleaning staff a greater sense of loyalty. The school has also been active in sharing its best value practices with its 'family' of primary schools when seeking tenders for minor building and decorating work.



70. The school makes effective use of new technologies, including information technology, electronic mail (e-mail) and data analysis to manage the school's finance, curriculum and assessment systems. Within the school community as a whole, levels of expertise in the use of information technology are above the national average and many teachers make use of CD-ROMs, the Internet, information technology software and e-mail to enhance and extend students' learning. In design technology, good use is made of computer-aided design programs and control technology to raise standards and make students confident in the application of new technology.
71. The school allocates sufficient funds to provide good learning opportunities for students with special educational needs and English as a second language. The literacy programme run in Key Stage 3 makes good provision for students with low levels of literacy and funds are well spent on raising students' attainment to functional levels in this key area. There is a clear policy for the allocation of additional support for statemented students and the core subjects are appropriately prioritised. The co-ordinator of special educational needs is fully involved in the school's schedule of meetings, which also enhances the whole school approach. Senior management oversight is in place, with the co-ordinator reporting to a line manager, but also having direct access to the senior management team. The funding is well used to provide a high level of additional support, which, in turn, makes a strong contribution to the good progress made by students. There is a designated member of the governing body to oversee special educational needs. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative which has, as its focus, raising the attendance and aspirations of students. Although in the early stages of implementation the school reports a positive impact of the programme on students' attitudes.
72. Given the good provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the high quality of teaching and the standards students achieve, the school gives good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

The governors, headteacher or staff of the school should now:

- Review and restructure the curriculum to ensure:-
  - that there is enough time to teach the National Curriculum programmes of study in all subjects and, especially, religious education at Key Stage 4
  - that there is a balanced curriculum at both key stages
  - that there is a more appropriate allocation of time for personal and social education at Key Stage 4
  - that time is allocated to subjects in a way that supports continuity and progression of learning. (paragraphs 36, 37, 39, 40)
- Improve the use of assessment to raise standards by:-
  - developing the existing good practice found in some departments for the benefit of all subjects
  - training teachers in the use of assessment data to predict future attainment and to set targets for themselves and their students.  
(paragraphs 82, 102, 111, 147, 165)
- Improve line management throughout the school so that:-
  - senior managers have clear and consistent objectives in their oversight of departments
  - senior managers set and monitor challenging targets
  - heads of department are clear about their accountability for improving standards and are trained in monitoring and evaluation procedures to support them to do this.  
(paragraphs 102, 116, 165)



- Improve the attendance of students in Key Stage 4 so that they benefit fully from the benefits of the school's educational provision. (paragraph 49)
- Provide a daily collective act of worship. (paragraph 44)

In addition, the following paragraphs refer to other matters that the governors may wish to include in their post-inspection action plan: (87, 118,166)

- improve resources for subjects (art, music)
- improve accommodation in drama and music.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	174
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	95

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	14	46	37	2	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	947	N/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	189	N/a

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	23	N/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	172	N/a

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	104

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.0
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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	1999	89	86	175

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	47	46	41
	Girls	59	46	39
	Total	106	92	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (61)	53 (46)	46 (52)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (28)	22 (25)	13 (19)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (29)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	41	40	57
	Girls	41	52	59
	Total	82	92	116
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	48 (56)	53 (62)	55 (60)
	National	64 (62)	66 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (20)	25 (30)	43 (33)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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	1999	99	72	171

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	36	94	97
	Girls	25	69	69
	Total	61	163	166
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	36 (34)	95 (89)	99 (93)
	National	46.3 (44)	90.7 (89)	95.7 (89)

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



GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	31 (30.4)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

### **Attainment at the end of the sixth form**

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	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	N/a	N/a	N/a

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	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
National	17.7	18.1	17.9	2.7	2.8	2.8

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	N/a	N/a
	National	N/a	82.5

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	12
Indian	0
Pakistani	83
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	0
White	829
Any other minority ethnic group	14

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	16	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	36	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 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	51.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79
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### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	N/a
Key Stage 3	23
Key Stage 4	20.7

## **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	1979073
Total expenditure	1964302
Expenditure per pupil	2159
Balance brought forward from previous year	59339
Balance carried forward to next year	74110



## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	947
Number of questionnaires returned	184

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	59	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	56	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	59	5	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	59	15	2	3
The teaching is good.	28	65	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	51	23	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	45	8	1	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	40	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	51	15	3	7
The school is well led and managed.	32	58	2	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	60	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	49	3	1	7



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

### **ENGLISH**

73. Inspection evidence shows that students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. This is confirmed by the results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests, which were close to the national average in the proportion of students achieving Level 5 and above. The proportion reaching Level 6 and above was lower than the national average. The school's results were better in 1998. The results, when compared with similar schools nationally, are above average. Girls achieve marginally better results than the boys do and, overall, results in the tests between 1996 and 1999 show a gradual, but slow upward trend in performance.
74. The proportion of students who gained A\* to C grades in the 1999 GCSE examinations was below the national averages in both language and literature. However, the percentage of students gaining A\* to G grades was close to the national averages and has been for a number of years. Students achieve more A\* to C grades in English than they do in English literature and just over one-third or more of all entrants gain the high pass grades, with girls outperforming boys, though the gap was less marked in 1999. Few students gain the higher grades, A\* to A. Lower examination results in the literature paper are attributable to the prior attainment of students, many of whom were reluctant readers. This is now being tackled effectively. The 1998 results in both subjects were higher when 48 per cent of students achieved A\* to C in English. Results fluctuate from year to year, but there is a steady improvement and students' results in the subject are among those in which students achieve point scores just below the national average. Students nearing the end of Key Stage 4 are attaining below the national expectation for sixteen year olds.
75. During Key Stage 3, students follow the full National Curriculum and emphasis is placed on developing speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively to instructions in both key stages and speak confidently and enthusiastically. This was well illustrated in a Year 7 lesson where students demonstrated a good understanding of the language of advertising as they analysed and discussed visual images accurately. Year 9 high attaining students undertook a leading role in group work to review and evaluate their work and provided succinct feedback. Students in all year groups make good progress when they ask and answer questions and use talk to approach their learning. They analyse their learning and share their ideas and viewpoints. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, students used drama to produce a script based on Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 1. In a Year 11 lesson, low attaining students used the question and answer approach effectively to analyse Maya Angelou's poem 'Life Doesn't Frighten Me'. There are, however, some older students in Key Stage 4 who do not readily take part in oral work and, in Key Stage 4, students do not organise their ideas clearly to give lengthy answers. Listening skills tend to wane towards the end of some lessons.
76. In recent years, the reading skills of almost one-quarter of the new intake are below average and many students are reluctant readers. It is too early to evaluate the impact of the recently introduced initiatives on the attainment and learning of all students at the end of each key stage. However, the reading records on students with statements and those with special educational needs in Year 7, show that the majority make good gains in improving their reading and spelling age as a result of the intensive literacy programme. Reading skills are good for the high attaining students and satisfactory for most students. In responding to a range of texts, students in all years use quotations to support their views and they can give personal responses and focus sharply on a writer's use of language. This was illustrated in a Year 9 lesson where students analysed the play "Gregory's Girl". The high attaining students have a secure knowledge and understanding of literary texts, as seen in their responses to "Buddy" and "Macbeth" in Year 9 and to Delaney's "A Taste of Honey".
77. Statemented students and students with special educational needs respond accurately to a range of texts, but their response is at a basic level and comments are generalised. They make good use of phonetic skills when developing their reading skills. All students use annotating skills as well as scanning and skimming. By the end of Year 9, students use good



analytical skills when discussing non-fiction texts for discursive writing. Students in all year groups do not use good intonation when reading aloud and some experience difficulties pronouncing unfamiliar words.

78. Students in all year groups undertake a wide range of writing and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Creative writing is a strength of high attaining students and discursive writing, as well as assignments on the media, is well written as students employ rhetorical language to approach their work. In a Year 9 lesson, students planned and presented a range of arguments on a range of topical and ethical issues. The high attaining students in both key stages, in particular the gifted students, write with control and command and use a wide vocabulary. These students are adept at planning, re-drafting and editing their work and have a clear understanding of the power of language. For example, two of the highest attaining students in Year 10, a boy of minority ethnic origin and a girl, write highly stylised essays showing artistic craft. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards in writing are satisfactory for most students and good for the high attaining students. They make good progress in structuring and writing extended essays. Students with statements and those with special educational needs, make good use of writing frames to structure their essays in both key stages. They make good gains in completing comprehension exercises when they are supported in lessons.
79. Many students do not spell accurately and this affects their progress. Many do not use editing skills as they rely on their teachers to correct their technical mistakes. Basic grammatical features are not fully understood by many low attaining students.
80. Students have very good attitudes to their English work, with many working beyond the end of a lesson. Behaviour is good and they respond well to the set challenges, using the opportunities given to them to develop their ideas. They concentrate well and show interest. Students listen closely to instructions and work well without being distracted. Group work is carried out impressively and learning is fun for the younger students in Key Stage 3. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on "Macbeth", students developed drama and experimented with words, beats and rhythm using a tambourine and choral speaking. They support each other and high and middle attaining students, particularly in Key Stage 3, confidently take responsibility for assessing and reviewing each other's work.
81. Teaching is a strength of the department. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection in both key stages. Teaching is good or better in three-fifths of lessons in comparison to half in the previous inspection. It is satisfactory in the remaining lessons. Altogether, one-third of lessons were very good or excellent. The teaching in both key stages is of a similar standard. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use very well planned lessons that identify the learning objectives for all pupils in the class. They select from a wide range of resources, including the OHP, percussion instruments, interesting articles and quality worksheets to develop students' understanding of the subject. Work is carefully matched to the students' needs, including students with a statement and special educational needs. Well-structured lessons, with a range of timed activities and interesting resources, maintain students' interest and sustain their progress. Learning objectives are always clear and are shared with students. Teachers have high expectations, effectively question students, build up their vocabulary and develop an understanding of examination techniques. There is effective guidance and modelling during reading and this elicits good responses from students. There is a good balance and integration of activities and pace is brisk. Intensive individual support and effective partnership teaching contribute to the learning of students with statements and special educational needs making good gains in lessons. Management of lessons is good and homework is used to extend and consolidate students' learning. Work is carefully and constructively marked and targets for improvement are set. Occasionally, sufficient time is not given for summing up lessons or for providing feedback. Very good use is made of display throughout the department. Students' work is well presented in display and used as exemplar material for other students. There are also good displays of information about language use and literary texts. All of these features have a positive impact on students' response to the subject and the standards they achieve.
82. The department has a cohesive and stable team, responsibilities are delegated and members work together well to help students improve. A very good and forward thinking assistant head of department supports the head of department. However, the department has not responded fully to all of the issues raised in the last inspection. Virtually all members are now specialist



teachers of English. Teaching has improved significantly and is contributing to students' progress. The curriculum provides breadth and balance, but units are still being developed and tested. Students evaluate their work, but the department has not yet developed procedures for monitoring and evaluating both teaching and learning. Assessment procedures remain undeveloped. Baseline data and test and examination results are not analysed to set targets, identify areas for improvement and curriculum planning. Folios exemplifying standards and standardising work are not in place. This is an area that still requires an urgent overhaul to raise standards. The department development plan does not contain information on developing and monitoring targets. The department has begun to look at the under-achievement of boys and has introduced the Certificate of Achievement for the lower attaining students. Literature from other literary heritages is not widely used in Key Stage 3 and the use of information technology is not written into the departmental curriculum. Despite the obvious improvements, much remains to be done in managing and developing change if standards are to rise beyond their present levels. The department is well placed to achieve this further improvement. The time allocated for teaching the subject in both key stages is insufficient and, especially at Key Stage 4, is below the national average. This reduces the opportunity students have to study the literary texts in depth and gain higher GCSE grades.

## **Drama**

83. By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainments are in line with the standards expected nationally. Standards are below the national expectations in Years 7 and 8 and the lack of organisational skills and the immaturity of these younger students hinder progress; by the end of Year 9 pupils have overcome these features. At the end of Key Stage 4, students work in line with national levels with high attaining students working above the average expected nationally. A small number of students take the GCSE option, but the numbers are too small to make a comparison with the national average. In 1999, all students achieved a grade with 50 per cent gaining GCSE grades B and C. They make good use of class and research notes for project work in all years, but homework is not always completed by students in Key Stage 4.
84. Students use a range of dramatic conventions and take part in role play convincingly, particularly the high attaining students who stand out in performances. Most students readily volunteer to take on leading roles and do extra work, as illustrated in Year 9, where students prepared backdrops for performances and acted as promenaders in their presentations of Russell's "Blood Brothers". In this lesson, all students, including statemented students and those with special educational needs, worked well in pairs, improvising and developing ideas with the promenaders providing commentaries. Year 11 students work confidently when exploring ideas and high attaining students understand the tensions that occur in role and make good use of these to introduce conflict between characters, as was seen in their work on Greek theatre.
85. Students have good listening skills and are attentive during performances. However, their restricted vocabulary and poor speaking skills diminish the standard of their work. Students in Year 7 do not project their voices sufficiently and most students do not have the skills required to review and evaluate performances effectively. They work well in groups, sharing and developing their ideas and accepting the principles underpinning team-work. There is a small minority of students with behavioural difficulties who disrupt group and class work.
86. The teaching of drama is mainly satisfactory and occasionally good. Good subject knowledge and clear learning objectives contribute to developing students' drama skills. Previous work is clearly reviewed to reinforce learning, but reviews are not always sufficiently detailed to help some low attaining students and students who have missed lessons to be more engaged in their learning. The standards of control and discipline are good and time is used effectively to develop a range of activities. Assessment of students' work takes place, but students are seldom given the time to reflect on, discuss, review and evaluate their work. These skills are under-developed.
87. Drama is not well supported as an option at Key Stage 4. The low allocation of time at Key Stage 3 reduces the opportunities students have to learn good drama skills in preparation for Key Stage 4. It also limits their option choice and the place of drama in the whole curriculum



needs to be reviewed. The teacher is committed to developing the students' skills in drama and the subject contributes to their social and cultural development through involvement in extra-curricular activities, including productions, working with playwrights and on projects linked to the local theatre. The schemes of work, some of which are dated, do not match the needs of all students, in particular those of the lower attaining students who do not understand some of the more difficult topics. Students evaluate their work as part of the annual review, but the assessment procedures do not provide parents with information on their children's achievements and progress in the subject. There is a large drama studio, but it is drab, cold, poorly furnished and requires full refurbishment. The action plan, which falls within the remit of the performing arts department, is vague and without targets or clear direction on the growth and development of the subject within the department. A rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring and reviewing the department is not in place to develop the needs of the subject and to raise standards.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

88. The school has worked hard to introduce a number of literacy strategies in all year groups, particularly in Year 7. Procedures are in place for assessing the literacy skills of the new intake. The level of intensive support provided for students with learning difficulties is good and the literacy scheme, timetabled as part of the English curriculum, is contributing to developing students' confidence and independence. Students enjoy working on the scheme. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme, as it is being run as a trial project. Experienced teachers co-ordinate the literacy scheme, but procedures for monitoring the work in departments are not in place.
89. Every department is represented on the literacy working party and staff have received appropriate training. Teaching fully promotes good practice in speaking, reading and writing in most subjects. There was little evidence of these skills being developed in music. In religious education, challenging lesson introductions promote discussion skills. Most students speak confidently and work collaboratively in groups, using talk to review and develop their learning, as seen in a Year 8 geography lesson, where students prepared group presentations on environmental issues. In history, they form hypotheses, analyse and make deductions and comparisons when talking about events. They listen attentively to instructions and listening skills are sharpened when teaching provides clear explanation and interesting resources. This was well illustrated in a Year 9 history lesson on World War 1. Students follow, respond to and contribute to discussion clearly. Sometimes, teachers give lengthy discourses and students are not engaged in their learning. This limits opportunities for oral work.
90. Many students read accurately, expressively and with understanding. Subjects such as history, information technology, physical education and religious education actively encourage students to use the library and carry out research. There is very little research in mathematics or art; students investigating the work of artists do not extract and use information to show understanding, as they simply copy out their reading. Good opportunities for reading aloud are provided in religious education and occasionally in mathematics and history.
91. Students write for a range of purposes and good writing skills are reinforced in a number of subjects, such as geography and history. Teachers emphasise basic grammar and punctuation and key words are displayed in all subjects. The writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing work, is practised in Key Stage 4 in history and design technology. High attaining history students in Key Stage 4 have well developed drafting and editing skills, as seen in the assignment on political issues in Northern Ireland. In mathematics, high attaining students extend their learning by making additional notes in their own time.

### **MATHEMATICS**

92. Students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the level expected nationally at the ages of 14 and 16. Performance in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national average, but in line with the average in comparison with schools with students from similar backgrounds. The difference between the performance of girls and boys in 1999 is against the national trend – girls achieving slightly higher levels of attainment. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, over the



last four years, measured in terms of average National Curriculum levels, broadly follows the national trend. There is no significant difference in attainment between different ethnic groups. The proportion of students achieving A\* to C grades, in the 1999 GCSE examinations, is below the average for all schools nationally and for schools with students from similar backgrounds. These results are significantly less good than the figures for 1998 or 1997. In 1999, girls' and boys' relative performances are against the national trend, the boys attaining better than girls. Students' results in mathematics are lower than those in English and science in 1999. Until this year, there has been a modest increase year by year in the proportion of students obtaining A\* to C grades.

93. The attainment of students on entering at Year 7, based on their Key Stage 2 levels, is below the national average. An analysis of the national data compared with that of the school's shows that students make satisfactory progress during both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 although their attainment remains below the expected level.
94. By the end of Key Stage 3, the lowest attaining students can use a calculator to solve simple problems involving the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Middle attaining students in Year 9 can construct prisms using paper and glue, sketch these models accurately on isometric paper and use them as visual aids in the investigation of planes of symmetry. Higher attaining Year 9 students investigate and visualise the paths traced by points moving according to a rule. Middle attaining students in Year 11 are able to investigate systematically a mathematical problem and to present their results in writing in a clear and logical manner. The highest attaining students in Year 11 can use trigonometry to find the lengths of sides and the sizes of angles in triangles, making a logical choice as to the most efficient method to use.
95. Students with special educational needs make good progress over Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress over Key Stage 4. This is a result of effective support teaching which ensures that these students are fully challenged relative to their levels of attainment. A small group of lowest attaining Year 9 students were extracted to follow broadly the same work on rotational symmetry as the main group. By the end of the lesson, they could identify objects having rotational symmetry and were able to use the correct mathematical language. Over the course of a lesson on probability, with teaching support, a lower attaining Year 10 group was able to calculate the probability of certain events occurring. This work involved handling simple fractions, which was a real challenge for the group, but the students persevered.
96. Students have a satisfactory attitude to the subject and many say that they enjoy it. The great majority come fully prepared for lessons and settle down to the task in hand. Students are willing to listen to others and are mature enough to seek help, from their peers or teacher, when needed. Levels of concentration are usually high. Students show an interest in their work and written work is usually well presented. These positive attitudes promote progress.
97. The quality of teaching is good at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. It is always at least satisfactory and, in two-thirds of lessons, it is good or better. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are well aware of the common difficulties experienced by students.
98. Relationships with students are good and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers know the students in their groups, are aware of their particular needs, and provide work matched to their levels of attainment.
99. Students experience a range of learning and teaching styles. These include guided discovery (a Year 10 group working on angle sums in polygons), practical work (a Year 9 group making and analysing patterns based on Roman tiles and Year 11 students investigating a locus problem using real people and measuring tape), games (a Year 7 group practising algebraic substitution) and group work (a Year 8 group set problems in calculating probabilities to be solved as they think fit).
100. Almost all lessons begin or end with a short numeracy activity. Students enjoy these as they add variety to their learning. The aims of the lesson are explained in appropriate language to the class at the start, and re-capped at the end of the lesson. Marking is regular and is usually accompanied by positive comments. There is evidence that students respond to these, for example, by using rulers to draw neater tables or improving the layout of their work. Homework



is set regularly, but in many cases, teachers are unwilling to allow students to take text books home. This produces a considerable number of worksheets, which tend to give a false impression of disorder. The department is considering producing in-house homework booklets with the possible inclusion of material which would involve and inform parents to a greater extent.

101. Standards in mathematics suffer as result of the present curriculum model. For example, the time available for mathematics in Year 11 is below the national average. In the present timetable, all Year 11 mathematics teaching occurs on two consecutive days. This sometimes makes the marking feedback and continuity of teaching difficult.
102. The department is positively led and comprises a small team of teachers who are committed to raising standards and increasing the profile of mathematics within the school. All members of the department have participated in out-of-school in-service training over the last twelve months, which has developed teaching skills. The effect of this is seen in the establishment of a more formal and systematic monitoring of teaching and marking, as well as a greater use of national test data.
103. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching. Lessons are now better planned and involve a higher level of challenge. These changes, coupled with others outlined above, provide a good foundation to improve levels of attainment.

### **Numeracy**

104. The standard of numeracy is satisfactory, although it is slightly better in Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. This is particularly so with the higher attaining students in Key Stage 3, who have experienced the National Numeracy Project in primary schools. The department is involved in the local numeracy summer school and the associated in-service training and finds this a useful source of teaching ideas. Short numeracy activities are now a feature of mathematics lessons. Many of these encourage students to explain their own methods of calculation. The department has adopted the LEA's numeracy policy and assessed its approaches to numeracy. However, at present, numeracy does not feature directly in the schemes of work of all subjects.
105. There is no evidence that levels of numeracy skills impede progress in any subject of the curriculum. Students in all year groups have the opportunity to apply numeracy skills. In science, students successfully measure mass, time and length from a wide variety of scales and meters. From Year 9 onwards, calculations using formulae based on Ohm's law are successfully carried out. In design technology, students develop effective skills in geometrical, measurement and drawing. Simple bar and line graphs are well used in physical education and English, as are the construction and interpretation of time lines in religious education and history. Year 10 information technology students successfully construct spreadsheets. This involves understanding and using algebraic notation, as well as using basic number skills to test the operation of their spreadsheets. Numeracy skills are well practised in geography. These include the use of 6-figure grid references in Year 9, which involves estimating tenths, and interpreting a wide range of graphical displays, such as pie charts, divided bar charts, line graphs and pictograms.
106. There are one or two instances of numeracy skills being directly taught within subjects. These include drawing lines of best fit to find the resistance of a conductor from experimental data in Year 11 science and, in Year 10 geography, the interpretation of graphs on 3 axes showing the relative composition of three component mixtures.

### **SCIENCE**

107. Attainment in the national testing at the end of Key Stage 3, over the last three years, has been below the national average, but is above the average of similar schools. However, the percentage of students improving by one level from Key Stage 2 is above the national average for all levels of prior attainment. Average points scores over the last three years show a slight falling trend, which is similar to the trend nationally. Over the last four years, the performance of boys was close to the national average, with girls below. Attainment at GCSE in Double



Award Science has risen from below the national average in 1997 to average for the last two years, whilst the average point score was 4.1 (4.3 nationally). GCSE results, when compared with schools with students from similar backgrounds, were well above average in 1999. The attainments of students nearing the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with the national expectation.

108. Students at the end of Key Stage 3 are attaining below the national expectation. The highest attaining students in Year 9 have good knowledge and understanding of forces. Importantly, they are well able to apply this knowledge of forces to new examples. Middle attaining students in Year 9 have a satisfactory understanding of the differences between renewable and non-renewable forms of energy. Students' laboratory skills at end of Key Stage 3 are satisfactory, with the expected understanding of the principles of fair testing. The highest attaining students in Year 11 have a good understanding of the variables which control the speed of electric motors. At Key Stage 4, in their investigations, students show the expected understanding of fair testing. They show appropriate awareness of the criteria necessary to achieve the higher grades. The department has successfully increased its efforts on investigations as a way of improving GCSE grades. Students in both key stages have expected levels of factual recall and understanding of recent work.
109. Students, overall, make good progress at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, students enter the school with below average attainment. Although attainment is still below the national average at the end of Key Stage 3 it is important to recognise the above average improvement in levels from Key Stage 2 which the students achieve. At Key Stage 4, students start from below the national average and achieve average results at GCSE. Observations from lessons confirm the good progress in both key stages. In lessons, higher attaining students in Year 9 make good progress when learning about trends in the reactivity of metals in the same group of the Periodic Table. Year 8 students make at least good progress whether investigating the effect of cooling rates on the crystal size when molten rocks solidify, or ways to produce sound from various instruments. The highest attaining students in Year 11 make very good progress, when learning about electromagnetic induction and the economics of industrial chemical processes. Similarly, students in Year 10 make very good progress when learning about plate tectonics, or when investigating physical and chemical changes. There are many examples of students with special educational needs achieving higher GCSE grades than might be expected from their attainment on entry. The good progress students make at both key stages is due to the high quality teaching by an enthusiastic team of teachers, who develop good relationships with their students.
110. Students' attitudes to learning in four-fifths of lessons are good or better. They show genuine interest in their work. Behaviour is good, so that all students have every opportunity to learn. This is a significant reason why students who join the school with below average attainment leave the school with average GCSE results. Students work well together when carrying out experiments, following instructions, and working safely. Students act responsibly when moving around the laboratory to collect materials and equipment. When questioned by teachers, they answer courteously and to the best of their abilities. Many students show initiative when asked to research a particular topic for homework.
111. The quality of teaching is a strength of this successful department. In eight-tenths of lessons, teaching is good or better. There is no significant difference between the key stages in the quality of teaching. Teachers set high standards for discipline, which are achieved. Teachers have thorough subject knowledge and understanding, which is to be expected as teachers mostly teach their specialist science subject. Expectations of students are appropriate. Lessons are carefully planned, often using a range of resources and methods. Teachers provide work which recognises the different attainment of students in classes which are setted, but do not always provide for different attainments within one class. The setting arrangements for the different groups are accurate. Within sets, teachers recognise that the attainment of students varies and are developing suitable work to cope with this. Regular topic tests take place, which help to raise the levels of students' recall and understanding. There is some inconsistency among the teachers with regard to the quality of marking and methods of assessment. Generally, supportive comments which focus on the science content, are not used sufficiently. The use of homework to support students' learning is very good. Teachers care about the attainment of all their students and are rewarded by the good progress they make.



112. Schemes of work plan effectively for continuity of students' learning in both key stages. Nearly all schemes follow a common format, which include detailed lesson plans, with health and safety risks identified. Assessment procedures help staff to form similar attaining teaching groups. These procedures are suitable for ranking students but the department does not examine how it uses assessment in order to improve the agreement between teacher assessments and the results in national tests at Key Stage 3. The department does not make enough use of target setting as a means of further improving results. Annual review sheets contain space to grade students' performance in the various attainment targets, but the comments are not specific enough for parents to know what their child should do to improve. There is a good team spirit in this well-managed department. The department is well supported by a qualified, efficient technician team, but it is inadequate to service all of the laboratories. Accommodation is good. The teachers are well aware of how information technology can be used in science and have sufficient expertise to implement this further. The department does not have access to high quality information technology hardware. There are serious shortages of basic equipment, textbooks, and computers. The money made available annually is insufficient for a school of this size and to support the needs of the National Curriculum. The department gives due attention to health and safety, but the Authority last tested portable electrical equipment in 1996. The head of department has brought this to the attention of the senior management team. It is important that the school acts urgently to get this equipment tested so that students are not put at risk unnecessarily. Since the last inspection GCSE results have improved.

## **ART**

113. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards in art are broadly in line with the national average for the majority of students. Standards are higher in some areas of the subject than in others. For example, work in clay modelling is good, particularly in mask-making in Year 8. Work in pencil drawing is good across the key stage, particularly with regard to tone and texture. Techniques for achieving tone and texture are well understood and used in practice. Drawing from observation is good in Year 7 on the "shoe" theme and in figure drawing in Year 9. Portraits in pastel in the style of Modigliani are almost all of a good standard. Again, blending to achieve tone and texture is good. However, painting gets too little time and attention across the key stage. As at the time of the last inspection, there is room for broadening the breadth of study in Key Stage 3. Students would have a broader experience of art if the department planned a shorter time scale on some projects and extended the range of activities for students. The department is hampered in its planning because only half the average amount of time is allocated to art in Year 7 and this has an adverse effect on standards.
114. Standards in GCSE have fluctuated over the past three years, but have been well below the national average. Standards in 1997 and 1999 were very low, at half the national average. Year 11 coursework indicates that attainment in GCSE in 2000 will be below the national average, although some aspects of the work, such as modelling and light sculpture, are generally good. Many students have not yet completed final presentations of work on each project. A much greater pace in lessons is needed if they are to improve on last year's results. There is potential to make greater gains than is evident at present. Students need more scope for wide exploration and initiative. Research is largely copying closely and in detail, rather than exploring areas such as composition, style and technique. However, these close copies are of a good standard. Imaginative development in drawing and painting is weak.
115. Standards in Year 10 are good in the work completed. There is potential for students to achieve above the national average if they work at a similar standard and increase their pace in lessons. In both year groups, detailed work in pencil is of a good standard with good tone and texture. A great proportion of the work is on a small scale and lacking in boldness, flair and dramatic quality, although a small percentage of students produce work of a high standard. All students have good attitudes to the subject and it is a popular choice in Key Stage 4. Students work steadily and with care in all aspects of their work. They take responsibility for their materials and clear up at the end of lessons.



116. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3, half of the teaching is satisfactory and the remainder is good, with an instance of very good teaching. Teachers organise and manage their lessons well. There is also good discipline and teachers have good relationships with their students. All students get individual attention in lessons. However, there is not enough teacher input into lessons, particularly in Key Stage 4. More teacher demonstration and illustration of techniques would enable students to learn the skills needed to improve their standards to an average level in GCSE. For example, there is no evidence of teaching on perspective in Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4. Portfolios of students' work show that too little of the expected coursework is covered in sufficient detail. Students do not have a clear understanding of the design process in Key Stage 4. This needs to be taught more formally. Day-to-day assessment is good and is used to inform students how they can improve their work. Students with special educational needs get individual attention and appropriate help in lessons and they reach their potential in the subject.
117. Although the department acknowledges the need to support literacy, there are many missed opportunities for drawing attention to subject specific words and terms.
118. Strengths of the subject include the commitment of the teachers, who run art clubs each lunchtime and on one evening each week after school. Art is a very popular subject, with a larger than average percentage of students choosing the subject at GCSE. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in three-dimensional work. Students have a satisfactory understanding and knowledge in relation to the world of art. There is an improvement in students' concentration in lessons. However, the range of art activities in Key Stage 3 is still narrow and students work for too long on some themes. There has been no improvement in GCSE results. Funding for the subject is low. There is less than £1 per person allocated for this year. This has a significant effect on standards in GCSE, where approximately 170 students are taking the subject. It restricts provision for research and the development of work on a large scale. Teachers manage their funds very efficiently, making the most of what they can provide. They are very successful in getting students to bring in a range of materials as appropriate for collage. As at the time of the last inspection, many students of all ages appear to derive real enjoyment and satisfaction from the subject. The building programme is still in progress and this restricts the opportunities for displaying students' work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

119. For technology subjects as a whole, GCSE results in 1999 were below the national average for A\* to C grades, but above the national average for A\* to G grades. This is an improvement on 1998 figures, which were particularly poor, but still represents a downward trend since the last inspection. Various factors have contributed to this including extensive building work and changes to GCSE courses and examination methods. Inspection evidence is that the school has laid a sound foundation for continued improvement. Girls continue to outperform boys. These overall figures disguise differences in achievement between the various disciplines within the subject area. Textile technology achieves a better A\* to C success rate than food or resistant materials. GNVQ manufacturing results in 1999 were above the national average.
120. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment matches the national average for students aged 14. Standards of work vary between subject areas, with particularly good work taking place in control technology, computer-aided manufacture and textiles. For example, a Year 7 group was introduced to computer-aided manufacturing techniques by designing and making a paper fastener. Students successfully used card modelling techniques to test their ideas and then confidently entered their shapes into the computer program in preparation for manufacture. Similarly, students in a Year 9 control technology lesson were actively engaged in using software (developed in the school) to design and activate an alarm system. Students with special educational needs were able to achieve standards similar to the others in the group. Higher attaining students can use a range of techniques to research ideas and present their findings, including some good examples of the use of computers to process text, generate images and improve presentation. Standards of hand - produced graphics and text are less



well developed. Some projects in resistant materials allow limited opportunities for the development of design skills.

121. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is currently at the level expected nationally for students aged 16. In control technology and textiles, students build upon their positive Key Stage 3 experiences to produce work of a high standard. For example, students in a Year 11 textiles group, working on their chosen area of interest for GCSE projects, demonstrated good independent working skills and their folders contained a greater depth of research than that seen in other areas. Students in resistant materials are given opportunities to use computer-aided manufacturing techniques in making their designs. For example, in a Year 11 resistant materials lesson, students were cutting housing joints by both hand and computer-aided methods, allowing comparisons between the two. Students across all subject areas are confident in the use of a wide range of computer-controlled equipment and know how the technology can help them with their work. The integration of information technology into much of the work of the department is of particular benefit to all students, including those with special educational needs.
122. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Most students make progress in relation to their attainment on entry. The use of project outline booklets, which set targets and allow staff and students to track progress, is a valuable strategy and a significant factor in improving standards. Students make most progress when lessons are structured to meet clearly explained targets. For example, Year 7 students involved in a computer-aided manufacture project clearly benefited from the varied activities in the lesson and developed a deeper understanding of the processes involved. One student with special educational needs maintained his rate of progress and had his interest revived when he began computer work. Progress at Key Stage 4 is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good. Progress is greatest where students are able to build on previous experience. For example, students in a Year 11 food technology lesson were able to use their knowledge of sensory testing procedures to conduct a small consumer survey of their prepared dish.
123. Students enjoy working in technology and this is reflected in their generally positive attitudes. They are usually well behaved and keen to participate in lessons. Occasional lapses are generally dealt with effectively by staff. Students work well in groups, take pride in their work and respond positively to praise and encouragement. Students with special educational needs respond well to practical activities.
124. Teaching at both key stages is good. Three-fifths of lessons seen were good or very good, one-third were satisfactory and only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers have established good working relationships with students which, in the main, are based on mutual respect and trust. Teachers are knowledgeable, experienced, willing to acquire new skills and work well as a team to develop the technology curriculum. The best teaching was characterised by thorough planning, enthusiastic delivery and the use of praise and encouragement. Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching strategies. For example, in a Year 9 textiles lesson, the teacher maintained the pace of the lesson by a combination of individual, whole group and smaller group activities. Students' interest was maintained throughout. Lesson planning includes appropriate measures for students with special educational needs.
125. A strength of the department is that it introduces students to computerised machinery at an early stage. The development work on systems and control technology undertaken in conjunction with a local firm is of major importance and of great benefit to the school. Some resistant materials projects are skills based and allow little scope for the development of design skills. GNVQ manufacturing has been a successful addition to the broad range of design and technology subjects offered at GCSE level. Assessment procedures are sound, although the marking of students' work is mainly carried out at the conclusion of a project rather than during its course where it would be of greater value in helping them to improve. National Curriculum levels are not used in day-to-day assessment and students are not aware of the level at which they are working. Project outline booklets, however, clearly set out what students have to do to make progress. Procedures for setting targets for students are in place and have the potential to become increasingly more effective in raising standards as they are refined and developed. The setting and marking of homework are not sufficiently rigorous to



make it an effective tool for raising standards. Design projects are set in a context which helps students to relate the work to the world of business and industry. Textiles projects make an effective contribution to students' aesthetic development by using art as a source of inspiration. Literacy skills are well developed in all aspects of the work that students do. They engage in constructive discussion about design and teachers are careful to insist on the correct use of terminology in the subject. This reinforces students' understanding and recall of the subject.

126. The leadership of the department is good. Schemes of work have been revised and a common approach to designing and making across each subject specialism has been established. Staff training needs have been identified and matched to curriculum needs and teachers are effectively deployed. The department makes good use of the technician's skills in class demonstrations providing students with examples of good work practice. A recently completed building programme has given the department excellent accommodation and equipment. Funding is low and needs careful management. Except for the co-operation between art and textiles, the links between art and technology are tenuous.
127. Since the last inspection, the school has improved provision for control technology and maintained the high standard of work in textiles. Information technology skills have been more successfully integrated into technology projects. The school has not been able to maintain its previous level of examination results because of the reasons mentioned at the outset, but the department is in a good position to foster further improvements in standards.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

128. At the end of Key Stage 3, in 1999, attainment was assessed by the school to be in line with national standards for students aged 14. Almost two-thirds of the students achieved the level expected. Girls achieved much better than boys. During the inspection, attainment in lessons and the standard of students' work were judged to be below national expectations.
129. As part of the school's option arrangements for Key Stage 4, geography is a popular choice and the number continuing with the subject over the past 3 school years has been above the national average. Attainment in GCSE examinations at grades A\* to C is below national average, but above the overall performance of the school. Results in geography over the period 1996 to 1999 have been good when compared to most other subjects taken by students in Key Stage 4. In 1999, 43% of the entry achieved higher grades compared with 53% nationally. In contrast to previous years and in contrast to national trends, in 1999, boys achieved slightly better than girls at grades A\* to C. When the results across the full range of grades (A\* to G) is taken into account, students are achieving above national standards. For the past 3 years all the students entered have gained a pass grade and the average score for each student has improved and is close to the national average.
130. Progress in Key Stage 3 is generally satisfactory. The rate of progress varies. For example, in one Year 7 group completing a report following a visit to study a local stream, students grasp the skills of using the measurements they made to produce cross-section diagrams accurately to scale. This is because the techniques used, the lesson activities planned and the resources used were well matched to the range of students. Where additional help from a support teacher is available, students with special educational needs make good progress. Where progress is slower, as for example, in one Year 8 class studying latitude and longitude, less effective use is made of the full range of resources, there is no extra support for the group and the length of the lesson leads to a loss of pace and challenge.
131. Progress in Key Stage 4 across all levels of attainment is generally satisfactory. This is because the students who have chosen the subject are well motivated and benefit from the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in their earlier studies. In a Year 10 group looking at patterns of employment, students were stimulated by the excellent use of video clips showing how changes in the Sheffield region over the last three decades can be used as a case study from which they can produce good written work and graphs. In this situation progress and the rate of learning is very good.



132. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good. Students settle to work quickly, they understand what is expected and co-operate well with their teachers. Relationships are very good. Students work with interest and when opportunities arise for group work, they show respect for each other's view points. Their broader social and personal development is enhanced through the range of classwork and fieldwork. Books, resources and equipment are carefully used and most of the students enjoy their work and are eager to learn and improve.
133. Teaching is generally good at Key Stage 3 and is consistently good and sometimes very good at Key Stage 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge, expectations are high and work is well planned. In three-quarters of the lessons seen, teaching is good or better. Where, occasionally, teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the objectives and planning of the lesson do not make full use of assessment information. When this happens the resources and tasks are less well matched to the wide range of students' abilities and, as a result, not all students work at an appropriate pace and level. Teachers manage students very effectively. Lessons are orderly, there is a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere and teachers encourage and value students' contributions. On rare occasions, when reminders to individuals about following school routines are needed, this is done firmly and fairly. Good use is made of the opportunities to reinforce basic skills of literacy and numeracy and increasingly the teaching and learning benefits from the use of the school's facilities for information and communications technology. All students receive regular feedback on their work and homework provides opportunities to develop independent learning and extend the work done in lessons.
134. The schemes of work include fieldwork activities for students in all years and good use is made of the local environment. Students in Key Stage 4 respond well to the residential course in the Peak District. Teachers mark students' work consistently and maintain appropriate records. Students' progress is monitored and there are good arrangements for assessment. As yet, this information is not fully analysed and used to review performance and to set future targets in both key stages.
135. Geography is part of the human studies faculty and benefits from good leadership and management. Team work is strong. Documentation is clear and there is very good support for policies and procedures that reflect the school's aims and values. Resources and finance are used effectively and efficiently and the development plan is in line with whole school priorities. Since the last inspection, there has been good progress and the work in geography makes a significant contribution to the raising of standards.

## **HISTORY**

136. In 1999, the proportion of students attaining GCSE grades A\* to C was below the national average, but was above average for the grades A\* to G. Boys attained higher results than girls in 1999, but both boys and girls were below their respective national averages. Students' results in history, however, were higher than their achievement in most other subjects.
137. In work seen during the inspection, students' standards of attainment at age 14 is broadly in line with that expected of students of the same age nationally. Students gain knowledge of historical periods such as the Romans and non-European civilisations; they have a sense of chronology and can place events in time. They develop skills in using sources of evidence, though many find difficulty in interpreting illustrative material such as cartoons. Students acquire knowledge of historical terms and write competently, sometimes using computers, to express ideas and views on topics such as the morality of the slave trade. A significant minority of students show weakness in literacy; particularly spelling which reduces the quality of writing. Discussion is a feature of many lessons, group work is generally effective, but responses are sometimes insufficiently developed.
138. In work seen during the inspection, students' standards of attainment at age 16 are average for students of the same age nationally. Students acquire knowledge of topics such as the contributions of Pasteur and Jenner to advances in medical science in the early nineteenth century, but do not always recognise the links between the social conditions of the time and medical progress made. They understand the nature of the problems faced by settlers to the American Plains in the nineteenth century and organise written work in a coherent and



sequential form. Good standards are evident in GCSE coursework. Higher attaining students write reasoned accounts about issues such as the Northern Ireland conflict and successfully use computers for research and presentational purposes. Many students however, show insufficient development of reasoning and opinion about events and, on some occasions, work is copied from text without adaptation to show understanding.

139. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Lessons have clear aims and incorporate opportunities for student-centred activities, which generate interest and enjoyment. Learning is effective in Year 7, for instance when students show independence and responsibility in researching and accessing information about Roman civilisation using computers. Students with special educational needs make good progress where there is additional adult support available, but students for whom English is an additional language in Year 8 made slow progress in the absence of support when writing about Tudor times. Lower attaining students make sound progress when provided with resources designed to meet their needs, but continuous writing presents difficulty for many students. At both key stages, teachers make good use of resources, including books, photographs, film and computers, which provide a focus for learning and good progress is made. Learning is not fully effective in instances when teachers impart knowledge but neglect to challenge students to develop ideas and responses to issues. Discipline is good and lessons proceed smoothly; occasionally learning slows when control is not fully effective in ensuring students concentrate fully when they are working independently or in small groups. The marking of books is mostly satisfactory with attention being given to improving spelling accuracy and offering encouragement to produce good work. Occasionally, marking is insufficiently regular and does not always set targets for improvement.
140. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experience, particularly in moral and cultural studies of issues about slavery and the way of life of the North American Indians. There is coverage of the National Curriculum units at Key Stage 3, but few opportunities are provided for visits and fieldwork at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. This reduces students' breadth of curricular experience. National Curriculum levels are reported to parents at the end of Key Stage 3, but there is insufficient use of data in the monitoring of progress at both key stages and in the setting of attainment targets. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. Schemes of work show detailed planning and identify opportunities for the use of computers to support learning, but do not provide information about the suitability of resources for students of different attainments. The development plan shows broad planning intentions, but is insufficiently precise and the success criteria are not identified.
141. Since the last inspection, the department has maintained the excellent record of success at GCSE grades A\* to G, but there has been a small deterioration at grades A\* to C. The quality of learning has improved at Key Stage 3 and maintained as satisfactory at Key Stage 4. The restricted range of teaching styles reported previously has been addressed and there are more opportunities for work which requires some initiative and organisation by students. Leadership and management have declined from good to satisfactory, but there is improvement in the quality of book resources at both key stages.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

142. The attainment of students in information and communications technology (ICT) at the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national average. Teacher assessments at the end of the key stage have fluctuated during the past three years, but generally show that more students in this school attain Level 4 and above than expected nationally, but fewer attain Levels 6 and 7. Students' attainments in lessons and evidence in students' files match the assessments made. Progress overall is good. Students enter the school with differing experiences of using computers, but most students in Year 7, including those with special educational needs, make quick progress in learning how to log on to the network and call up the programs. By the end of Key Stage 3, students know how to log on to the network, call up programs, retrieve files, print and save work. Most students control the mouse effectively and know that menus are used to help them to create screens or begin other operations. A few students, usually the



higher attaining students and those who have a home computer, use two hands when working at the keyboards and consequently work quicker than others who do not do so. Most students attain satisfactorily when using a word processing package to present text in different styles and they can use short cuts for alterations and improvements. A few of the lower attaining students, who have poor language skills, rely heavily on the spell-checkers. Many students know how to add pictures and scanned images in texts to make the work more acceptable to different audiences. Most students can successfully find information from a CD-ROM and by searching web sites on the Internet. Students know how to collect information, sort it and insert it into a database ready for analysis. Students can find answers to basic questions and create graphs of their results. Students in Year 9 have a good grasp of animation. During the inspection, groups created their own short scenes of popping balloons, windmill sails moving round and making a sun shine. Spreadsheet work is good, as students understand about calculating by using simple formulae. Students have a range of experiences of controlling a screen robot, using sensors to record changes over time, and work with control technology. Students know how to use a digital camera and about loading the results into the computer and they apply this skill to other subjects they study such as history, technology and English.

143. The overall attainment of students at Key Stage 4 is above the national average. In the most recent GCSE examinations, 55 per cent of students attained A\* to C grades and all students attained at least a G grade. Results have been constant for the last three years and overall attainment has risen in the higher-grade range from 17 per cent nine years ago. In the recent GNVQ intermediate examinations, 50 per cent of students attained a distinction. When compared with their other subjects, students' results in ICT are usually the best they attain. By the end of their two-year courses, students have made good progress, built on to the skills they mastered during the previous three years in school and have become adept at using most of the software and hardware available to them. Students generally produce full files of theory, can spot errors in their work and make sensible use of the library for research. Attainment is particularly high on project work, where students collect and manipulate data to work on realistic business situations. They analyse the needs of customers, design a range of company stationery and use spreadsheets to work out solutions to cash flow problems. After consultation with real clients, they assess the value of their work, which shows good understanding of how ICT can be effectively used in society. Portfolio presentation is usually good and students present their colourful work in a desktop published format.
144. The response to ICT is very good at both key stages. Most students show a positive attitude. They listen attentively at the beginning of lessons, are keen to learn and try hard. Behaviour is very good. Students are polite when asking for help and appreciate advice. Students are usually busy throughout the lesson and persevere well. Most students are careful when using the computers and know not to tamper with the machines or alter other peoples files. They understand why they should not access unsuitable information from the Internet. Students do not deface work on display, showing appreciation of others' efforts. When they have to work in pairs, most students work well with each other and share the tasks. A few students sit back and let the more confident or dominant partner do all the work. Most of the lower attainers are very dependent on adult help. The higher attaining students are more likely than others to make joint decisions after discussing problems and how to solve them. Some more confident students help others when the teacher is busy, showing mature attitudes. Students usually finish their work and many students produce a good quantity of work. In order to be more self-sufficient, especially at examination times, most students need encouraging to file and date work more systematically and to improve annotation on their printouts.
145. Throughout the school, the overall quality of teaching in ICT is very good. In the nine lessons observed, a third were good and two-thirds were very good. Teachers know the subject well and pass their enthusiasm on to the students, who like and respect them. Two of the teachers are also mathematics specialists and ensure that numeracy is well addressed in most lessons. For example, the lessons observed using databases and spreadsheets all included basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, various units of measurement and often the use of formulae for calculations. Planning is very good. The scheme of work follows the requirements of the National Curriculum and is designed to secure progress by building up students' skills and knowledge of handling words, graphics and numbers in realisable stages. The modules of work are made interesting for the students by simulating and using real life situations and the individual tasks are designed so that students of all abilities are stretched to their full potential. Expectations are high. At the beginning of lessons, there is usually a recap



of the previous session, which ensures that students have understood the current work before they are moved on to the next. During lessons, oral work is very good. Teachers value students' answers and comments and students gain in confidence, knowing that they have made a contribution to the lesson. Relationships are very good. Teachers move around well to keep students on task and to assess their effort and progress. In many lessons, especially those in Key Stage 3, there is very good support from the technicians and the network manager. Students do not have to wait for equipment to be mended, nor are they prevented from progressing when the teacher is speaking to another student. Marking is thorough. Comments on work, in addition to marks and grades, ensure that students know exactly what has to be done to improve. Homework complements the class activities and often requires students to research away from the computer, ensuring that those who do not have their own equipment are not disadvantaged.

146. Cross-curricular ICT is variable between subjects. Most departmental documents include indications where IT is to be used, but they do not all have their own software and computers. Some departments, including design and technology, geography and science, ensure that students use the equipment when appropriate to do so. For example, students gain insight into control technology by designing buzzers for alarm systems, monitor changes in temperature over time and use programs to examine places. In English, art, music and history, students create texts, do sequencing and find information. In all, the ICT linked lessons ensure that students demonstrate and use the skills learned in other contexts, which aids their overall education. Many teachers, however, need training in the use of ICT in order to extend the range of lesson activities.
147. Leadership of the department is very good. The members of the department work well as a team and are committed to ensuring that the students have equal access to and valuable experiences in ICT lessons. The last inspection report was positive, but the school has made good progress since the last inspection. After regular assessment, the scheme of work constantly changes to introduce consistently relevant modules of work and to exploit the new technology. There is higher attainment at both key stages than previously. Assessment is good and students are involved in self-assessment, particularly at Key Stage 4. Cross-curricular ICT remains patchy, but monitoring is good and some teachers have received training in the use of the computers. All students now have access to the full programmes of study. Old equipment has been relocated and there is a new, centrally managed network. The ratio of students to computers at 11:1 has risen, but remains low and is not good for a school of this type. Facilities for research in the library are better and students use the facilities before school, at breaks and during after-school sessions. The school has access to the Internet. The department has gained funding as a result of a well-argued bid and has gained national recognition in the use of control technology.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

148. The proportion of students gaining grades A\* to C in the GCSE examinations in 1999 was substantially below the national average in French and German. The proportion of students gaining grades A\* to G was just above the national average in French and just below in German. There was a wide disparity between the achievement of boys and girls in German, with girls performing better than boys.
149. In 1999, students performed better in most other subjects than in German, and better in all other subjects than in French. All students taking the Certificate of Achievement examination in either French or German gained a merit or distinction, with the exception of one student who obtained a pass.
150. Students' attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 in French is broadly average. Students' understanding is generally good. There is consistent use of the foreign language in the classroom by teachers and listening exercises are included in most lessons. Lower attainers in a Year 9 class scored well, identifying newly-acquired names of furniture heard on cassette. A mixed ability class in Year 7 German showed a good understanding of the cassette at the end of the lesson; they also used dictionary skills well to identify the names of animals. Oracy is



below average and requires further development. Most responses are short. The best speaking was in a Year 9 class of higher attainers, who spoke confidently about their daily routine. Writing skills are satisfactory, although there is room for greater accuracy in some cases, particularly with accents. Students' work on display shows a good range of topic vocabulary and appropriate attainment levels of the National Curriculum. Half of Year 9 study German instead of French. German was not taught in these classes during the time the inspector was in the school.

151. Students' attainment in French and German by the end of Key Stage 4 is below average. Understanding of the foreign language is quite good. Students are familiar with the topic vocabulary and can extract relevant information from cassettes. The quality and range of students' oral skills vary according to the current teaching set and teaching in previous years. Lower attainers in French in Year 10 ordered something to eat and to drink in a role play, which they presented to the class. Higher attainers in a Year 11 French class spoke confidently about their pocket money. In their written work, higher attainers show a good knowledge of tenses and of vocabulary; average attainers have a good vocabulary, but accuracy in spelling and use varies. Year 11 students in German produced two letters to a campsite during the lesson, using a template to help them. Written work at both key stages would benefit from greater accuracy, with students re-drafting their work and completing corrections.
152. Students' progress at both key stages is satisfactory: where certain skills are weak, they are being developed. Progress for some students, particularly at Key Stage 4, is impaired by poor attendance. There is consistency across the department in the presentation of lessons, with the objectives being shared with the class at the outset, so that students know what they have to do and how it fits in with past work. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and, in two-thirds of the lessons seen, it is good. It is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. The effect of teaching on learning is good. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subjects and make very good use of the foreign language in the classroom to challenge their students. This supports the development of students' understanding. Consistent planning is very good and effective. Past work is consolidated and developed in most lessons, with gains in knowledge. Year 9 higher attainers in French developed their oracy in pair work about daily routines. Lower attainers in a Year 10 French class developed confidence in pair work. In a Year 11 French class, average attainers developed their knowledge of the perfect tense in pair work and extended this knowledge into writing. However, there is still a need in some lessons for teachers to provide better opportunities for students to speak and develop their oral skills, particularly at Key Stage 3. Lesson planning includes a variety of activities and these help students to sustain their concentration. For some students the 70-minute lesson is too long. Teachers use the overhead projector and cassette recorder well in the learning process; they use worksheets well to complete the objectives, and in many cases the results are successful. Occasionally, however, worksheets could be replaced by a different activity. Teachers' management of students is very good; this means that students are productive in most lessons and have the opportunity to think about what they have to do. Teachers set time limits for tasks, so that students do not waste time. Relationships in most lessons are good. Homework is set regularly and extends and consolidates the work in the classroom.
153. Progress made by students with special educational needs is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and is good at Key Stage 4. Students are well integrated into their classes. There is little in-class support, but teachers give good support in lessons and use worksheets with different levels to help individual students. In one Year 9 French class, one student worked with the inspector and correctly identified all twelve television programmes, which he had learnt during the lesson, with a satisfactory pronunciation. The Certificate of Achievement course is appropriate for some students at Key Stage 4.
154. Students' attitudes to work are satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and generally good at Key Stage 4. In most lessons, students are attentive and well behaved. They apply themselves well to their tasks and respond well to good classroom management. Higher attainers show a very good attitude to work. In some lessons, however, some students – usually boys – shout out; boys also require more attention than girls. Relationships are good in pair or group work. In some cases, students' written work could be better presented



155. Within the modern foreign languages department, there is provision for students to study Urdu from Year 9. The number of students taking Urdu at GCSE has increased over the past three years. In the GCSE examinations in 1999 forty-two per cent of students obtained a grade at A\* to C; the remainder all obtained grades D to F. In the one lesson observed in Year 10 the teaching was good, with both teachers providing good support to all students and to the one student with special educational needs in particular. The whole lesson was conducted in Urdu and students' understanding was good. The lesson was well planned, with a variety of tasks designed to cover all skills and students are making appropriate progress for the requirements of the course. They worked well throughout the seventy minutes and sustained their concentration well. Software is required to permit the use of information technology (IT) in the subject. The provision for students with English as an additional language (EAL) is very good.
156. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. The use of grammar is now well founded in the schemes of work and in practice. Independent learning skills have been developed. The teaching staff is now more stable; they work hard and are very committed.
157. All students now study a foreign language, and the Certificate of Achievement course has been introduced. Modern foreign languages have now become part of the school's core subject initiative to raise achievement: monitoring is very good. Primary liaison with pupils in Year 6 is good.
158. The assessment process has identified the gifted and talented students. The remaining weaknesses which are having a detrimental affect on standards are the length of the lessons, seventy minutes, which are too long for the most effective language teaching and the lack of time allocated to the subject in Year 9.

## **MUSIC**

159. When students enter the school, most arrive with below average musical experience, but a small number of students have an above average background.
160. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards are below the national average. The shortage of time has an adverse impact on standards in singing, playing and composing. Students sing insufficiently and irregularly and, after Year 7, do not sing as a class. Most students play keyboards in instrumental work, but performing and music reading skills are insufficiently developed because of lack of time to consolidate these skills. Students who play instruments can name given notes or recognise common signs; others do so mathematically from theory work, but the vast majority need practical activities to improve their understanding of notation. In composing with given ideas, most students lack techniques to develop pieces or the performing skills to realise them. Students listen respectfully to other students and recordings. They appraise sensibly but show limited vocabulary and poor general musical knowledge, for example of composers, forms, styles, artists and instruments. With more time allocated to the subject the standards of learning could be raised through practice and consolidation of these skills.
161. At Key Stage 4, students have achieved below average GCSE pass rates in recent years which reflects the prior attainment of students who opt for the subject. Standards in the current small Year 11 group are well below average. Students show below average instrumental skills; the average student performs at about grade 2 level in Year 11, mainly on keyboard. Students do not sing or play as a class; this prevents them from learning from each other and gaining the confidence to improve their performance. In composing, the few higher attaining students show a secure understanding of musical language. They make good use of computers to develop and notate their work, but the shortage of working computers hampers progress. Students listen attentively, but show limited vocabulary in discussion reflecting their lower than average literacy skills. They show poor retention of general musical knowledge of instruments, composers, artists, styles, forms and well-known pieces of music. In Year 10, standards are higher, but are still just below average. The performing level of students in Year 10 is about grade 3, and students show a satisfactory knowledge of instruments.



162. At Key Stage 3, the quality of learning is satisfactory overall, with unsatisfactory progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding over time, because of the shortage of time allocated to the subject. High attaining students who are instrumentalists and read music, make the best progress, building on their previous learning, experience and their personal interests. Because of the shortage of time the teacher uses an academic approach which does not produce the best learning for the majority of students, who make the best progress when they are actively engaged making or listening to music. Students with special educational needs are well integrated and make similar progress to other students. The poor accommodation also impacts negatively on standards and this was highlighted in the last report. Progress at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory for similar reasons and because of the lack of commitment of many of the students in the current Year 11.
163. Most students show positive attitudes and their good behaviour supports achievement. Students are friendly, open, responsive and respectful towards staff and each other. They use equipment sensibly, work well collaboratively and remain on task when the work interests them. They show initiative and enjoy taking responsibility when given it, for example when composing in groups. They enjoy music making, especially using instruments and singing when it occurs, but strongly dislike written work and the academic approach at all levels. In GCSE work, attitudes are variable. Some students are hardworking, but many do not show enough commitment in Year 11. Not all GCSE students take advantage of opportunities in tuition; most disadvantage themselves by not joining extra-curricular musical activities which would support their work. At all levels, the more committed students join groups in the community such as rock bands, church choirs or community brass bands such as Sheffield 13.
164. In classroom work at Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall. Teaching at Key Stage 4 was also satisfactory. Teaching shows appropriate subject knowledge, understanding of information technology and musicianship - for example in accompanying or arranging. Expectations of students are sometimes too low, especially at Key Stage 3, but are always appropriate in guitar work. Tasks do not always challenge students and occasionally too much time is given to complete them, so that students do not work at a brisk pace. The better lessons proceed at a suitable pace, as in Key Stage 4, but the weaker ones are sluggish. In some lessons the most talented students could be more rigorously challenged. Discipline is secure and relationships are very good in all classes. A range of resources is used in lessons, but more use could be made of visual aids and musical terminology. Verbal assessment is encouraging and supportive, and could be developed to raise standards by including specific targets for students. Homework is set regularly.
165. The head of department is hardworking, but much remains to be done, especially to raise standards in classroom work and to increase numbers in examination work. Department documentation and the scheme of work need to be reviewed to include provision for the development of students' creativity and ensure that adequate records are kept. Assessment procedures need to be developed so that they show students and teachers what they need to learn. The departmental allocation of money is woefully inadequate, resulting in shortages in resources. These include classroom instruments, especially bass tuned percussion, computers, songbooks and music. The accommodation lacks sufficient practice areas and rooms are uninviting, in need of decoration and stimulating display, including students' work. Some are depressing and too small to use, for example for groups in tuition. Technical support is absent, imposing great pressures on the already overburdened staff. The problems of shortage of time at Key Stage 3 and poor accommodation mentioned in the last report remain.
166. Five visiting teachers provide a limited range of instrumental lessons involving 9 boys and 35 girls. As a percentage of the school's population, this is less than half the national average. Commendably, tuition is heavily subsidised by the school. Standards and students' attitudes are satisfactory, but a little higher in brass lessons. Good teaching and learning was observed in brass and guitar work. For the size of the school, there is a limited range of extra-curricular activities. Current activities include a band; the standard is very good and students play with a sense of communication and enjoyment. They listen well to each other and show high levels of orchestral discipline, so that they learn effectively. Standards are enhanced by a residential weekend. Teaching is very good and challenges players. Repertoire is varied and appropriate, direction is clear and routines are well established. The choir meets from time to time but does not meet regularly; this is a weakness. These musicians perform regularly at



concerts, in musicals such as "Big Al" and in the community, but there is no music in assembly. This represents a lost opportunity to promote students' cultural development. Visits to the Crucible Studio in Sheffield support students' work in music. The extra-curricular activities reflect the enthusiasm of the small number of musicians whose performances bring credit to the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

167. Attainment overall is above the national average at the ends of both key stages. In the GCSE, 36% of students gained grades A\* to C in 1999 and 98% gained grades A\* to G. These results were below the national average for grades A\* to C; this is due to the prior attainment in writing of pupils who sat the examinations. They were slightly above the average of other subjects in the school. Results in the GCSE have improved since the last inspection and students taking the GCSE often attain higher grades in PE than in other subjects.
168. Attainment in dance, trampolining and gymnastics are particularly good. A class of Year 7 girls, with little background experience of netball, were all able to make a chest pass with satisfactory accuracy to a partner up to five metres away and applied the two step rule consistently when catching a ball while moving. All boys in a Year 8 class, with very skilful teacher guidance, demonstrated good shape and tension in the performance of seat drops and tuck jumps on the trampoline. Year 9 girls display lots of confidence, imagination and very good collaboration in creating dance sequences and they evaluate the quality of each other's work with some skill. The standards of table tennis of GCSE students are good. They sustain rallies well and apply both back-spin and top-spin effectively. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls in both key stages.
169. Progress is good through both key stages. Year 7 boys in their second ever rugby lesson mostly demonstrated a satisfactory passing technique and applied it effectively in skills practices carried out at pace. In a basketball lesson, Year 8 boys made very good progress in closely controlled dribbling and in the effective use of decoys to create space and extend passing movements. In a full sided football practice match, following careful attention to teacher instruction, Year 10 students much improved their use of space and, as a result, increased the speed and fluency of attacking moves. Within a forty-five minute session of concentrated practice, Year 11 GCSE students made very good progress in developing and linking their chosen six-part trampoline routines, aided by clear teacher guidance and by encouragement from others in the class. Students with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, particularly through Key Stage 3.
170. All but a tiny minority of students have a very positive attitude to lessons. They listen attentively, sustain concentration well and mostly collaborate very well in paired and group activities. This was displayed in an extra-curricular trampoline session, where the students constantly commented constructively on each other's performance. No misbehaviour of any kind was witnessed. Students, particularly in Key Stage 3, are motivated by the well-organised merit and awards system.
171. Teaching is good overall through both key stages and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are very clearly communicated. A good range of teaching and learning styles is employed and in all lessons teachers engender a sense of pace. Relationships with students are very good and their management is very effective without being oppressive. All staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the curricular areas they cover. Teachers are sensitive to the progress being made by the students and lessons are invariably adapted when necessary.
172. The curriculum is very broad and well balanced and aesthetic activities make an important contribution. It is organised to ensure very good equality of opportunity. The range of experiences offered at Key Stage 4 is very good. However, timetabling arrangements are unsatisfactory in the allocation and distribution of time and impact on the continuity of learning. This is countered to some extent by the very good range of extra-curricular opportunities, including many provided through excellent community links. These are well promoted and



participation rates are very high. Assessment arrangements are well structured and comprehensive and are effective in aiding students to understand how well they are progressing. Parents are well informed of the achievements and progress of students.

173. Management of the department is collaborative and very effective and there is a shared vision of how best to build students' skills, confidence and understanding. This is a major contributory factor to the good progress students make and is achieved despite the handicaps of unsatisfactory accommodation and poor storage provision. Documentation is comprehensive and informative. Developmental planning is appropriately focused and rigorous and the individual professional development needs of teachers are well met.
174. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have both improved. A good curriculum has been further enriched, particularly through wider community involvement. Students have a better understanding of how they are progressing and teaching is informed by much more comprehensive assessment data.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

175. GCSE results for 1999 were well below the national average for grades A\* to C and close to the national average for grades A\* to G. The last results before 1999 were in 1996, when grades A\* to C and grades A\* to G were well below national averages. There is no current GCSE group.
176. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Students display a broad understanding of the different aspects of the syllabus, although they are better at acquiring knowledge and understanding than they are at giving personal responses. In their study of Judaism, students describe the features of the festival of Passover and they explain its historical origins. In their study of Christianity, they make links between the symbolic and literal meanings of church features. Some students explain the importance of personal symbols including family photographs. Students identify Christian values and beliefs from Bible passages and link them with the achievements of Mother Theresa. Students produce a good range of different types of writing. They write about the life of Jesus and produce their own, modern versions of the story of the Prodigal Son. They describe the life and achievements of Gandhi. They write explanations of the symbols of different world religions and give brief personal responses to different social and moral issues. They use the idea of prejudice as a theme for a play script.
177. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Students' understanding is at a basic level and does not meet the depth required by the syllabus. Some students acquire a basic understanding of Islamic beliefs from information given by Muslim members of the class. Students acquire a basic knowledge of the role of Oxfam in the modern world. They describe the life and achievements of individuals who have given outstanding service to communities in different parts of the world. In a study of the work of Amnesty International, they identify the rights which they consider to be important and compare them with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In a project on Christianity, students write brief descriptions of Jesus' disciples and of different Christian festivals. They give examples of the miracles of Jesus and their personal responses. They write brief descriptions of the life of Martin Luther King and record interviews they have conducted with Muslims and Christians.
178. Students make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3. They make good progress in going beyond a basic understanding of Judaism to appreciate the historical significance of food, family and home. They make good progress in study skills in scanning Bible references for meaning. They make good progress in consolidating their understanding of abstract ideas, including symbolism in worship. In oral work, they make good gains in their understanding of belief through giving lengthy definitions of concepts such as caring and service from a religious perspective. Students with special educational needs make good progress in selecting information to find examples of religious values in people's achievements. Students' progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory in individual lessons, but it is unsatisfactory over time. The insufficient time allocation for the subject means that students are not able to build on their knowledge and understanding from Key Stage 3 and do not go on to acquire a greater depth of understanding at Key Stage 4. In particular, they make unsatisfactory progress in acquiring an understanding of religious belief in depth and of how belief affects attitudes towards current social and moral issues. In lessons, students make satisfactory progress in gaining an understanding of why certain human rights are of fundamental importance. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring a basic knowledge of different religious traditions. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in developing skills in identifying and summarising relevant information from different sources, including biographies.
179. Students' responses are good at both key stages, with some very good responses at Key Stage 3. Collaboration in group activities is a notable feature of students' good responses at both key stages. Students work well together to complete tasks, with older students agreeing individual roles within groups. In the best responses at Key Stage 3, students maintain high standards of concentration and behaviour during lessons with different activities, including small group work and whole class discussion with individuals seated in a circle. Respect for each other's beliefs



is evident at both key stages, with younger students listening to individuals talking about their most precious possessions and older students listening to individuals talking about their religious beliefs. Students at both key stages show initiative in their willingness to read to the class, with students at Key Stage 3 doing so in front of the class. Students at both key stages show confidence in their reading and in their contributions to class discussion.

180. Teaching is good overall at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Half of the lessons seen at Key Stage 3 were good, a sixth were very good and one-third were satisfactory. Four-fifths of lessons seen at Key Stage 4 were satisfactory and the remainder were good. At Key Stage 3, all specialist teaching means that subject knowledge is secure and the level of challenge in class discussion enables students to learn quickly. The most effective teaching at Key Stage 3 is characterised by challenging discussion, which goes beyond factual information to incorporate concepts, beliefs and ideas. Students gain a deeper understanding of the link between religious belief and practice during such discussion. The secure knowledge of teaching staff also enables students to gain a deeper insight into religious values, which are clearly explained and illustrated during lesson activities, with students analysing the achievements of individuals in terms of the values that their achievements represent. A further characteristic of the best teaching is an emphasis on activities which enable students to learn quickly, such as a group activity where students sort through word cards to label different features on the plan of a church. Teaching is less effective when written tasks following class discussion occupy too great a proportion of the lesson and lack challenge. The use of video material is not always well used, with some material being too long and opportunities not always taken to discuss ideas represented. The most effective teaching at Key Stage 4 is characterised by good planning with, for example, students working with confidence on group activities for which they have been thoroughly briefed in a previous lesson or in the lesson introduction. There is a good pace to lessons at Key Stage 4, with an emphasis on task completion. Resources are well used, including topic books to support group activities. Although students learn quickly, they achieve no more than a basic level of understanding due to the inadequate time allocation for the subject. The time allocation does not allow teachers to plan an in-depth treatment of topics. The lack of specialist teaching, in some cases, results in a lack of challenge in class discussion.
181. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are not met at Key Stage 4, due to the inadequate time allocation. Schemes of work lack detail and need to be more clearly linked to the targets students are expected to reach. Departmental management is satisfactory. There is a constructive emphasis on evaluation and staff aim to review and revise their teaching of syllabus topics in the light of experience. Building assessment tasks into the schemes of work is appropriately seen as a priority area for development.
182. Since the last inspection the major shortcomings in teaching and learning have been overcome, with good teaching now evident at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory teaching at Key Stage 4. The all specialist teaching now in place at Key Stage 3 and an appropriate time allocation for the subject in all of the year groups at Key Stage 3, is further evidence of improvement. The need to develop a coherent programme, with sufficient time to teach it, at Key Stage 4 has yet to be addressed.