

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **RIBBLESDALE HIGH SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE**

Clitheroe

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119716

Headteacher: Ms G M Ward

Reporting inspector: Mr D Page  
1028

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 November 2001

Inspection number: 190088  
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Queens Road  
Clitheroe  
Lancashire

Postcode: BB7 1EJ

Telephone number: 01200 422 563

Fax number: 01200 442 506

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Dr J Saunders

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1028	D Page	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it?  School's results and achievements  How well is the school led and managed?  What should the school do to improve further?
9952	L Brock	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?  Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
30996	A Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics	
27201	C Ashworth	Team inspector	English	
12356	R Dickason	Team inspector	Science	
11969	J Hardy	Team inspector	Design and technology	
15940	N Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design	
22524	S Innes	Team inspector	Information and communication technology  Special educational needs	
31008	P Rourke	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
7399	P Roberts	Team inspector	History	

23550	S Blewitt	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
4697	R Black	Team inspector	Music	How well are pupils taught?
21957	R Vaughton	Team inspector	Physical education	
7602	E Milroy	Team inspector	Religious education English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ribblesdale High Technology College is larger than other secondary schools. At the time of the inspection, 1220 girls and boys were on roll. The number on roll has increased significantly over the last 5 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, (8 per cent), is below the national average, (17.8 per cent). The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language, (3.1 per cent), is lower than in most schools. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, (9.2 per cent), is below the average, (19.3 per cent). Dyslexia; emotional and behavioural difficulties and moderate learning difficulties represent the special needs of the majority of these pupils. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, (4.1 per cent), is above the average, (2.5 per cent).

For the ward in which the school is situated: the percentage of adults with higher education is slightly below the national average; the percentage of children in high social class households is slightly below the average; the percentage of minority ethnic children is well below the average, and the percentage of children in overcrowded households is slightly below the average. There are significant differences in the data for adjoining wards.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Overall, Ribblesdale High School Technology College is a very effective school. Standards on entry to the school generally match the national average. The standard of pupils' performance in national tests at the end of both Year 9 and 11 is generally above the average. The standard of pupils' work seen during the inspection was generally well above the national expectation and sometimes very high. Overall, the standard of teaching seen was very good, with a significant amount of excellent teaching. The headteacher provides very strong, clear leadership and senior staff provide very good management of the school. There are very effective strategies to ensure that all pupils are included in the success of the school. Given how effective the school is, its context, and the money it receives, the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The headteacher has a clear vision and provides very good leadership and the senior team provides very effective management. The management of information and communication technology across the school is excellent. The governing body provides very good strategic management for the school.
- Standards of attainment are generally above and sometimes well above the national averages in examinations. In lessons, pupils' attainment is very high in comparison to national expectation in many subjects. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is impressive. Pupils make very good progress in their time at the school.
- Pupil behaviour is excellent and is a strength of the school.
- Teaching is often very good and sometimes excellent. There are high expectations of pupils in all subjects. In the best cases it is characterised by a relentless pursuit of excellence.
- The Technology College status has led to excellent levels of specialised resources across the school and is making a significant impact on learning.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good. Leadership and management of special educational needs are excellent.

#### **What could be improved**

- The structure of the timetable needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that taught time is brought in line with that recommended and the anomalous distribution of periods in some subjects is addressed.
- The provision for the daily act of collective worship needs to be improved.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection in October 1996. The school has made significant improvement in: school and departmental development planning processes; library provision and use; time allocations to subjects; pupils on vocational courses receive their full entitlement to English, and that statutory requirements for music in Years 7 to 9 are met. The length of the taught week remains below that recommended. The school is well placed to sustain the levels of high performance and to build on these to improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	B	B	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

The standards of pupils on intake to the school in 2000, as measured in national tests when the pupils were at the end of Year 6, generally matched the average. When compared to the attainment of pupils at the school at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11, these results show that pupils make very good progress in their time at the school. At the end of Year 9 in 2000, when compared to all schools nationally, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 5 and above in English and mathematics was well above the average and above the average in science. The performance of higher attaining pupils in English and science was above the average and well above the average in mathematics. When compared to other schools describing themselves as secondary modern, pupils' attainment in 2001 in English, mathematics and science at level 5 and above was well above the average. The performance of higher attaining pupils in English and science was well above the average and very high in mathematics. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects is rising as fast as the national trend. Pupils' standards in English as seen in their books and in lessons were good overall, and creative writing is a particular strength throughout the school. Standards of pupils' work seen in mathematics and science were well above the expected level for the majority of pupils. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils' performance by the end of Year 11. The pupils' performance in GCSE/GNVQ at 5 or more grades A\*-C, 1 or more grades A\*-G, and the average points score, was above the school's statutory targets. Pupils of all prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils' very high level of enthusiasm throughout the school makes them eager to learn and aids their concentration in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. The school's shared values create high expectations that are reflected in the excellent behaviour throughout the school. Pupils make their way around the school in a disciplined and orderly manner.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils demonstrate mature relationships with peers and adults, they exhibit high levels of care for each other.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance at the school is well above the national average and punctuality is a feature of the school.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

The very good quality of teaching is a real strength of the school. In only one lesson seen was there any unsatisfactory teaching, and that was by a teacher untrained in that subject. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good throughout the school. As a result of this very good teaching, together with the excellent attitude of the pupils, learning is very good and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. The teachers' expectations are generally extremely high. The teaching meets the needs of all boys and girls, regardless of their special educational needs, ethnicity, or whether they have English as an additional language. There is a very effective strategy in place for teaching literacy skills. Strategies for teaching numeracy across the curriculum are not as well developed as those for teaching literacy, but are nevertheless good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are good. The length of the taught week remains below that recommended. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with special educational needs have access to all the subjects of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and are withdrawn for additional lessons to support their learning needs for literacy, numeracy and behaviour management. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have full access to the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The progress in lessons of pupils with English as an additional language is at the same very good level as that of pupils in general.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There is a comprehensive and well taught programme of personal, social and health education, including education on sex, health and drugs misuse. The provision for moral and social development is excellent and for spiritual and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school continues to make very good provision for the health, safety and personal security of its pupils. The very good quality of the educational and personal support and guidance is further supported by very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher promotes a clear vision and expects high standards from all staff. A very effective team of senior managers supports her. The school has a clear sense of direction and a dedication to drive up standards and serve pupils well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is very effective at providing a strategic direction for the school and monitoring its progress. The governors are characterised by high levels of commitment and expertise.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, supported by an effective performance management policy. Departmental planning and quality assurance procedures are generally very good. There is a clear belief in equal opportunities and systems are in place to provide an inclusive education for all pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school works hard and is very effective at ensuring that it gets the best value from its resources.

The match of staff to curriculum needs is very good. Accommodation, while stretched in some areas is good overall and there are clear plans to improve it in the near future. Learning resources are good overall, although resources for information and communication technology throughout the school are excellent as a consequence of Technology College status.

## 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 school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.</li> <li>I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>The teaching is good.</li> <li>My child likes school.</li> <li>My child is making good progress in school.</li> <li>The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My child does not get the right amount of work to do at home.</li> <li>I am not kept sufficiently well informed about how my child is getting on.</li> <li>The school does not work closely enough with parents.</li> </ul>

The inspection team found evidence to support all those aspects which parents like most about the school. On the questionnaire sent home to parents there was no issue they would like to see improved which attracted over 20 per cent of responses. Seventeen per cent of respondents felt that their child did not get the right amount of homework. Inspection evidence indicates that the use of homework is very good. Seventeen per cent of respondents felt that they were not kept well informed about their child's progress. Inspection evidence indicates that the annual report to parents gives clear information about estimated levels of attainment as well as the actual levels achieved. There are regular newsletters informing parents about events in the school. Fourteen per cent of respondents felt that the school did not work closely with parents. Inspection evidence does not support this as, for example, when the school sent out a questionnaire to parents seeking their views on a range of issues including consulting them on the proposed vertical grouping tutorial system.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 The standards of pupils on intake to the school in 2000, as measured in national tests when the pupils were at the end of Year 6, generally matched the average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science was around the national average. For level 5 and above, the results for English and science were just below the national average, and matched the average in mathematics. When compared to the attainment of pupils at the school at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11, these results show that pupils make very good progress in their time at the school.
- 2 At the end of Year 9 in 2000, when compared to all schools nationally, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 5 and above in English and mathematics was well above the average and above the average in science. The performance of higher attaining pupils in English and science was above the average and well above the average in mathematics.
- 3 When compared to other schools describing themselves as secondary modern, pupils' attainment in 2001 in English, mathematics and science at level 5 and above was well above the average. The performance of higher attaining pupils in English and science was well above the average and very high in mathematics.
- 4 At the end of Year 11, when compared with all schools nationally, pupils' attainment in 2000 at 5 or more grades A\*-C in GCSE/GNVQ, and 1 or more grades A\*-G, was well above the average. At 5 or more grades A\*-G attainment was above the average. When compared to other schools describing themselves as secondary modern, pupils' attainment in 2001 was well above the average at 5 or more grades A\*-C, 5 or more grades A\*-G, and 1 or more grades A\*-G. The average total GCSE points score per pupil was well above the national average when compared to similar schools.
- 5 Over the last 5 years there has been little difference in the performance of boys and girls by the end of Year 11. The trend in the average total GCSE/GNVQ points score has been better than the national trend.
- 6 Provision for literacy is very good and is starting to make an impact on literacy levels which are currently good overall. Technical accuracy is often good though pupils do make errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout the school. Most pupils, including lower attainers, are able to speak clearly and articulate appropriately using a correct register and tone.
- 7 Standards of numeracy for the majority of pupils are very good. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is good and developing. The school's responses to the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 will further support this. The development of pupils' numerical skills forms an increasing aspect of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils make a good use of number in a range of subjects.
- 8 At the end of Year 9 in English standards are above average overall in all aspects of the subject, that is speaking and listening, reading and writing. A significant minority of pupils are well above average in each aspect. Most pupils, including those of lower prior attainment, are able to consider ideas thoughtfully, discuss sensibly and employ standard English as required. Most are able to use appropriate vocabulary. At the end

of Year 11 standards are above average in all aspects of the subject. There is a significant minority of higher attainers who are well above average. Speaking and listening skills are good and often very good. Reading skills are good and often very good. Creative writing is a particular strength; work is often original and thoughtful.

- 9 In mathematics standards of work seen in lessons and in pupils' books throughout the school are well above the expected level for the majority of pupils. Pupils are extremely productive in lessons because of their very good attitude to work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress.
- 10 In science by the end of Year 9 the standard of pupils' work in lessons and in their books was well above the national expectation. Pupils' standards of numeracy in lessons about light, and when dealing with graphs of speed and time, were very good. Boys and girls do equally well and the attainment of pupils with special educational needs are well above that expected of them. By the end of Year 11 the standard of pupils' work in lessons is also well above the national expectation for girls and boys, and for pupils with special educational needs. Investigative skills, and pupils' understanding of the reasons why things happen, are very good. Pupils from ethnic minorities do as well as all others throughout the school. The most able pupils are highly articulate, they can explain difficult ideas.
- 11 In lessons and in their books, pupils' standards are very high in design and technology throughout the school. Standards are well above expectation throughout the school in: information and communication technology and modern foreign languages, and in Years 10 and 11 in art and design. Standards are above expectation throughout the school in geography; music, and religious education, and in Years 10 and 11 in history and physical education, and in Years 7 to 9 in art and design. Standards are above expectation in all GNVQ courses in Years 10 and 11. Standards are in line with expectation in history and physical education in Years 7 to 9. Standards improve from the end of Year 9 to the end of Year 11 in history; art and design and physical education, as a consequence of the very good teaching.
- 12 The quality of assessment and monitoring of progress through individual education plans is a significant factor in enhancing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Intervention programmes to support literacy and numeracy are effective in enhancing these pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are also benefiting from computer programs to support their progress in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of test scores and examination results shows that pupils make very good progress and often exceed predictions based on their attainment as assessed on entry.

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

- 13 Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and personal development and their relationships with staff and each other are all excellent. This shows a further improvement on the very good standards identified in the previous inspection report.
- 14 Pupils' very high level of enthusiasm throughout the school makes them eager to learn and aids their concentration in lessons. During discussions with inspectors, pupils confirmed their appreciation of the opportunities on offer for both academic achievement and personal growth. In the classroom, pupils listen attentively and apply themselves diligently to their work, showing high levels of collaboration when working in groups. For example, the very good attitudes of Year 10 pupils during a drama lesson resulted in them using a poem to create strong visual images and well presented speech. In addition they demonstrated sheer enjoyment during their performances. Year 8 pupils gave a mature and sensible response to a debate on drug abuse within personal and social education. This very enthusiastic approach to

learning makes an excellent contribution to raising standards throughout the school and is one of its major strengths. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported. As a result, their attitudes to learning, and to the life of the school are excellent. Pupils accept responsibilities around the school with cheerful enthusiasm.

- 15 The school's shared values, embodied in its main aims, create high expectations that are reflected in the excellent behaviour throughout the school. Such a high standard of behaviour, confirmed by the great majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire, greatly aids access to the curriculum by making all members of the school feel safe. Pupils confirm that incidents of bullying are dealt with well by the school. In the year prior to the inspection there were 22 fixed period, and 3 permanent exclusions. The relatively small number of exclusions were imposed when all other avenues had been explored. This reflects the school's determination not to allow the poor behaviour of a few to affect the learning of many. Year 7 pupils discussed the ways of ensuring personal safety well during a personal and social education lesson. They know who to turn to for help within the school. Pupils make their way around the school in a disciplined and orderly manner, even in communal areas where congestion can occur. Their behaviour during whole school assemblies is impeccable, and most behave responsibly when moving from one building to another.
- 16 The excellent relationships throughout the school create a climate of harmony and friendliness based on mutual respect. Year 11 pupils confirmed that they get on well with adults in the school but they also realise that they are expected to work hard and achieve well. There is a shared commitment between teachers and pupils, as seen when the school council held a meeting supported by the two pastoral managers. Pupils were pleased when their suggestions had come to fruition but also accepted cheerfully that not all issues could be resolved quickly. The high quality of relationships in the school and the mutual support lay a firm foundation for learning and reflect the very good progress made by pupils in their personal development. There are very good opportunities for personal development, for example: the Young Enterprise scheme; The Duke of Edinburgh Award, and work related learning. All these help to encourage pupils to be good citizens. Pupils are prepared to put something back into the community and demonstrate their care and concern for the disadvantaged in society. Their enthusiastic support for charities demonstrates their growing sense of responsibility and acknowledgement of their world citizenship.
- 17 Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, are fully integrated into the life of the school. They form good relationships with adults and their classmates and some are appointed to undertake responsibilities as prefects in the school.
- 18 Attendance at the school is well above the national average and currently stands at 96 per cent for the first half of the autumn term. This is in line with the very good attendance noted at the time of the previous inspection. Much of the authorised absence is due to parents taking children on holiday in term time, although the rate of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Punctuality at both morning and afternoon sessions is generally good and registration periods provide an orderly start to the day. Such very good levels of attendance ensure full access to the curriculum for most pupils. Parents confirm that their children like school and attend willingly.

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

- 19 The very good quality of teaching is a real strength of the school. About nine out of ten lessons seen had teaching which was good or better and in over half of the lessons

teaching was very good or excellent. Some teaching of the highest quality was seen in mathematics; science; information and communication technology; art and design and in modern foreign languages. In physical education and music teaching was good, and in all other subjects the overall standard of teaching was very good. In only one lesson seen was there any unsatisfactory teaching, and that was by a teacher untrained in that subject.

- 20 As a result of this very good teaching, together with the excellent attitude of the pupils, learning is very good and pupils achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs also learn particularly well. Overall pupils make very good progress throughout their time in the school.
- 21 In Years 7 to 9, 99 per cent of teaching was at least satisfactory, 85 per cent good or better and 48 per cent very good or excellent. In Years 10 and 11, 100 per cent of teaching was at least satisfactory, 97 per cent good or better and 61 per cent very good or excellent. Teaching has improved since the last inspection report. While the nature of the good features of the teaching remain generally as they were then, teachers now demonstrate these more consistently. During the last inspection, 97 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better, 66 per cent were good or better and 25 per cent very good or excellent. This compares with 99, 91 and 54 per cent respectively.
- 22 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject is very good and is often a key factor in the very good learning by pupils. The excellent teaching of Spanish throughout the school, for example, is characterised by the teacher's confident, fluent use of the language. In science, throughout the school, teachers showed that they have an excellent command of their subject.
- 23 Lessons are very well planned to meet the needs of pupils from a wide range of levels of prior attainment. Teachers have clear and appropriate objectives which they share with the pupils at the start of the lesson. The teachers' expectations are generally extremely high and pupils are expected to concentrate on the often challenging work. This encourages them to think for themselves. In many subjects, for example, science and modern foreign languages, the use of a wide variety of activities interests the pupils and is successful at keeping the attention of the lowest attaining pupils. In mathematics the extensive use of whiteboards in starter exercises is very effective in this respect. Many teachers use questions very effectively, sometimes encouraging explanatory answers, as in science and mathematics, to get pupils to explain their method of working out problems. Sometimes questions are used to encourage speculation, as in the very good Year 8 work in religious education around a video about the images of Jesus in paintings.
- 24 The teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage the pupils very well indeed in class. The excellent relationship between staff and pupils, in so many subject areas, encourages the pupils and gives them good levels of confidence and self esteem. The pupils cooperate well together when asked to work in groups and they share ideas. They respect one another and listen well to other pupils' contributions in class.
- 25 The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers provide appropriately challenging work which raises the self esteem and confidence of pupils. The excellent relationship formed with teachers when pupils are withdrawn for necessary additional support in small groups leads to very good progress so that they are able to have support reduced and participate more fully in mainstream lessons. Sometimes however, pupils' progress in the subject from which they are withdrawn is disrupted. Specialist teachers are well qualified and use

successful teaching methods to help pupils with dyslexia. Teacher assistants are very effective in supporting pupils. They are involved in planning work and reviewing progress. They meet together regularly with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss progress and to share concerns.

- 26 Information and communication technology is used effectively and imaginatively throughout the school. In music, pupils are producing very good compositions through using multi-tracking facilities. In art, in Year 10, digital photography and the use of a painting program are just two examples of the excellent use of technology. In design and technology there was very good use of programmable sewing machines and of a desktop publishing program to help develop graphics.
- 27 Assessment of pupils' work is particularly good. Teachers generally inform themselves very well of how successful pupils have been in their learning. Marking of work is usually very thorough and teachers' comments are often very helpful in showing pupils how they can improve their work, as in English and design and technology. Occasionally, for example in music, marking is irregular. Homework is set regularly, according to the timetable. Homework tasks are relevant and appropriate in supporting the class work and in developing learning.
- 28 The progress of pupils throughout the school is very good; they are well motivated, show considerable enthusiasm for their work, and concentrate well upon their tasks. They acquire the intended skills, knowledge and understanding because their effort and pace of working are excellent; very little time is ever wasted.
- 29 Overall, pupils who have special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language learn very well. The special educational needs coordinator has very good knowledge of the pupils and ensures that all departments are aware of the help that pupils require. Where support staff are timetabled they are effective in ensuring that pupils learn successfully, gaining the knowledge and understanding of the subject that they need to enable them to make good progress. It is not possible to have assistants in every class and there are, inevitably, some lessons, for example in music, where support is needed but cannot be provided.

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

- 30 The overall quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are good. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Information and communication technology is taught across the curriculum in all year groups and the provision is very good. Three pupils are withdrawn from religious education lessons and the act of collective worship, and the school makes appropriate alternative provision for them. As part of the school's aim to develop pupils' skills of independent learning, the curriculum is enriched for pupils in Years 9 and 10 by lessons on key skills and self study strategies. The total teaching time of 23 hours 20 minutes remains as it was at the time of the last inspection and is below the recommended time of 24 hours for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and 25 hours for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- 31 Provision for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good. All follow the National Curriculum subjects and religious education together with personal, social and health education. Over half the pupils take Spanish as a second foreign language in Year 9. There is good coverage of all areas of design and technology in Years 7 to 9, and choices offered in Year 9 help prepare pupils for courses in Years 10 and 11.

- 32 There are some weaknesses in the organisation of teaching time across the week. This is related to the shorter than average teaching time, which falls short of that recommended. This was identified in the last inspection report and has not been addressed. This leads to inflexibility in timetabling produced by the day's division into only four rather lengthy periods. As a consequence there are a number of anomalies in the distribution of periods for some subjects, for example, several French classes receive their week's lessons on one day. A further anomaly is the arrangement for withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs which removes them disproportionately from some curricular areas. This has a negative impact on their learning in these subjects.
- 33 Good arrangements for the implementation of the national strategy in English and mathematics for Years 7 to 9 are in place. The introduction is well planned and has already undergone some evaluation that will lead to improvements for next year.
- 34 The provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good. All pupils follow a core curriculum and choose additional subjects from a wide range of options that include four vocationally oriented GNVQ courses. A number of subjects are offered as both full and short GCSE courses to ensure that all pupils can receive a properly broad and balanced experience. All pupils follow a short GCSE course in religious education that meets the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. Very few pupils in Year 10, and none in Year 11, study Spanish as a second foreign language in spite of the substantial numbers learning two languages in Year 9. Alternative accreditation is offered in some subjects for pupils for whom a GCSE course is too demanding: a Certificate of Achievement is available in English and in French; French is also accredited through NVQ units; single GCSE science is followed by GNVQ candidates. High standards of attainment in ICT are reflected in the very good grades achieved by pupils in Key Skills examinations at the end of Year 11. Thirty six pupils are appropriately disapplied from some of the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to follow GNVQ courses.
- 35 There is a very effective strategy in place for teaching literacy skills. All staff have taken part in in-service training, strategies for promoting literacy are included in subjects' schemes of work and key words are prominently displayed in classrooms. Currently the focus is on the development of a reading ethos across the school and the integration of literacy units into the personal, social and health education programme. Visits to partner primary schools to observe the literacy hour have helped to ensure that the school builds on pupils' existing strengths in literacy. Strategies for teaching numeracy across the curriculum are not as well developed as those for teaching literacy, but are nevertheless good and pupils' skills in using and applying number are good. Each department's policy on the development of numeracy is currently being up-graded, and the mathematics department is helping subjects develop the use of consistent methods in their teaching of mathematical skills.
- 36 Pupils' experience of the curriculum is enriched by work related learning and by a very extensive range of extra-curricular provision. In July each year, while pupils in Year 10 have a carefully planned two-week work experience placement, pupils in Years 7 to 9 experience a community curriculum week during which the normal timetable is suspended. Many subjects use the resources of the local community for investigative work. For example, in geography this opportunity is used for fieldwork, mathematics work involves visits to a local supermarket distribution centre to solve mathematical problems based on the centre. Citizenship is also developed during the week with visits to the law courts and fire service, and through holding mock elections.
- 37 The school offers nearly 70 extra-curricular clubs and activities. Some, such as the use of the astronomical observatory, cater for the special interests of a small but



dedicated group of pupils, and are also shared by the wider community. Others, such as the French exchange and weekend trips to France, very directly support pupils' classroom learning. Pupils' wider personal development is encouraged by the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme that pupils can begin in Year 9, and in Year 11 by the Young Enterprise scheme. Competition within the school for involvement in Young Enterprise is fierce and the school enjoys a very high level of local and national success in this scheme each year, even though pupils compete against many older pupils from other schools.

- 38 The school has policies in place to ensure that there is equality of provision and opportunity for all pupils, with particular reference to race and gender. Evidence from pupils indicates that they are successfully implemented. There is little bullying and no evidence of racial harassment. There is some evidence of unequal take-up between boys and girls in some subjects in Years 10 and 11. The French department is responding to this by teaching boys and girls in separate groups in Year 10 this year, so far with the approval of pupils and staff.
- 39 The overall provision for pupils' personal and social education is very good. There is a comprehensive and well taught programme of personal, social and health education, including education on sex, health and drugs misuse. Pupils respond as well to these lessons as to those in their other subjects. They participate sensitively and sensibly in discussions. The school has recently carried out an audit of provision for citizenship. Areas that have not been identified elsewhere will become a key feature of next year's programme on personal, social and health education.
- 40 Provision for careers education is very good. Much use is made of computer-aided guidance to help pupils develop their interest in, and knowledge of, appropriate careers. There are very good resources with a wide range of information available to pupils. The school's good contacts with local businesses have enabled it to set up an extensive system of mock interviews for pupils in Year 11. After "applying" for a post, pupils are formally interviewed, attending appropriately dressed and using their record of achievement as in a real interview. Visits to industry and visiting speakers are arranged as part of personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils also visit industrial fairs and exhibitions and have access, through the Internet, to a range of colleges for continuing education. Pupils visit the local college that is the school's main provider of post-16 education, and a tutor from the same college visits the school regularly to talk with pupils.
- 41 The school has used the resources derived from its status as a Technology College to develop very effective links with the local business community and with partner schools and colleges. The school was financially supported in its bid for Technology College status by a large number of small contributors and continues to have links with this very wide range of employers, many of whom continue to support the school by offering work placements to pupils, including those on GNVQ courses, helping them with Young Enterprise projects and with mock interviews. The school also provides training and the use of its premises for local community activities. Although this is done on a commercial basis, users believe that they obtain good value for money and the school's reputation in the community is further enhanced. Links with partner primary schools are well developed. Teachers from the school visit primary schools to improve curriculum continuity between primary and secondary phases. The secondary school runs a weekly timetable of visits from primary schools to use its facilities. At present these are offered in English, mathematics, science, French, physical education, and computer-aided design. On one evening each week the school offers a drop-in facility for teachers from primary schools to consolidate their skills in information and communication technology.

- 42 Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have access to all the subjects of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and are withdrawn for additional lessons to support their learning needs. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have full access to the National Curriculum but there is scope to increase the range of courses which are especially suitable for pupils with special educational needs.
- 43 The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is very good overall. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Numerous opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect upon their own and others' lives and beliefs. The Muslim month of Ramadan began at the same time as the inspection. Reflection upon the similarities between the Christian period of Lent and Ramadan formed the theme of assemblies, and the thought for the day used in some tutor groups. The school provides a prayer room for Muslims during this period and pupils are encouraged to understand how difficult it is for some of their fellow pupils to avoid eating during the day in Ramadan. In one tutor session, a Muslim pupil gave a graphic account of the customs and traditions of Islam, to which other pupils listened with respect, and asked mature and sensible questions. The teacher read out a poem written by the same pupil, shortly to be published in an anthology: a moving and deeply reflective response to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere in the curriculum, pupils consider life's fundamental questions. In science they explore issues such as when life starts and where life comes from. Pupils in art and design lessons reflect on their experience of self through producing self-portraits. Geography lessons consider the natural forces at work in earthquakes and volcanic eruptions – their inescapability and their inevitability. Assemblies are well thought out and contribute well to pupils' moral and social development. They include well focused Christian worship and this provides opportunities for reflection and pupils' spiritual development. However, the school does not comply with the requirement for a daily act of worship, which reduces regular opportunities for spiritual development in which all can share.
- 44 Provision for moral development is excellent. The school has clear values, recognised and supported by the whole community. The excellent relationships throughout the school community are based upon mutual respect. Teachers expect pupils to behave courteously and with consideration for the rights and feelings of others – and they do. Classrooms are enlivened with displays of pupils' work, often beautifully displayed, and indicative of the way in which the school values and celebrates pupils' achievements. All work in a clean, graffiti and litter-free environment – with the exception of the unusually large amounts of chewing gum, abandoned apparently with unconcern for the school environment. The taught curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' development of a secure sense of right and wrong. The programme for personal, social and health education provides numerous opportunities for pupils to consider the importance of responsible moral behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to consider moral and ethical issues in a number of subjects: in English as responses to tragedy and to issues of social class in texts; in science in recognising how scientific knowledge can have harmful as well as beneficial effects; in religious education in discussions of issues of rights and responsibilities; in geography in considering the impact of people's actions on the environment and the importance of balancing present needs with those of future generations.
- 45 Provision for social development is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to a real community and are loyal to the school. Pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities to work co-operatively in very many lessons and assist each other with work quite easily and naturally. The democratically elected school council met during the week of the inspection. The pupils run the meetings in a mature and sensible fashion. They report back to their team councils, from whom they have taken items

for discussion to the meeting. The school listens to and responds to pupils' views, through the two teachers who attend the meetings regularly. The headteacher also contributes to those meetings where a response from her is appropriate. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities that give them scope to mix and make new friends and deepen their relationships with their teachers. In every area of the curriculum pupils work outside school, with members of the local or more distant communities. They respond well to these opportunities to develop their social skills and are excellent ambassadors for the school.

- 46 Provision for cultural education is very good. Strong contributions are made to this aspect of provision by music, art, drama and dance through curricular and extra-curricular activities. All projects in art refer to the life and works of significant artists and cultures, not just European but also African, Chinese, Egyptian, Mayan and Aboriginal. Visiting artists work in school with pupils, and pupils visit a number of museums. A drum-dance workshop in Year 9, based around African rhythms, was the product of collaboration between music and physical education. Visiting musicians have worked with pupils on African musical composition as well as on contemporary British music. Pupils are introduced well to their own cultural heritage through English, history and religious education lessons. Understanding of contemporary European culture is enhanced through the annual visit of Year 7 and 8 pupils to France, and the annual exchange with French pupils. Understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society is less strongly developed.

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

- 47 The school continues to make very good provision for the health, safety and personal security of its pupils, resulting in a sense of belonging and well being that greatly aids learning. The very good quality of the educational and personal support and guidance is further supported by very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development. At the meeting with the inspectors before the inspection, parents reported that they were impressed by how well the school knows its pupils and their families.
- 48 The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. A computerised registration system allows the school to monitor absence but teachers also use a manual record so that they can identify emerging patterns of poor attendance. The school telephones home if there is a concern and, in addition, the registration system triggers an automatic letter home to the defaulting family. Pupils receive attendance scores in their interim and final reports. Pupils achieving 90 per cent attendance or less are targeted for special attention and parents are reminded of the adverse effect of taking pupils on holiday in term time. Students with good attendance are publicly rewarded for their achievement.
- 49 The excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are supported by clear and detailed policies and the consistent application of them by teachers. Because they work well, teachers can teach and pupils can learn in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. The result is an orderly school community that provides a solid platform for teaching and learning. The high standards required of pupils are well emphasised so that all pupils are aware of the school's high expectations. The procedures for monitoring and supporting the behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are enhanced by the work of the co-ordinator and the behaviour support teacher.
- 50 The school has a very effective system for tracking the academic progress of pupils as they move through school. The assessment co-ordinator collects and collates information on each pupil. This information is then fed back to teachers to help them

see the relative strengths of each pupil. An effective mentoring programme supports those pupils who are underachieving. Target setting for individual pupils is used well. Whilst the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in subjects are very good overall, there are inconsistencies between departments. There are excellent examples in English and science of procedures which are used well to target individual attainment and progress. The procedures in other subjects are either very good or good, apart from music and religious education, which are satisfactory.

- 51 Pupils with statements of educational needs have their progress reviewed annually and their special needs assessed for the following year. Parents are invited to attend reviews and pupils contribute their own feelings about their progress. For these pupils at the end of Year 9, special transition plans are put into place which identify and provide for their needs in terms of future education and employment. Reviews are attended by representatives of the careers service and in appropriate cases by representatives of other special support services as well as by parents. The school has excellent relationships with visiting specialists such as the educational psychologist.
- 52 Pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties are appropriately placed on a special register which is carefully maintained. Its details are known to all teachers who are also involved in the formulation of targets which form part of students' independent education plans and in the review and monitoring of progress. Pupils are appropriately moved up or down the stages of the register based on the success they have in meeting their identified targets.
- 53 There are well-developed assessment procedures in information and communication technology and these are used to monitor subject performance, but not the performance of individual pupils in order to set targets for improvement. An area for development is an understanding of the different grades awarded for different courses. Very good use is made of assessment information to guide curricular planning. Class work and homework is generally regularly marked, although, in mathematics and music there is a need for greater consistency. The annual report to parents gives clear information about estimated levels of attainment as well as the actual levels achieved. The best examples of target setting for individual pupils are used to plan for the next phase, to extend a greater challenge, or to drive changes in teaching approaches.
- 54 The school's very good procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development include very good approaches in personal, social and health education. Pupils receive very good careers guidance with access and information given on all routes of progression after the age of 16. The results of this can be seen in the impressive statistics on pupils who transfer to further and higher education, training or employment. Pupils are involved in their own assessments and the awards system celebrates individual achievement as an incentive to further effort. Independent and group learning promote a sense of personal and social responsibility, while involvement in the school and team councils imbue pupils with the principles of negotiated solutions and responsible citizenship. Female pupils for example, attribute the decision to allow them to wear trousers to the effectiveness of the school council. Sex education and information about drug abuse is a feature of the PSHE programme. Pupils are well prepared for the transfer to high school and Year 7 pupils confirm that they have settled into school life well due to the good induction procedures and the opportunities they had to visit school beforehand.
- 55 The school makes very good provision for the health, safety and welfare of those in their care. All adults in the school know the designated person for child protection and her deputy, whilst many other members of staff, including support staff, have attended

relevant training. The detailed health and safety policy includes effective procedures for recording and reporting hazards, for risk assessments, termly fire drills and alarm tests. Each department is responsible for conducting its own safety inspections. Use of the Internet is well supervised. There is a health and safety committee which meets each term and the site supervisor is vigilant on a daily basis. There are a generous number of adults with full first aid qualifications, including a member of staff in each department. Efficient procedures are in place for reporting and recording accidents. The school lives up to its aim of ensuring that all pupils will gain a knowledge and understanding of the world which will equip them for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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

- 56 Parents view the school as a very good school which is helping their children to become mature and responsible. These positive views of the school were reflected in the comments of the parents attending the meeting prior to the inspection. They describe the very good relationships and the high standards set by adults in the school, as well as the school's good knowledge of pupils in their care. Parents commented on the excellent transition arrangements from primary education. They praised teachers for their good teaching and for their commitment to extra-curricular activities. Some parents do not feel that they get enough information on the progress of their children. The school has addressed this concern and is issuing an interim report before the end of the autumn term.
- 57 As also noted at the time of the previous inspection, the information which parents receive is good. There are regular newsletters informing parents about events in the school. The school prospectus is bright and attractive and gives a lot of information for parents on the school's expectation of pupils. The school's site on the Internet is a further source of information. Parents say that there is good information in the home/school agreement which gives clear guidance on their responsibilities in their partnership with the school. Reports on pupils' progress are clear and detailed and give information on the scores and grades for attainment and effort, parents confirm that they consider these are "excellent". They also contain targets for improvement and the format of the new interim report should help parents to consider what their children need to do to improve their performance before summer assessment. There is a consultation evening for all parents. The pupil planner is a good two-way communication system between the school and home, but not all parents feel that teachers check them regularly. There is a homework timetable so that parents can offer maximum support. Some parents would appreciate guidance on the variety of marking systems used by teachers.
- 58 Parental involvement in the work of the school is very good. Open evenings, achievement evenings, information evenings, parents' evenings and option evenings all contribute to parental involvement in the school. In addition, the special needs department has an open evening for parents when they are given a very useful handbook. The Ribblesdale School Association provides valuable resources for the school through its social and fund raising activities. The school successfully involved parents from the minority ethnic community by changing the name of the Year 7 parents' meeting to "Welcome Evening". The school sent out a questionnaire to parents seeking their views on a range of issues, including consulting them on the proposed new tutorial system. This resulted in the headteacher writing to all parents who expressed a concern about any of the school's provision.
- 59 On a practical day-to-day level, parents make a valuable contribution to their children's learning by ensuring that they arrive at school regularly and on time and by supporting them with their homework. Many parents have responded to the school's emphasis on technology by providing their child with a computer at home.

- 60 The inspection team found evidence to support all those aspects which parents like most about the school. On the questionnaire sent home to parents there was no issue they would like to see improved which attracted over 20 per cent of responses. However some parents felt less positive about homework; how well they were kept informed about their child's progress, and how well the school worked with parents. Inspection evidence indicates that the use of homework is very good. The annual report to parents gives clear information about estimated levels of attainment as well as the actual levels achieved. There are regular newsletters informing parents about events in the school. In addition, the school tries hard to work closely with parents, for example, when the school sent out a questionnaire to parents seeking their views on a range of issues including consulting them on the proposed vertical grouping tutorial system.

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

- 61 The quality of leadership and management is very good. This has contributed to the success with which issues contained in the previous inspection report have been addressed. The headteacher promotes a clear vision and expects high standards from all staff. A very effective team of senior managers supports her. The governing body is extremely supportive of the headteacher, providing commitment and high levels of expertise. The school has a clear sense of direction and a dedication to drive up standards and serve pupils well.
- 62 The headteacher and senior staff work together with skill, determination and energy. There are clear and appropriate priorities for development and improvement underpinned by detailed financial planning. The principles of best value are firmly embedded in the management of the school. The headteacher and the governing body are therefore making excellent use of all available funding. Initiatives continue to be introduced to improve achievement and the school is taking vigorous action to meet the challenging targets it has set itself.
- 63 The governing body discharges its statutory duties very well. The governors are well informed concerning the school's performance and take a very active role in monitoring all aspects including the finances. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body responds to the expertise of individual governors very well, ensuring that this is used to good effect on relevant committees. They take a strong and influential lead in determining the long term development of the school, for example the chair of governors was influential in encouraging the school to pursue Technology College status.
- 64 The acquisition of Technology College Status has had a significant influence on the school, particularly on the quality and quantity of additional learning resources. A further advantage linked to this development is the excellent coordination of information and communication technology throughout the school. Many subjects have benefited from this; including science, geography, history, design and technology, art and design, and religious education.
- 65 There is very good use of assessment data to set challenging targets for pupils and analyse the effectiveness of pupil progress and attainment. This is evident in many subjects but of particular quality in English, science, modern foreign languages, art and design and technology. The special educational needs coordinator has an excellent awareness of how pupils learn and provides clear direction for colleagues. The head teacher and senior managers are highly supportive and provide opportunities to develop appropriate strategies to support pupils. Leadership and management of special educational needs are excellent and contribute to the

achievement of the schools' aspirations for all of its pupils. Teachers work co-operatively with the special educational needs coordinator who provides support and information for teachers on how they can best support pupils in lessons.

- 66 The school has successfully implemented the recommendations of the Code of Practice for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs. The governors' annual report to parents provides appropriate information about the success of the special educational needs policy and the allocation of resources over the previous year. Pupils' special needs are identified by liaison with primary schools, the results of tests taken before and after admission to the school and by the concerns of parents and teachers.
- 67 Improvement since the previous inspection in the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Documentation to support the work of the department is very clear and helpful; accommodation for pupils with special educational needs now provides a stimulating and supportive learning environment for learning; systems to manage support for pupils are very effective.
- 68 There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching supported by an effective performance management policy. The school has been awarded the Investor in People award for the training and development of all staff. Considerable support is given to experienced teachers and to recently qualified teachers. Induction of new staff is particularly effective. Consequently the overall quality of teaching is a particular strength of the school.
- 69 The school development plan is a well structured document which contains all the appropriate information and is costed with budget headings identified. Individual department plans are clearly driven by the whole school priorities and the document is an effective management tool. Heads of faculties and departments meet their responsibilities very well. Planning is effective in supporting teaching and there is recognition that the quality of provision is the responsibility of the head of department. Departmental planning and quality assurance procedures are generally very good. There is a clear belief in equal opportunities and systems are in place to provide an inclusive education for all pupils. The special education needs provision is particularly well coordinated.
- 70 Procedures for the care and support of pupils are managed very well. Staff at all levels and responsibility act as very good role models and are supported by the senior management team. Considerable commitment and energy are devoted to ensuring that all pupils benefit from what the school has to offer. The pastoral care of the pupils is seen as an educational priority and is supported by effective pastoral management and high levels of mutual respect between the pupils and their teachers.
- 71 The staffing of teaching is very well matched to the needs of the curriculum which the school delivers. Teachers are well qualified and deployed very well to help pupils learn. The exception was in the one unsatisfactory lesson where the teacher was not well trained in the subject. The school is well provided for in respect of education support staff. Overall, the learning resources in the school are good. The provision for information and communication technology, and its use in other subjects, is very good, and in some parts of the school is excellent. Overall, the standard of accommodation is good. However, the school has become victim to its own success and the consequent pressure on accommodation means that in parts of the school this is only satisfactory. This will be addressed in the near future by a building programme, which will provide a number of general classrooms in addition to specialist science laboratories.

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

The structure of the timetable needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that: taught time is brought in line with that recommended; the anomalous distribution of periods in some subjects is addressed. (paragraph references: 25; 32.)

The provision for the daily act of collective worship needs to be improved. (paragraph references: 30; 43.)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	171
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	20	71	63	16	1	0	0
Percentage	12	42	37	9	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,220
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	94

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	45
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	127

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	35

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	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	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	7.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 9)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	124	102	226

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	85	96	83
	Girls	92	89	71
	Total	177	185	154
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	78 (83)	82 (81)	68 (66)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	28 (42)	54 (55)	37 (39)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	83	95
	Girls	91	80	83
	Total	169	163	178
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (77)	72 (65)	80 (64)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (32)	38 (40)	48 (47)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2000	103	92	195

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	55	99	101
	Girls	66	88	92
	Total	121	187	193
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	62 (57)	96 (94)	99 (98)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	42
	National	38.4

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		n/a

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	32
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	1183
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	22	3
Other minority ethnic groups		

*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)	70.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3

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

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	472

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.2
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	-
Key Stage 3	25.2
Key Stage 4	22.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	2,984,616
Total expenditure	2,979,697
Expenditure per pupil	2,510
Balance brought forward from previous year	186,210
Balance carried forward to next year	191,129

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	24

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	326

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	55	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	34	60	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	65	3	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	58	13	4	0
The teaching is good.	36	59	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	53	15	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	44	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	51	13	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	56	40	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	52	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	42	3	2	6

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

### ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is very good.

#### Strengths

- Very good teaching throughout the school.
- Very good leadership and team work in the department.
- Pupils' very positive attitude to the subject.
- Excellent systems of assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Standards both by the end of Year 9 and at GCSE.

#### Areas for improvement

- Introduce strategies to further improve English grades A\*-C in line with those obtained in English literature.
- Sharpen the focus on the already good provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Explore ways to develop the learning outcomes from lessons of private reading.

- 72 Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were well above the national average for pupils achieving level 5 and above, and above average for pupils achieving level 6 and above. Seventy eight per cent achieved level 5 and above compared with a national average of 63 per cent. These results were not as good as those attained in 1999. The figures for 2001 show an improvement at level 5 and above and a substantial increase of pupils attaining level 6 upwards (forty eight per cent in 2001 as compared to twenty eight per cent in 2000). There were no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.
- 73 In year 2000 the GCSE results in English were above the national average at grades A\*-C. Sixty three per cent of pupils achieved these grades against a national average of 56 per cent. A\*-G grades were in line with national averages. The percentage of pupils obtaining the higher A\*/A grades was slightly above the average with more girls than boys achieving these grades. 2001 results show a slight increase in the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C. These figures indicate a trend of sustained achievement. Both boys and girls achieved above the national averages.
- 74 The year 2000 results at A\*-C in GCSE English literature were well above the national average. Seventy six per cent achieved these grades against a national average of 61 per cent. Again, the percentage of higher grades (A\*/A) was above the national average, with girls achieving more than boys. The results for 2001 indicate a very substantial improvement in results; 87 per cent of pupils achieved grades A\*-C.
- 75 At the end of Year 9 standards are above average overall in all aspects of the subject, that is speaking and listening, reading and writing. A significant minority of pupils are well above average in each aspect. Speaking and listening skills are good overall. Almost all pupils listen carefully and respond appropriately. Most pupils, including those of lower prior attainment, are able to consider ideas thoughtfully, discuss sensibly and employ standard English as required. Most are able to use appropriate vocabulary. The oral work of those of lower prior attainment is more limited because of restricted vocabulary and, sometimes lack of confidence. Very good use is made of drama in English to develop the oral abilities of pupils in a variety of situations.
- 76 Reading skills are good overall; pupils explore a wide range of text types and those of lower prior attainment were able to respond well to the sensitive teaching. For

example, a Year 9 group of pupils with lower prior attainment were able to speculate and predict as they analyse a newspaper report. Pupils whose attainment matched national averages in Year 9 were able to isolate and discuss sensory images and figurative devices in a Rupert Brooke poem, whilst higher attainers in Year 8 confidently explored characterisation in the novel 'The Outsiders'.

- 77 Writing skills are good overall and often very good. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of writing and much emphasis is placed on learning the basics of effective expression. Thus, for example, one lesson looked at the negative and positive use of adjectives, another at 'sentences' made up of one word used for descriptive effect, and another at how mood and atmosphere are established. Creative writing is a particular strength throughout the school. Most pupils understand how similes, metaphors and other devices can be used to strengthen description. Year 9 pupils understood about the effects of sentences and paragraph length, positioning and structural links. Throughout the school some otherwise mature work is occasionally weakened by technical errors, most often spelling.
- 78 At the end of Year 11 standards are above average in all aspects of the subject. There is a significant minority of higher attainers who are well above average. Speaking and listening skills are good and often very good. Many pupils are able to construct appropriate speeches, for example, in the style of Martin Luther King on world freedom, and can share their research on texts with fellow pupils, using appropriate language and tone. Most pupils are able to vary speech patterns well, according to audience and purpose; some are skilful at using appropriate rhetorical devices. Reading skills are good and often very good. Pupils are often able to bring mature, and sometimes sophisticated, critical analysis to their work. This was seen with such texts as 'Romeo and Juliet', 'The Speckled Band', 'Wuthering Heights' and comparisons of poetry, for example poems by Porter and Rimbaud. Many are able to discuss nuances of meaning, structural features and alternative interpretations with confidence. Lower attainers understand significant features of plot and character. Writing skills are good overall and often very good. Creative writing is a particular strength; work is often original and thoughtful. Year 11 pupils wrote a trilogy in different styles on the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, others wrote imaginatively on aspects of their own lives. Structure, development, and language are often impressively confident.
- 79 Since the last inspection the department has made good improvements. The previous report was positive in almost all respects. Standards in English were described as above average; they are now well above average. Standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were average and they are now well above average. Pupils were described as behaving well; their behaviour is now very good. The lack of subject knowledge by non-specialist teachers referred to in the previous report is not now a problem as all members of the department are specialist teachers. The heavy workload due to whole school responsibilities has now been appropriately dealt with. The library resources have benefited from the funding from the Technology College status, and the two learning coordinators work closely with the librarian to ensure effective use of the facility.
- 80 Teaching is very good overall. Ninety six per cent of lessons seen were good or very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Major strengths are that all teachers possess very good subject knowledge, have good classroom management skills and plan their lessons effectively. As a result, very good learning takes place in a supportive and orderly environment. Much emphasis is placed upon thinking skills so that pupils are not just taught knowledge but also how to learn effectively. Modelling is well used in some lessons; for example, when the teacher models the layout of a newspaper page in detail. This is good practice which encourages effective learning.



- 81 There is a strong emphasis on active involvement, with pupils being encouraged to speculate, think and discuss. Independent learning techniques are being used very successfully with lower attainers in Year 9 and these are being developed for wider use. This approach encourages thought, exploration and imagination. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils; very high quality individual help is offered to pupils as they work individually or in groups. Homework is well used as an integral part of the learning process; it is relevant and appropriate. Marking is very good. Work is marked carefully and in detail; comments tell pupils what they need to do to improve and what targets they should aim for next. Most lessons contain a good level of challenge for pupils; for example, a Year 10 class research structural aspects of a short story in pairs, in order to re-teach this material to the rest of the class.
- 82 Most lesson plans recognise the sequential nature of learning, though occasionally in lessons objectives are not stated clearly and summary sessions to consolidate learning are omitted. Very occasionally teacher exposition and pace are less effective than is the departmental norm. Private reading lessons do not have sufficiently clearly defined learning outcomes. Information and communication technology is very well used to enhance learning; the technology college status of the school allows wide use of facilities and research.
- 83 Learning is very good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress as a result of the very good teaching they receive. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are well supported in lessons by material which is well matched to their needs. More work to extend the higher attaining pupils could be further developed.
- 84 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They arrive on time to lessons ready to work. Most take a keen interest in their work and are happy to discuss it. Many pupils enjoy English because they have opportunity to investigate, discuss and explore. They show initiative and a high level of collaborative skill when working in groups or pairs. Scrutiny of books and folders shows that work is completed and carefully presented by pupils of all attainment levels.
- 85 The department is very well led with vision and efficiency. A very strong team of teachers work well together. They are enthusiastic and are committed to the learning and welfare of their pupils. This gives the department a warm and welcoming feel to which pupils respond well. Teachers are keen to explore new ideas; for example, independent learning and well considered strategies to improve boys' performance. Delegation is effective. Very good teaching is underpinned by clear schemes of work. The department development plan is detailed and well considered. Assessment is excellent; data analyses are used very effectively to underpin a clear system for tracking, predicting and intervening in pupil achievement. There are strong links with primary feeder schools. Extra-curricular activities enhance the life of the school: amongst them the Literary Festival, at which famous authors visit and hold writing workshops with pupils. Formal monitoring of teaching is in place. Given the degree of enthusiasm and ability in the department it is well placed to improve still further.

## **LITERACY**

- 86 Literacy levels are good overall. Technical accuracy is often good though pupils do make errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout the school. Nevertheless, overall these are less frequent than usual. Writing skills are generally satisfactory, with most pupils able to form effective sentences and paragraphs and apply rules of grammar appropriately. Higher attainers compose writing of greater sophistication and accuracy. Reading skills are at least average for most pupils, though a minority have reading ages substantially below their chronological age. Higher attainers are able to read texts of some complexity with fluency. Speaking and

listening skills are good overall. Most pupils, including lower attainers, are able to speak clearly and articulate appropriately using a correct register and tone.

- 87 Provision for literacy is very good, and is beginning to make an impact on standards. The school has a well considered whole school policy and this is reflected in the good departmental policies which exist. There is a working party on literacy, chaired by a deputy head teacher, which includes representatives from each department in the school. This places a clear emphasis on the importance of literacy throughout the school. This will receive further support as the school enacts its plans to respond to the national strategy for Years 7 to 9. Key words are displayed prominently and attractively in most departments and emphasis is placed on using subject specific vocabulary. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are carefully corrected in pupils' work in most departments. Most, but not all, departments insist upon the use of a drafting process to develop accuracy. There is evidence of extended writing for different audiences in the majority of subjects but less of extended reading beyond the immediate requirements of the syllabus. A strength is the degree to which speaking and listening exercises are used; for example in role play, debate, discussion and presentation, to develop oral skills. The library and the information and communication technology facilities are extensively used by most departments to enhance the learning of literacy.

## DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is very good.

### Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject.
- Lessons underpinned by good schemes of work.

### Areas for improvement

- Further develop the analysis of examination results.

- 88 In the 2000 GCSE drama examinations A\*-C grades were below the national average, but in 2001 results were in line with national expectations. Since small numbers of candidates were entered in both years, however, no accurate statistical comparisons can be made.
- 89 At the end of Year 11 standards are good. Pupils are able to focus appropriately on the dramatic implications of the interesting material studied. They are able, with varying degrees of ability, to express underlying themes in interesting group presentations. Standards of movement and delivery vary considerably, with the best being above average. Choral speech and ensemble work were attempted thoughtfully and successfully. Tableaux and thought tracking exercises were carefully prepared and executed.
- 90 Teaching in drama is good. The major strengths are the effective planning of lessons; these are devised to give pupils maximum opportunity for active involvement. Hence interest and enthusiasm are maintained. There is good, unobtrusive, classroom management which allows pupils maximum freedom within very clearly established frameworks. There are good teacher-pupil relationships which give pupils confidence to experiment and explore. The teacher acts well as a facilitator, knowing when to intervene and help, and when to stand back and allow pupils to work independently. As a result, ideas are refined and developed well. Objectives are made clear at the outset and summary sessions draw together the learning of the session.

- 91 Drama is very well organised. Good lessons are underpinned by clear schemes of work. The teacher responsible for drama has also created very good schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 drama taught in English. The analysis of examination results is satisfactory but could be developed further. Good use is made of: extra lessons after school; key-words and exemplar material, and there is a clear understanding by pupils of assessment criteria. The modern studio is a good learning environment and well equipped.

## MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is very good.

### Strengths

- Standards of attainment well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Good progress of the pupils due to high teacher expectations.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- Team work of the department and the vision of the head of the department.

### Areas for improvement

- GCSE statistics results.
- A more consistent approach to marking.

- 92 At the end of Year 9 standards of attainment of the majority of pupils are well above average. Test results at the end of Year 9 show that almost 80 per cent of pupils reached level 5 or above and 55 per cent of pupils reached level 6 or above. These results are well above the average for all schools as well as schools in similar circumstances. Pupils enter the school with results broadly in line with national average. Achievement of the majority of pupils between age 11 and 14 is good. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. Boys and girls perform equally well at this stage.
- 93 At the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are well above the national average. Approaching 70 per cent of GCSE candidates over the last two years have achieved grades A\*-C. This is significantly above the national average. Almost all candidates who are entered for the GCSE examination in mathematics have achieved a grade, and boys and girls perform equally well. Achievement and progress of the majority of pupils are good. For the first time, in 2001, all pupils in Year 11 were entered for GCSE Statistics, about 50 per cent of them achieved grades A\*-C. This is an area which the department could develop further.
- 94 Standards of work seen in lessons and pupils' exercise books during the inspection were well above the expected level for the majority of pupils. Pupils are extremely productive in lessons because of their very good attitude to work. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in some lessons, otherwise they are withdrawn and taught in small groups. All are making good progress.
- 95 Since the last inspection all results have improved. GCSE results have shown a significant improvement. Facilities for, and the development of, information and communication technology have improved. The National Numeracy Strategy is being developed in Year 7. Planning and assessment procedures have improved.
- 96 While teaching is sometimes good or excellent, overall, it is now very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. All lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives

which are shared with the pupils. Lessons contain an appropriate range of activities with pupils working as a group or on an individual basis. The development of the three part lesson is becoming normal practice and some very good and imaginative starter exercises were seen using white boards. Investigations are used to good effect, the chocolate bar investigation used in Year 7 caused pupils to think of fractions in a different way, and the writing frame used to write this up helped their literacy skills.

- 97 The use of information and communication technology is well developed in the department. Spreadsheets were being used to generate number sequences in Year 7 to test the pupils' prior knowledge of sequences and develop their information and communication technology skills. A geometry program was used in Years 8 and 10 to consolidate the work the pupils were doing on an aspect of geometry, and to develop their information and communication technology skills by using word processing software to print their work. A feature of the department is the imaginative and sometimes inspirational work the teachers have planned themselves. Examples of this were work prepared for Year 7 on fractions, for Year 8, a game using directed number, and for Year 11, a very good use of graphs from a newspaper in a statistics lesson.
- 98 Teachers made effective use of questioning during group work and pupils are encouraged, and able, to explain their answers and solutions to the rest of the class. Good support is given to the pupils when they are undertaking work on an individual basis. Homework is regularly set, marked and returned to pupils to correct their mistakes and make further progress. Greater consistency is needed in the way work is marked. Good records of individual pupils' progress are kept by the teachers. Pace of work is well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- 99 As a result of effective teaching most pupils acquire knowledge of basic concepts and skills which enable them to work on their own to improve their understanding. The pupils have a very positive attitude to their work in mathematics, they settle down to work quickly and behave very well in lessons. Pupils answer fully the frequent questions they are asked during group work. Relationships between pupils and the teachers are very good. Mental arithmetic skills are good and pupils use calculators appropriately.
- 100 The department is an enthusiastic, hard working and committed team of teachers who work well together. The teachers have high standards and high expectations of the pupils. They are well led, and in the short time the head of department has been in post, she has made her mark. She has encouraged the more collaborative planning for the National Numeracy Strategy and is sharing her enthusiasm for, and experience of, investigations as an effective tool in pupils' learning. Lesson observations are undertaken and are followed by discussion. Teachers are well qualified and have a secure grasp of the subject and its requirements. The mathematics curriculum is appropriate and meets the statutory requirements, providing equal access and opportunity for all pupils. Schemes of work have been developed and these lead to continuity and progression for individual pupils across the aspects of the subject. The rooms provide a pleasant working environment with excellent wall displays of pupils' work, key words and work produced using information and communication technology.

### **Numeracy**

- 101 Standards of numeracy for the majority of pupils are good. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is good and developing. The school's responses to the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 will further support this. The development of pupils' numerical skills forms an increasing aspect of the mathematics curriculum.

Lessons in all years involve starting and finishing exercises, and pupils show good levels of confidence and skills with number when undertaking them.

- 102 Pupils make a good use of number in a range of subjects. For example in science, geography, history, religious education, design and technology and modern foreign languages, pupils use basic numerical skills, drawing accurate graphs and analysing data. In addition, in science, calculators were being used effectively and angles were being measured accurately. In geography there was good use of co-ordinates in the work on grid references. It is clear that pupils are not restricting their experience of mathematics but are transferring their mathematical learning effectively to different contexts. A representative of the mathematics department attends other department meetings on a regular basis to discuss developments in numeracy. It is planned that all staff in the school will be involved in development activities relating to numeracy for one day in February 2002.

## SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is very good.

### Strengths

- The high quality of a very large majority of the teaching.
- The excellent system for assessing pupils' work and supporting them.
- The information and communication technology facilities and their effective use.
- The management of the department.

### Areas for improvement

- Inclusion in the curriculum plan of opportunities for short investigative activities.
- Use of paired discussion activities to encourage independent learning.

- 103 In tests in 2000 at the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment in science was above the national average and above those of pupils in similar schools. In the 2001 tests pupils' attainment in Year 9 were also above the national average, and the number gaining the higher levels is well above average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' results are well above average. Their performance was above the national average between 1996 and 2000 and pupils' results show the same pattern of improvement as the national results, with boys and girls doing equally well. Before pupils come to the school their test results for science are broadly in line with the national average.
- 104 In GCSE examinations in 2000 nearly two thirds of the pupils gained an A\*-C grade compared with the national figure of close to fifty percent, and girls and boys did equally well. These results are above the national average and above those of similar schools. In 2001 the number of pupils gaining an A\*-C grade, in comparison with national results, was very high and in comparison with similar schools it was well above average. In 2001 all pupils gained a grade A\*-G. These results show that standards in GCSE examinations improved between 2000 and 2001 and that pupils' standards in science are improved between entry to the school and Year 9 and between Years 9 and 11.
- 105 Progress made since the last inspection is satisfactory. Test results have improved steadily in Year 9 and in the GCSE examinations in Year 11. Boys and girls now do equally well and teaching is equally effective in all year groups. The department has a science library and funding has improved as a result of the school's Technology College status. Pupils following GCSE courses have more books, but changes in GCSE courses have slowed the process of providing each individual pupil with all of the books they need. Overall resources for teaching, including books, are good.

- 106 In Year 9 the standard of pupils' work in lessons was well above the national average. In a lesson about the measurement of angles as light passed through a glass block, pupils' practical skills and their explanations of the changes they saw were well above average. Pupils' understanding of the differences between solids, liquids and gases, and of the way in which the heart works was also above average. Pupils' standard of numeracy in lessons about light, and when dealing with graphs of speed and time, was very good. Boys and girls do equally well and the attainment of pupils with special educational needs are well above average.
- 107 By the end of Year 11 the standard of pupils' work in lessons is also well above the national average for girls and boys, and for pupils with special educational needs. For example, in lessons about chemistry, very able pupils' understanding of chemical reactions and of the way in which a chemical formula can be calculated are very clear. Pupils with lower prior attainment learn about enzymes and rates of reaction very successfully in a lesson about bread making. During a lesson in which pupils investigated the reasons why hot things cool down, computer equipment was used very effectively to record changes in temperature. Investigative skills, and pupils' understanding of the reasons why this happens, are very good. Pupils from ethnic minorities and those with special educational needs do as well as all others throughout the school. In a lesson about the structure of atoms a very high standard was reached by all pupils. Standards of literacy and numeracy in science lessons are very good throughout the school. Pupils tabulate data and draw graphs very well, and in lessons about forces, or the structure of molecules, they readily and accurately used calculators. The most able pupils are highly articulate, they can explain difficult ideas about solids, liquids and gases very clearly, and other pupils do well. All pupils listen carefully, sometimes for long periods.
- 108 Overall, the teaching of science throughout the school is very good. In Years 7 to 9 it is at least good and often very good, and in Years 10 and 11 it is excellent or very good in two thirds and good in most of the rest. A small number of lessons are satisfactory and no teaching is unsatisfactory. The best lessons in all years have similar features. In a lesson for a top set in Year 11, pupils were given a variety of problems which were challenging, but supported by clear explanations by the teachers. This ensured that pupils made very good progress. Expectations are high, and sympathetic teaching ensures that lower attaining pupils do well. Teachers provide very effective support for pupils with special educational needs and these pupils do well. This was seen in a lesson about cells in Year 10 in which careful attention was given by the teacher to spelling and reading skills. Demanding and challenging teaching for higher attaining sets throughout the school ensures that these pupils reach high standards of understanding of many difficult ideas.
- 109 Teachers have an excellent command of their subject; they make good use of questions to find out what pupils know, and to make sure that they learn effectively in lessons. Relationships in many lessons are excellent; teachers foster pupils' self esteem and confidence, with the result that pupils are always willing to try hard and answer difficult questions. Teachers' management in the classroom is excellent and they always insist that pupils' behaviour is excellent, that they should listen and try hard, with the consequence that lessons are orderly and productive. In Year 7 a very well managed lesson gave pupils an opportunity to learn through discussion and at the same time to improve their literacy skills. In a small number of lessons there are no opportunities for pupils to work independently doing some investigative work. In these lessons too much is led by the teacher and teaching methods lack variety.
- 110 During Years 7 to 9 the achievements of pupils in lessons are very good. In a lesson about acids and alkalis pupils' practical skills developed very well. Pupils develop a

very clear understanding of the process of fertilisation in plants and in a lesson about weight and mass they developed a very good understanding of a difficult idea in which weight was related to gravity. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the well-organised support provided by teachers.

- 111 In Years 10 and 11 progress continues and the achievements of pupils in lessons are again very good. Pupils learn to use books as sources of information. In a lesson about the planets they learned how to use the Internet, selecting relevant information and showing good information and communication technology skills. Pupils in top sets made excellent progress when they learned about the formula of chemicals. In lower attaining classes pupils learning about cells was very good. When progress is satisfactory it is because teaching lacks the variety found in the better lessons. Overall in lessons, boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, and those from ethnic minorities all make very good progress.
- 112 During science lessons throughout the school the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and from ethnic minorities, are very good. This is largely due to the very hard work of the teachers and the very effective teaching received by the pupils. Behaviour is excellent because teachers insist on it. Pupils are highly motivated because their lessons are demanding and interesting. They are responsible and cooperative, especially during practical work, which they do carefully and safely. Pupils are confident, willing to take responsibility and show initiative because teachers foster this. The work produced by the majority of pupils is complete and very carefully and tidily written or drawn; pupils clearly take pride in their work. Pupils show a high degree of enthusiasm for their science lessons.
- 113 Management of the science department is very good. Planning is very good and has a strong emphasis on raising standards. Systems for recording the progress made by pupils and identifying those who do well or poorly are excellent. There are very good links with local primary schools which involve exchange of teachers and visits by pupils to Ribblesdale High School. The curriculum is well planned and is being reviewed. However, there is a need to include opportunities for pupils to use investigative activities more frequently, and to continue to make good progress in integrating information and communication technology into the curriculum. More use should be made of paired discussion strategies to widen the range of learning methods used in classrooms.
- 114 The department organises a science club and visits to local universities in order to interest pupils in science. The school has built its own observatory which is used well by pupils and the local community. The science department has a very well equipped information and communication technology room which is used well. There are a large number of data loggers and the pupils benefit from the school's status as a Technology College. Technicians in the science department work very hard, they provide teachers with excellent support and enable them to make the best use of practical activities in the classroom.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is very good.

### Strengths

- Standards in Years 10 and 11.
- The quality of teaching.
- The management of the subject.

- The attitude of the pupils in all year groups.

#### Areas for improvement

- The location of the accommodation.

- 115 By the end of Year 9 standards of attainment are above national expectations. Pupils experience a wide variety of creative experiences and as a consequence of the level of provision, combined with effective teaching, the majority of pupils show a high level of interest in their work. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils draw and paint with confidence and have some appreciation for the use of colour, line and tone. Some interesting work has been produced such as: collage designs in Year 7 based on the work of Klimt ; designs in Year 8 based on the work of Hundertwasser, together with some impressive personal studies on abstract art.
- 116 Year 9 pupils have produced figurative work based on the paintings of Francis Bacon and some self-portraits in the style of Picasso. In addition, many pupils demonstrate good research skills when completing homework assignments. Pupils are willing to discuss their work and a significant proportion show pride in their achievements, which is a reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. When attainment is below national expectations it is usually found in Year 9 classes with some disaffected pupils for whom the subject has little attraction. Overall, pupils make good, often very good, progress and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make equally good progress.
- 117 By the end of Year 11 attainment is well above the national average and also above most other subjects in the curriculum. In 2001 fifty nine pupils took the GCSE examination, of whom 98 per cent gained A\*-C grades and 29 per cent gained A\*-A grades. The majority of pupils handle drawing instruments competently and show a satisfactory understanding of their own progress. The use of sketchbooks by all pupils demonstrates that research skills are very good. Pupils use a wide range of materials and are competent in drawing, painting and three-dimensional work. Pupils produce work to a high standard, making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. There was evidence of some impressive work being produced using computer generated art applications. The pupils are articulate when discussing their work and many can understand and use technical language. Course work provides evidence of good research containing written extracts and annotations. The attitude of the pupils is impressive, ranging from good to excellent. The relationships between pupils and towards the teachers are very effective, based on high levels of mutual respect.
- 118 Teaching is very good overall with a significant proportion of lessons being excellent. The lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all pupils with opportunities to progress, and to attain levels of achievement commensurate with their abilities and aspirations. Many pupils, including those with special education needs, often exceed their own expectations. Pupils with special educational needs are well served through sensitive teaching and specially designed learning opportunities, which offer pupils the opportunity to succeed. Classroom organisation and management is very effective. The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are often excellent, providing a pleasant atmosphere in the lessons. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures, in order to raise creative and visual appreciation and awareness.
- 119 All classrooms within the department contain excellent displays of pupils' work, together with displays relating to the work of significant artists or culture. Assessment is effective, acting as an influence on future curriculum development and lesson planning. Assessment includes a certain amount of pupil self-assessment and



therefore, when questioned, the pupils were well aware of teacher expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Work is marked at appropriate intervals, usually linked to the completion of a project.

- 120 The management of the department is very effective in promoting high standards in lessons and giving clear direction. The department development plan, together with a well-structured and detailed scheme of work, promote the vision of the department. The quality of the pupils' work is assisted by an effective assessment policy. Work is marked regularly, pupil attainment is recorded and analysed, and pupil self-assessment is a regular feature of all lessons. The teachers work as a very effective team offering a range of complementary skills, which in turn provides pupils with a wide range of creative opportunities.
- 121 The Technology College Status has had a beneficial effect upon the quality and quantity of available resources. These resources are managed effectively. The quality of the work of the pupils on display in the department and around the school is very good, promoting high standards; interest in the subject, and celebrating achievement. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. All staff are suitable qualified and have access to training and development opportunities.
- 122 Consideration should be given to the location of the various art rooms, which are separated by a considerable distance. This factor frustrates the effective management of the subject. Some resources have to be duplicated; regular contact between the teachers is difficult, creating a sense of isolation. Restrictions are created for lesson planning which can have an adverse effect upon the flexibility of provision for all pupils.
- 123 The last inspection drew attention to the fact that the GCSE grades were below national averages. This is no longer the case. The transformation has been outstanding. Assessment was considered to be weak. Assessment now informs curricular planning and provides a very good level of understanding of pupil attainment and progress.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is very good.

### Strengths

- The very good standards throughout the school.
- The very good teaching.
- The very good management.
- The very good pupil attitudes.
- The very good use of information and communication technology.

### Areas for improvement

- Target setting for individual pupils in Years 7 to 9.

- 124 Standards at the end of Year 9 are very high in relation to the national average. Pupils arrive in the school with levels of attainment which match those for most pupils nationally. During their first three years pupils make very good progress and significantly exceed the level of attainment recorded nationally. There is very little difference in the performance of girls compared to boys. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

- 125 Standards at the end of Year 11 are very high compared to the national average. In design and technology as a whole, eight out of ten pupils gained higher grades. Graphical products and electronic products exceeded that figure, whilst food technology, textiles technology and resistant materials almost equalled it.
- 126 Pupils' practical skills on entry to the school are not as well developed as other aspects of the subject. However the introductory modules provided by the department quickly develop pupils' understanding of the design process. Focused tasks provide a good grounding in the practical skills required to allow pupils to realise their designs with a good level of accuracy. Year 7 pupils in textiles are competent and confident in the use of standard and programmable sewing machines. Pupils are able to scan in their own decoration to individualise the bags they design. In Year 8, pupils were able to develop their knowledge and use of technology when they designed and made a key holder. They used computer aided design software and computer aided manufacturing equipment to produce their final designs. Other Year 8 pupils demonstrated high levels of understanding and practical ability in producing nerve testers as part of their electronics module.
- 127 In Year 9, pupils concentrate on three different technology areas, thereby further extending their skills. For example, pupils used hand and machine tools with accuracy to produce puzzles and mechanical toys in wood and wood-based materials. Higher attainers achieved outcomes closely matching their original designs, taking considerable care with the final finish. High levels of competence were also evident in food technology and graphics. The emphasis throughout the three years is on good quality design techniques linked to research. The results of this approach can be seen in well-presented folders. Middle and lower attainers find the research and evaluative aspects of the subject more challenging but still perform at a higher level than expected. Pupils with special educational needs perform very well, especially in the practical aspects. Positive attitudes and very good relationships with teachers and peers make a considerable contribution to the very good standards achieved. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed as an integral part of subject specific skills.
- 128 Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to display very good attitudes towards their chosen area. The very good progress made in the first three years provides a strong foundation for the GCSE courses. The faculty provides effective support for the work-related curriculum through the GNVQ in Manufacturing. Year 11 pupils taking systems and control are developing a wide range of complex products. They have a confidence which enables higher attainers to design products comparable to A-level standards. In one example a product combined the pupil's technology expertise with his science capability in producing an air purification system. Pupils taking graphical products make very good use of information and communication technology to enhance their work. Challenging projects are evident in resistant materials, where pupils use their knowledge of the full range of materials to complete major projects. Faculty policy is supportive of pupils' choice in not restricting on size or design. Teachers provide every encouragement to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential. Good practical skills development supports pupils who find the folder and examination aspects most challenging. Progress is closely monitored by the specialist teachers, with considerable efforts being made to keep even the least motivated on track for the highest possible grade. The department has developed very effective systems to support this approach. Pupils attaining at all levels appreciate the quality of advice and assistance they receive.
- 129 The quality of teaching is a strength within the department, with most lessons seen being at least good and many very good. There are some excellent lessons. This undoubtedly makes a major contribution to the improved standards. In very good lessons, teachers have precise aims and their learning objectives are clearly thought

through. Pupils are challenged, with teachers maintaining a good pace throughout the lesson. Pupils demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm for the subject resulting from the commitment of staff. All staff have good specialist knowledge which they use very effectively to support and develop learning both in lessons and during the many extra-curricular periods. Where teaching was less effective, pupil activity was less well monitored, and guidance on the use of hand and machine tools was not taught to a level matching the high expectations of the faculty.

- 130 The subject area is very well managed by a highly competent, committed head of faculty. He has vision and the ability to realise it. The head of faculty has the benefit of working with a cohesive and supportive team, including very effective technicians. The staff make very good use of assessment information to set appropriate targets for improvement in Years 10 and 11. However, this approach has not been used with pupils in the lower school. Teaching is monitored and developed through formal and informal contact. As a result of Technology College status the subject benefits from high levels of technical equipment which is used to very good effect. Pupils receive a broad range of experiences in Years 7 to 9, which serves to inform their choices in Years 10 and 11. However, rising numbers are beginning to stretch the specialist staff and facilities, especially in food, textiles and electronics.
- 131 At the time of the last inspection standards matched the national average in Years 7 to 9 and were well above in Years 10 and 11. Now Year 9 pupils attain well above national levels and performance at GCSE is very high. Teaching has improved significantly. Issues related to time allocation and the development of drawing and modelling skills have been dealt with effectively. Whilst management was regarded as making a significant contribution to the progress of the faculty, it is now central to a very successful faculty and key to maintaining the school's technological effectiveness. There has been very good progress since the last inspection.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is very good.

### Strengths

- Very effective use of information and communication technology to support and enhance pupils' learning.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning.
- The high quality of most teaching.
- The exceptionally good planning of pupils' learning experiences through the scheme of work.

### Areas for improvement

- To develop and implement a system of teachers observing each other's teaching in order to share the best practice in the department.
- To increase the proportion of girls following the full GCSE course.

- 132 In the last three years standards achieved by pupils in the teacher assessed national tests at the end of Year 9 have been above the national average. The proportion of girls attaining level 5 or better was significantly greater than that of boys in 1999 and 2000 although the attainment of boys and girls was the same in 2001. However, at the highest level in these tests, the performance of girls is very much better than that of boys: around twice as many girls as boys achieve level 7.
- 133 Overall, standards in lessons and in the written work of pupils by the end of Year 9 are above the standard expected nationally. Pupils have a good geographical vocabulary

that they use with confidence in written and oral work. They have a good sense of place and awareness of spatial relationships. Pupils in Year 8 suggested that London was an acceptable answer instead of the south-east because London is in the south-east. In addition, they were able to suggest that an alternative way of expressing nearness to the equator could be distance from the North Pole.

- 134 Pupils in all three years have good skills of independent investigation. Pupils in Year 8 produced well written accounts of their first hand investigation of a hypothesis on retailing in Clitheroe, illustrated with a variety of well produced graphs and maps. Their attainment in this work was well above the standard expected nationally. The attainment of pupils in Year 9 was also well above that standard in their investigation into the relationship between stages of economic growth and development in more and less economically developed countries. They selected and extracted data from a data base, then used it well to illustrate the relationship. Pupils of high prior attainment have a sophisticated awareness of some subtle factors in these inter-relationships. The course for pupils with special educational needs in Year 9 is modified to meet their needs more appropriately. Although their attainment is below the standard expected nationally it is good in relation to their prior attainment, particularly when involving the use of information and communication technology. They can use a web site with weather satellite data to select and record information about daily weather changes in Africa.
- 135 In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 standards in 1999 and 2000 were below the national average at the higher grades although they matched the national average at grades A\*-G. In 2001 the proportion gaining the higher grades increased significantly to well above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades, A\*-A, also increased significantly and is now at the national average. The achievement of boys in relation to girls improved considerably in 2001 and the proportion of boys gaining grades A\*-C was higher than that of girls. In year 2001, pupils were also entered for the GCSE short course. The proportions of pupils gaining grades A\*-C and the highest grades A\*-A were well above the national average.
- 136 The standard of work seen in lessons and in pupils' written work by the end of Year 11 is above the national average. Pupils' good geographical vocabulary helps them to write accurately and express themselves clearly. Their description of geographical features and processes is clarified further by the integration of maps, graphs and diagrams into the text to good effect. Pupils in Year 10 have a good understanding of the concepts of National Parks and of the conflicts over land use that arise in the Lake District National Park. By Year 11, pupils have acquired a good understanding of a substantial body of appropriate knowledge. They deepened their understanding of the causes and effects of earthquakes through their very capable Internet investigation of two case studies. Pupils used the information to produce a cogently written newspaper article, illustrated by appropriate maps and photographs.
- 137 Pupils following the short GCSE course are working to the same high standard. The coursework of many, on the urban morphology of Burnley, was outstanding. They produced very good, well structured accounts of their first hand investigation, with text, graphs and illustrations very well presented through the use of their expertise with information and communication technology. A weakness in the coursework of all GCSE pupils is their determination to ensure that the outcome of their investigation fits a theoretical model, rather than assessing the extent to which the model fits real life.
- 138 The overall standard of achievement of all pupils is good. Their attainment on entry to the school is close to that expected of all pupils nationally but they make such good progress that their attainment is above the national average at the end of Years 9 and

11. Pupils of high prior attainment are appropriately challenged and generally attain well, although occasionally they waste a little time in class when they complete short tasks more quickly than their fellow pupils. There is no obvious difference in achievement between boys and girls in Years 7 to 9 although sometimes girls are more passive in class than boys. In Years 10 and 11 far more boys than girls take the full course in geography. Overall, girls' achievement is better than that of boys, as they waste little time in class and attempt to complete all their work to a high standard. Some boys work less hard and waste some time in class and so attain less well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in all years. Learning support assistants and teachers, support them in their learning, and work is adapted to meet their needs so that they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

- 139 Standards in literacy are good. Pupils listen well and answer questions well in class. Most express themselves clearly, directly and accurately in oral and written work, sometimes using a variety of writing forms as appropriate for the occasion, or writing for different audiences. Pupils produced some particularly good work for display in Year 9, as part of their preparation for their field visit to Bowness. Pupils in Year 11, especially those able to use information and communication technology for their presentation, wrote very good newspaper accounts of the Gujarat earthquake in the style of good journalism. There is, however, little imaginative and empathetic writing. Standards in numeracy are good. Pupils are able to produce and interpret a wide variety of graphs, although the standard of finish of their work is often of poorer quality. They can interpret data effectively and much of their work helps them develop an understanding of numbers so that they can recognise significant differences in data. Standards in information and communication technology are exceptionally good. Pupils have a high level of competence in its use as a source of information and for the presentation of completed work. They use it quickly and efficiently in lessons and for homework.
- 140 Most teaching is good or better. In Years 7 to 9 nearly half the teaching is very good or excellent, over half is good or better, one quarter is satisfactory and one eighth unsatisfactory. Teaching is better in Years 10 and 11, where almost all lessons are good or better and most are very good or excellent. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace, with high expectations of pupil behaviour and learning, and the use of challenging tasks and good resources. This teaching enables very good independent learning. Pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm and work hard. Clear exposition, the possibility of using alternative methodologies and an intrinsically interesting but difficult task, stimulated pupils in a Year 9 lesson. They responded with enthusiasm and maturity to the analysis of the relationship between population growth and the state of economic development of a number of contrasting countries. Pupils in Year 10 worked independently and with interest on a challenging, clearly presented and well resourced task to describe and explain the attraction of Bowness for tourists.
- 141 A particular strength of the teaching is the highly effective integration of the use of information and communication technology as a learning tool. Data from field enquiry, and from secondary sources such as databases and the Internet, are used to develop pupils' thinking skills as well as to deepen their knowledge and understanding of geography. The learning of pupils in Year 11 about earthquakes was strengthened and enriched by their Internet research.
- 142 Where learning is less good it is related to a slower pace of work in lessons and some lack of challenge in what is expected of pupils. This leads to a reduction in interest and a passive rather than active involvement in learning. Pupils work well on written tasks but become inattentive in their listening when questioning is unfocused, vague or unchallenging. Occasionally pupils are expected to imagine what landscapes look like, or are told where places are, rather than looking at photographs

to see the features of the landscape, or using an atlas to locate places for themselves.

- 143 The scheme of work is exceptionally well produced, and has developed in response to changes in perceived needs. All members of the department contribute to its development. There is detailed reference to the ways in which teaching in geography contribute to learning across the curriculum, and enquiry work is incorporated well. There are good assessment processes. Pupils' work is generally well marked and National Curriculum levels are used regularly to guide pupils' efforts to improve. There are frequent end of unit assessments, standardised across the work of all pupils. Pupil self-assessment is developing but the process is not yet helpful, as pupils are not guided to strategies that would help them reach the targets that they set.
- 144 Resources are good, including the computers obtained through teachers' efforts in collecting vouchers. There is good access to the school's computer suites. Accommodation is barely satisfactory, as two of the three specialist rooms are very small, although the planned move to a new block next year should resolve this problem. All teachers have opportunities for professional development but teachers do not observe each other's teaching in order to share and spread best practice. The management and leadership of the department are very good. There is a shared sense of commitment amongst teachers to continuous improvement in standards and a good sense of how to attain this. The department has improved upon the high standards of the last report. The minor criticisms in relation to marking and the construction of the department development plan have been effectively addressed.

## HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is very good.

### Strengths

- The very good leadership and management.
- The very good attitudes, behaviour and achievement of pupils.
- The very good aspects of teaching.

### Areas for improvement

- To further enrich the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Marking of the work of pupils in Years 7 to 9.

- 145 In the GCSE results of 2000, the proportion of A\*-C grades was marginally below the national average. In 2000, all pupils entered gained grades within the range of A\*-G which was above the national average. The trend in performance since 1996 had been downward, but this was halted in 2001 when A\*-C grades were 72 per cent. Strategies that are being implemented this year to sustain the improvement of 2001 include close monitoring of the work of underachieving pupils; closer reference in task setting to past GCSE papers, and the planning of extra revision sessions after school in the spring and summer terms.
- 146 In work seen, standards by the end of Year 9 match national expectation. This confirms the teacher assessments of 2001. Pupils achieve very well in most of the aspects of history. In one aspect, the interpretations of history, their achievement is satisfactory. Their knowledge of all of the study units is secure both in range and depth. They learn to make correct use of terms of chronology such as century, decade, millennium, BC and AD. Organisation and communication of knowledge are very good. During work scrutiny, some outstanding presentations of work, in varied

style and format, were seen in notebooks, particularly in those of pupils in Years 8 and 9.

- 147 Pupils markedly develop their skills of historical enquiry, especially in their study in Year 8 of the culture of the North American Indians, gaining an appreciation of the differing attitudes towards the land of the Indians and the white settlers. Perception of differing interpretations of history is further enhanced in Year 9 through study of various aspects of World War 1. However, this skill is not developed to the same extent as those that are integral to the other aspects of the subject. With regard to cause and effect, pupils of higher and average attainment gain an understanding of the distinction between long and short term causes of events in their study of the English Civil War in Year 8. In a lesson on this theme, pupils made very good use of information and communication technology to support their learning. A sense of empathy is developed in all pupils through the imaginative writing that they undertake in the character of a Roman soldier on Hadrian's Wall in Year 7 and of a First World War soldier in the trenches in Year 9.
- 148 By the end of Year 9, higher and average attaining pupils write about the subject with a good standard of literacy, with some extended writing prominent in the work of Year 9 pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when a support teacher or assistant helps them, and satisfactory progress when support is not available. The progress in lessons of pupils with English as an additional language is at the same very good level as that of pupils in general. Higher attaining pupils make good progress through the extension work that is provided for them in the various study units.
- 149 Standards of work by the end of Year 11 are good and are consistent with the GCSE results of 2001. Pupils achieve well in terms of their acquisition of the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the GCSE course, and their independent enquiry skills are further developed. This is evident in the impressive course work that is produced on two disparate topics: the dangers of coal mining in the 19th century, and the circumstances of life for people living in a London borough during World War 2. They make good use of a range of sources in compiling notes and answering questions, although lower attaining pupils are not certain of the essential distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' sources. Higher attaining pupils are confident in their ability to evaluate sources on the basis of utility and degree of impartiality. They gain a satisfactory understanding of key terms and concepts and can use these appropriately in their own writing for example, 'outdoor relief' and 'less eligible conditions' in their work on 19th century poor relief. They understand that the prevailing climate of opinion can inhibit progress, for example with regard to poor law reform and the improvement of public health in Victorian England. They have a greater awareness of interpretations of history and a stronger sense of empathy. Most pupils show a good standard of literacy when writing about the subject.
- 150 The response of pupils to the subject is very good throughout the school and they are keen to make progress. A high level of commitment to the demands of the GCSE course is evident both in lessons and in notebooks. Take-up rates in Year 10 compare favourably with other subjects in the Humanities Faculty. Methods of working are well rehearsed, for example when pupils took notes without prior instruction as they watched videos. Behaviour is almost invariably very good and high concentration levels are sustained throughout the lessons amongst pupils at differing levels of prior attainment. Pupils relate very well both to their teachers and to each other. When working in pairs or in groups they support each other's learning very well, giving their ideas and suggestions, and responding to those offered by their peers.

- 151 Overall, teaching is very good. All three teachers are enthusiasts for the subject and possess a secure knowledge base. Skilful and varied methods of lesson presentation engage the interest of pupils and promote their very good level of response. Planning is good and features clear and attainable learning objectives for pupils. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, allowing sufficient time for different activities to take place within them and ensuring good progress. Firm discipline is allied to very good pupil management and positive working relations. High expectations on the part of teachers were evident in several lessons. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher tested the deductive abilities of pupils by asking them to consider why shopkeepers would favour a continuation of outdoor relief for the poor. In a Year 8 lesson, when considering whether some of the causes of the English Civil War were short or long term, pupils were asked to supply the reasons for their designations.
- 152 Marking is an aspect of teaching that could be improved. In Years 10 and 11 marking is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 it is inconsistent in providing the help and information that pupils need to improve standards, and the quality of all marking should be raised to that of the best.
- 153 Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The school's aims and values, especially with respect to the raising of standards, are well reflected in the work of the department. A shared commitment to improvement is clearly evident at departmental meetings. There is a detailed development plan for the period from 2000 to 2004. The head of department monitors the quality of teaching through classroom observations. A very good range of learning resources has been assembled including: text and topic books; worksheets to suit the requirements of pupils at differing levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, and videos and information and communication technology resources, which are effectively used in lessons. A written statement on the subject's contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils has not yet been drawn up.
- 154 Lesson planning is very thorough and satisfies all statutory requirements. However, the identification of more opportunities for concentrating on interpretations of history would be beneficial to pupils' studies in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 would be enriched by paying more attention to the second half of the 20th century. Support for literacy is well established in the way in which essential vocabulary is displayed on classroom walls and in the writing frames that are used well to assist the work of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. There are excellent displays of pupils' work and related materials in each of the main classrooms that are used for teaching the subject. These reward pupils for their achievements and provide a further stimulus to learning.
- 155 With regard to the previous inspection report, the only point for attention was a recommendation to consider refinements in development planning. There is abundant evidence in the current schemes of work to demonstrate that these improvements have been very effectively addressed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is very good.

### **Strengths**

- Standards of attainment are very high.
- The quality of teaching and learning are very good.
- Co-ordination and management of cross-curricular provision are excellent.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are very well behaved.



- There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers.

#### Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of progress for individuals and use of assessment information to set targets for them.

- 156 Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 have been consistently well above average in recent years. Pupils achieve very high standards for Key Skills in information and communication technology at the end of Year 11. Pupils are not entered for GCSE or GNVQ in the subject. In teachers' formal assessment at the end of Year 9, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above is well above the national average. Boys and girls reach similar standards.
- 157 Standards of attainment in work seen at the end of Year 9 were well above average. Pupils use computers confidently and competently to support their work in all subjects of the curriculum. For example, in design and technology, pupils used computers linked to control devices to learn about electronics and how industry uses computers to control production processes. Pupils reached high levels of attainment in desktop publishing in English when they drafted and presented a final copy of their work effectively. Because pupils have a good understanding of page layout, they communicate key information successfully, using pictures to add visual effect and graphs and charts to interpret information from surveys. In science, pupils reached high standards when they researched information about the planets and presented it to the class using specialised software. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress with literacy and numeracy when they use computer programs in Key Skills lessons. In mathematics lessons, pupils made very good use of spreadsheets when they investigated and evaluated the effectiveness of the newly introduced form groupings. Pupils have heightened understanding of work in lessons because they are provided with relevant and interesting tasks using information and communication technology to underpin learning in all subjects.
- 158 Standards of attainment in work seen at the end of Year 11 are well above average. For example, in geography pupils reached very high standards when researching information and writing a newspaper article about an earthquake in Gujarat. They have very good desktop publishing skills and know how to communicate information effectively to an unknown audience when they write in the style of newspapers. In art, when pupils carried out a critical study of Picasso, they produced their own images based on Cubism. In mathematics, pupils used spreadsheets to calculate the areas of rectangles and played dice games to investigate probability. Pupils show very good skills and understanding when they use data logging equipment in science to investigate environmental changes. Pupils reach very high standards in graphical communication in their design and technology lessons. They use computers effectively to select appropriate size and styles of lettering when they design and make point-of-sale containers, and leaflets to advertise small businesses. High standards of attainment in ICT are reflected in the very good grades achieved by pupils in Key Skills examinations at the end of Year 11.
- 159 Pupils develop good skills and understanding of how to use information and communication technology effectively in all subjects. There are no significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The very high standards reached result from very good teaching and the positive attitudes and very good behaviour of pupils, together with well planned, well structured provision, and very good resources.
- 160 Achievement is very good throughout the school. Pupils enter the school with knowledge and skill levels matching the national average. This is in part because many have been well supported in their development by effective primary school

liaison activities which involve using information and communication technology at Ribblesdale. They are introduced to a broad range of information and communication technology skills in a six week course in Year 7 when they consolidate and extend skills and knowledge. Pupils with less experience of information and communication technology have opportunities to catch up so that all pupils are effectively prepared to undertake information and communication technology work in other subjects of the curriculum. Thereafter, pupils continue to develop their skills and knowledge through a structured programme involving all subjects.

- 161 They learn to use the Internet and the school's intranet for research, and very quickly become confident to use computers in all aspects of their work. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, make very good progress throughout the school because they are provided with opportunities to build skills and knowledge in relevant contexts which additionally enhance their learning in other subjects. By Year 9, pupils use computers very confidently so that when they begin new work for examination courses in Year 10, teachers are able to focus on communicating essential information about subjects. They are confident that pupils have the experience to use information and communication technology effectively and so do not have to spend time teaching new skills. Much new learning in information and communication technology is focussed upon what pupils need to know and do to present information or to use computers to perform tasks such as calculations. This is highly motivating and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning; very good behaviour, and attentiveness in lessons, contribute significantly to the very high standards they reach throughout the school.
- 162 The quality of teaching and learning is very good and sometimes is excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which they use to provide challenging, interesting and relevant work. Excellent planning of lessons and highly successful teaching methods result in pupils sustaining concentration and learning to work independently. In consequence, they make very good progress. Teachers make very good use of new technology. For example, in religious education teachers use the interactive whiteboard very effectively to present information, using video clips to add visual interest which leads to better understanding of the topic. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils which lead to their cooperation. Pupils work productively and gain skills and knowledge because lessons are conducted at a good pace. Teachers have very high expectations and the quality of teaching is successfully maintaining very high standards in the subject. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology to raise standards in literacy and numeracy throughout the school. For example, high standards of accuracy are expected when pupils write at length, and they have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. They complete work on measurement and control in science and design and technology, and in mathematics they use spreadsheets to calculate and to improve their understanding of shapes.
- 163 Pupils have a very broad and relevant range of learning opportunities in all years. The cross-curricular nature of provision is very effective in bringing relevance to the subject. Information and communication technology pervades the curriculum and computers are used effectively as a genuine and efficient tool for learning. There are good procedures in place to assess the work of pupils by information and communication technology specialists. Statutory requirements are met. Provision in other subjects is very successful and enables pupils to use information and communication technology very effectively. The department needs to further develop the monitoring of progress for individuals and the use of assessment information to set targets for them.

- 164 Leadership and management of the subject are very good overall and the coordination and management of the work in other subjects are excellent. The information and communication technology manager has clear vision for the development of the subject and provides excellent direction for the work of colleagues. In consequence, standards are rising. The manager has the support of all staff to develop information and communication technology in the school and there is a genuine shared commitment to raise standards and to continue to improve provision. Teachers are encouraged, and successfully take on additional roles, which involve the teaching of information and communication technology, such as its use in GNVQ courses. Technicians make an effective contribution to the smooth running of the department, including network management.
- 165 There has been good improvement since the previous inspection to resources and provision in other subjects. The expertise of teachers of other subjects has risen and there is effective planning and delivery of appropriate and challenging information and communication technology work in all subjects.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is excellent.

### Strengths

- Very strong leadership.
- The very good teaching, staff expertise and commitment.
- Excellent results at the end of Years 9 and 11.

### Areas for improvement

- To further involve pupils in target setting and self evaluation, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Wider use of the foreign language by pupils in impromptu situations and for classroom requests.

- 166 By the end of Year 9, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above in teacher assessed French tests is well above the national average. The gap between girls' and boys' performance is narrowing.
- 167 At the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C's in the 2000 French examination was well above average, with a creditable number of A\* and A grades. In 2001 the proportion of A\*-C's is again very high, with an increase in the A\* and A grades. Spanish was also a GCSE subject in 2001, with a very high proportion of A\*-C and A\*-A grades.
- 168 In lessons seen, and from the scrutiny of work, standards in all years in modern foreign languages are very high. In years 7 to 9, French and Spanish are spoken confidently, with good pronunciation and fluency. In a Year 7 French class on family, pupils quickly grasped new vocabulary and by the end of the lesson were able to talk about their own family, including the negative form. A lower ability class in Year 8 French suggested ways of expanding their answers when talking about leisure, with no prompting from the teacher. They suggested joining several activities and adding words to add interest, so that very quickly the teacher wrote on the board difficult words such as "quelquefois," meaning 'sometimes' and "de temps en temps" meaning 'from time to time'. This shows the high standards which are being set from the start.
- 169 Pupils in a Year 9 beginner Spanish class spoke with tremendous enthusiasm about the subject. They are making rapid progress in a very short time and in one lesson

enjoyed the challenge of using drama, which is normally only attempted at GCSE level. Most pupils are able to understand spoken or written French and Spanish, and strategies are in place to raise awareness of key words and phrases needed for answers. The quality of written work varies according to prior attainment. The lower attaining groups tend to be more inaccurate even when copying, whilst the higher attaining groups are able to produce more detailed work, using more complex structures and a variety of tenses.

- 170 Work of a high standard is produced on computers. Particularly effective and imaginative was writing based on the Mr Men series, for example, M. Parfait, M. Incroyable, M. Bruit, M. Atchou. Here pupils used all kinds of adjectives to suit their character, resulting in some amusing passages. The use of writing frames and literacy strategies is having a positive impact on the standards of written work, so that pupils have exemplar materials and a framework on which to base their work. The higher attaining pupils used these to advantage and with their good basic grammar, knowledge and wide range of vocabulary could manipulate the language to produce individualised work. Grammar is appropriately taught in context throughout.
- 171 By the end of Year 9, pupils have a sound grammatical basis as they progress into Years 10 and 11. Here courses have been chosen to suit the prior attainment of all pupils. In a Certificate of Achievement French class, pupils struggled with the pronunciation of words such as "voila" and "C'est combien?" They were determined and persevered until they were happy, and their self esteem increased visibly. Pupils in the higher attaining groups respond quickly and fluently and are not just satisfied with short answers. They can offer ideas and opinions and ask questions of others. In listening and reading tasks pupils are being taught to read quickly for understanding, with the result that they are learning important techniques for use in examinations. Written coursework is excellent. Pupils are writing accurately, skilfully and imaginatively. Impressive work to increase vocabulary was based on a poem.
- 172 Since the last inspection, very good progress has been made as a result of excellent leadership and teamwork. Improvements include: provision of courses in Years 10 and 11 which are suitable for the needs and attainment of all pupils; providing challenging activities for all pupils and providing work suitable for the needs of lower attaining groups.
- 173 Teaching is a strength of the department. Teaching was never less than good. In Years 7 to 9 over half of the lessons were very good, including one excellent lesson. In Years 10 and 11, the majority of lessons were very good, with one excellent lesson. Lessons are good as a result of clear objectives shared with the class, very good planning, brisk pace and variety of activity. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils enjoy challenge. Lessons are planned with one activity leading from another. This enables everyone to learn step by step according to prior attainment, and in the case of higher attainers to produce extended pieces of work.
- 174 The excellent lessons were breathtaking. No time was wasted. Towards the end of a Year 10 Spanish lesson there was the opportunity to have individual conversation practice with the teacher. Listening, written and memory skills were all used to complete the words of a song. It was a testing activity enjoyed by all. Effective learning was a result of excellent teaching, which made the pupils keen to learn more. The worksheets produced by the teachers are a particular strength. These usually comprised a common task, with provision for extended work to stretch the higher attainers and less challenging sections, together with help sheets to support anyone experiencing difficulty. Pupils with special educational needs are able to make good progress as a result of this preparation. Attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Support teachers are effective in lessons. They are helpful to both teachers and pupils without

being obtrusive. They use their initiative and there is an obvious partnership between teacher and assistant.

- 175 Homework set is relevant. Marking is thorough, with diagnostic and helpful comments. Modular workbooks, again teacher produced, provide support and help. The teachers are all well qualified and their skills complement one another. They are role models in the use of French and Spanish in class. Fluency and pronunciation are emphasised and whole class repetition is taken seriously. Pupils are not so keen to use the language to ask questions or make requests, and they could be encouraged to make wider use of the foreign language in impromptu situations and for classroom requests. Teachers give freely of their time for clubs and revision classes. Visits abroad add meaning to language learning. A Year 8 class referred to their experiences in St. Omer and pointed to photos displayed when talking about leisure. Reports to parents are informative.
- 176 Leadership and management are excellent. The Head of Faculty is a driving force behind an excellent hard working committed team. Courses are planned to suit all needs and course books and resources have been carefully chosen. Extensive work has been done on boys' underachievement and remains a development priority. Very good use is made of assessments and data. These, plus individual mentoring are instrumental in keeping standards in languages very high. Pupils could however, be more involved in setting their own targets and self evaluation, particularly in Years 7 to 9. The rooms are a pleasure to work in, providing colourful displays and features such as grammatical points and key words, which proved useful to pupils in some lessons. Pupils enjoy the "pupil of the month" incentive.
- 177 There are good links with primary schools and partner schools. Despite there being only one lesson per week for Spanish in Year 9, very good progress is made. Unfortunately in some Year 8 classes and one Year 7 French class all language lessons are timetabled on the one day of the week. This is detrimental to learning and should be reviewed.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

### Strengths

- The results in GCSE are very good, with many pupils achieving well.
- Lessons are well planned.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for the subject and are well motivated.
- New technology resources for music are very good and used well in Years 10 and 11.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and staff.

### Areas for improvement

- Improve the quality of the tuned percussion for Years 7 to 9.
- Improve the consistency with which singing is focused in pitch and tone.
- Improve the consistency with which exercise books are used.

- 178 Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is good. Many pupils are achieving National Curriculum levels 5 and 6 and most attain at least level 4. There is little information about pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 but, overall, the inspection evidence shows that pupils' achievement throughout Years 7 to 9 is good. Behaviour is excellent and almost all pupils show a very positive attitude towards the subject.

- 179 Attainment by the end of Year 11 is also good. The number of pupils studying music in Years 10 and 11 has been low for a number of years but there has recently been a marked increase in the number of pupils following a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11. Within the last four years 95 per cent of pupils entered have achieved a pass at grade C or higher. Standards in the current, much larger, Year 11 are good.
- 180 Improvements since the last inspection are good. The new accommodation, with its bright and positive environment, and attractive and purposeful display, has a marked effect upon teaching and learning. Space is used well and the large storage area between the two rooms is very effective, with little congestion. The key issue from the previous inspection report of ensuring that National Curriculum requirements for music were met in Years 7 to 9 has been well addressed. All classes throughout Years 7 to 9 have equal access to music and the allocation of time is adequate. Singing is much in evidence as a required part of the curriculum. Both boys and girls showed an enthusiasm for the vocal activities. Whilst the vigour and enjoyment of the singing is to be praised, there is a lack of refinement in the pitch and tone, and the purpose of some of the warm up exercises is not always clear.
- 181 Good use of the funds for new technology has provided the department with a considerable number of high quality keyboards. This good investment in resources has a very significant influence upon the success of the department. This success is shown not only in the pupils' enthusiasm for the music lessons, but also in the recently increased numbers of pupils wishing to study music in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 also have access to unusually good equipment in the recording studio. A Year 11 pupil was making excellent use of the multi-tracking facilities in his coursework composition. He showed excellent competency with the technical aspects of the equipment and equally excellent use of this equipment in his composing. Another pupil, using a keyboard, had made a very interesting composition using the similar facility of being able to build up the sound in layers. Other pupils in this Year 11 group were making imaginative use of the automatic features of the keyboards. There was a very purposeful and productive atmosphere in all the Year 10 and 11 lessons.
- 182 The standard of teaching in all years is always satisfactory and usually good or very good. Lessons are well planned and equipment well organised so that the lessons generally move at a good pace. Pupils are engaged in purposeful activities all the time. Teachers' subject knowledge and competence are good and they are well able to lead the classes in very productive lessons. In Year 8 the teaching of the instrumental parts of the song 'Let's dance' was particularly effective. The performance of the whole song was good because pupils knew clearly what to do and showed skill in doing it. Lesson activities divide well between teacher-directed whole class engagement and a skilful use of small group work. In this group work the teacher typically moves around quickly, giving each pupil some individual attention, assessing their attainment and giving assistance when it is required. Most pupils with special educational needs generally achieve well and make good progress in performance activities in music and make good progress. However, in a Year 7 class, a pupil with moderate learning difficulties, and playing a percussion instrument, received as much help as the teacher could reasonably give yet his achievement was still very modest. With help from a support teacher this pupil could have benefited much more from the lesson's activities. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
- 183 Assessment of pupils' achievement is being developed as a profile, or record, which follows the pupils as they progress up the school. This new system is at an early stage of development, however, records so far appear to be effective in providing a meaningful profile on each pupil. Pupils' written work is inconsistent in both content

and presentation. The purpose and intended use of the exercise books is not clear. The marking and checking of books is also inconsistent.

- 184 A rather small number of pupils learn musical instruments. Instrumental teaching is by members of the local education authority's music service and it is a school policy that there is no charge to the pupils for these lessons. In the brass teaching seen, pupils had good posture and produced a good tone on their instrument. As in many other aspects of this department, the pupils showed enthusiasm for their learning.
- 185 The music department is generally well managed and led. The organisation of the curriculum is good and there are a number of opportunities for pupils to take part in musical activities outside the classroom. Every two years there is a production of a stage musical, and during the year there are several occasions on which the school's musicians can perform. The department needs to improve the quality of the tuned percussion provided for Years 7 to 9. The music department has good connections with the local community, and a music centre for local primary schools, staffed by the local education authority takes place on a weekday evening.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is good.

### Strengths

- The continued improvement in GCSE results.
- The good teaching across a range of sports and activities.
- The exemplary pupil attitudes to their work and each other.
- The complementary skills of the head of department and her colleagues.
- The range and accessibility of extra-curricular activities.
- The effective links with local, regional and national centres of sporting excellence.

### Areas for improvement

- Further develop ways of enriching the physical educational curriculum.
- Further develop the use of pupil assessment procedures to inform planning and target setting.

- 186 Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 match national expectation. Both boys and girls develop precision and control in a range of basic skills. Most are able to link skills and techniques accurately. When asked, they are able to analyse their own and others' performance and suggest improvements. Some are able to apply their knowledge to develop strategies and tactics in small-sided games. Pupils expect to warm up, and when given the opportunity they can take responsibility for this part of the lesson by selecting and demonstrating appropriate safe stretching exercises. Some are able to name muscle groups and explain the effect of exercise on the body.
- 187 At the end of Year 11 standards match national expectations and are often above. A wide range of quality performance exists, some of which is very good. Pupils are given opportunities to draw on their own knowledge to develop advanced tactics and plan ways to improve their own and others' performance. They know how to warm up effectively and do so. Most work hard to develop their knowledge and understanding of the principles of invasion games. A significant number of pupils achieve very good standards in extra-curricular activities at local, regional and international levels.
- 188 GCSE examination results in 2000 at A\*-C were just below the national average and matched the national average at A\*-G. In 2001 the results were slightly above the national average at A\*-C, and again matched the national average at A\*-G. Pupils'

standards in 2000 and 2001 were below the standards achieved in most other GCSE subjects at the school. Overall performance in 2001 showed an improvement on the standard achieved last year.

- 189 Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 as they acquire and develop new skills whilst refining and adapting existing skills. Most enter the school below national expectation but by the end of Year 9 most match national expectations. A requirement since gaining Technology College status has been to support the teaching of physical education in partner primary schools. The recently appointed head of department has begun work with a link school.
- 190 Progress in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by analysing, evaluating and refining their own and others' practice. They are encouraged to develop their tactical awareness and modify this in relation to changing circumstances and conditions. Progress in netball is linked to good teaching that provides interesting yet challenging activities that make progressively increasing demands on pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers have an understanding of their particular needs.
- 191 The quality of teaching is good. In well over half the lessons observed teaching was good or very good and was never less than satisfactory. A major strength of the teaching is the quality of relationships, which creates a positive ethos for activity learning and enjoyment. The natural enthusiasm of the teacher is passed on to the pupils who are encouraged to attempt new skills and accept responsibility. Pupils are often given opportunities to demonstrate prior learning and to plan and evaluate performance, but in a minority of lessons they are not given sufficient guidance in what to look for, and so some learning opportunities are restricted.
- 192 Teachers have good subject knowledge covering a range of activities thus enabling them to plan lessons effectively with linked progressive practices. This range of expertise should be fully shared amongst the department to further improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to further enrich the curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and work hard to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment. Lessons are well structured and effectively managed and characterised by a brisk pace. On occasion the emphasis on pace can result in opportunities to reinforce and assess pupils' learning and understanding being missed. The department could further develop the use of pupil assessment procedures to inform planning and target setting.
- 193 Learning activities are interesting and progressively challenge pupils. All teachers use a range of teaching approaches. They give clear demonstrations and explanations of skills and question pupils effectively to help them recall what they have learned. Pupils are set targets for their performance and teachers use competition to motivate and interest the pupils. Teaching in GCSE lessons is good. Through discussion pupils are encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of the ways to prevent injury and how to achieve this by an understanding of the functions and interrelationships of bones and muscles, in addition to issues relating to health and safety. Homework is regularly set; marking is consistent and informs pupils about the standards they are achieving.
- 194 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Participation rates in classes are very good and standards of kit are high. Pupils enjoy their lessons and readily volunteer to demonstrate practice, and to answer questions. They are confident to talk about performance and suggest methods for improvement. Most listen carefully to the teachers and have a strong commitment to their own learning and a desire to



improve. Pupils behave very well in lessons. Relationships with each other and with teachers are very good. The teaching approaches adopted take account of pupils' interests and provide opportunities for them to accept responsibility for their own learning. The pupils respond very positively to this approach and are able to work cooperatively and with purpose. Many pupils take part in, and benefit from, the range of extra-curricular activities.

- 195 Indoor accommodation is good and has a positive effect on learning, but there is restrictive space for boys in which to change. Outdoor facilities are good and include extensive but poorly drained fields, which prevents them from being used for large periods of time. This is planned to be remedied next summer. There are netball courts and an all weather playing area. It would be appropriate for the department to have its own computer and direct links with school information and communication technology system.
- 196 The head of department is a recent appointment. Nonetheless, the leadership and management of the department are good, and very purposeful steps have already been taken to further develop the department. The focus of this work is very effectively on standards. The teaching staff make a well-balanced and complementary team who support each other well, have a commitment to continuous improvement and are deployed to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Day to day routines are well established, consistent systems operate and high standards and expectations are shared. The department is well positioned to move forward with its plans and achieve the aim of further raising attainment and contribute to other areas of the school curriculum. The good work identified in the previous inspection has been sustained and built upon, especially in the area of health related exercise.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is good.

### Strengths

- Pupil attainment by the end of Year 11 in 2001.
- The quality of teaching, which is good and often very good, and helps pupils to make good progress.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Very good subject knowledge of specialist teachers which enriches pupils' experience.
- Outstanding use of information and communication technology.

### Areas for improvement

- Ensure that all pupils have equal access to the best information and communication technology approaches.
- Increase the opportunities for well structured discussion and debate for higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11.

- 197 Standards on entry at least match the demands of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The wide variety of primary schools whose pupils come to the school means that pupils' previous attainment is not well known. Most schools follow the locally Agreed Syllabus, but others from church schools have followed a Diocesan syllabus. All have had an early experience of teaching about Christianity but their knowledge of other world faiths varies considerably. The subject leader has contacted all schools to try to ensure that pupils' previous attainment is built upon successfully, but the entry picture is a complex one.

- 198 Pupils' standards by the end of Year 9 are above the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus, and sometimes well above. Pupils acquire a good technical vocabulary which helps them to give precision to their work. By the end of Year 9 most pupils have acquired a firm foundation in Christianity. Pupils extend their knowledge of other faiths each year. In Year 7, pupils acquire sound knowledge of the basic features of Sikhism and attain a good understanding of symbolism in a major religion present in Britain. In Year 8, pupils gain an understanding of the elementary features of Judaism, and in Year 9, Buddhism is explored so that pupils develop a good understanding of key features, including the Eight Fold Path. They develop their knowledge of what is right and wrong, and the major similarities and differences of moral codes in several world faiths. They bring to bear ideas which they have acquired earlier, for example, on the notion of God in creation and to explore differences between the Genesis story and some scientific explanations. They relate their developing understanding well to their personal lives, in considering temptation for example.
- 199 By the end of Year 11, when most pupils have taken a short course in the subject at GCSE, standards are above average. In 2001, 52 per cent of pupils achieved a grade A \*-C . A satisfactory percentage of pupils gain the higher grades, showing that high attaining pupils are appropriately challenged. Other pupils have the opportunities to take relevant qualifications including the Certificate of Achievement. Standards in examinations have been maintained since the last inspection, with a much larger number of pupils taking the short course at GCSE. The school is changing the syllabus in Years 10 and 11 so that all pupils will have the opportunity to take the short course at the end of Year 10 and a full course at the end of Year 11.
- 200 In Years 10 and 11 pupils make thoughtful detailed responses to questions. They show good ability to express themselves on sensitive issues and support their responses with evidence and relevant argument. In a Year 10 lesson on euthanasia pupils were deeply moved at the plight of an older teenager who had reached a persistent vegetative state after a serious motor cycle accident. They showed real compassion and empathy with the terrible dilemma of the boy's parents. Nevertheless they were able to consider the general concept and defend their personal viewpoints substantiated by the understanding of religious teaching, drawing on their knowledge of the New Testament and their understanding of other faith viewpoints.
- 201 Pupils generally make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Good research skills are achieved through work on the Internet, on text and in projects set for homework including surveys and questionnaires. Pupils evaluate their own response to topics, for example on Buddhism. In a project on Hinduism, very thorough self assessment of skills of time management, cooperation with a partner, quality of research, presentation and originality were then set alongside a teacher's carefully considered assessment. They learn to appreciate the viewpoints and convictions of others.
- 202 In Years 7 to 9, pupils contribute readily, showing their confidence in their teachers and in each other. In a lesson on the creation narratives pupils remembered their previous work accurately and were able to move on quickly. Some pupils however, especially those with special educational needs, find it hard to move beyond literal interpretations and to appreciate symbolism. However, pupils' answers and questions are always treated with respect and individual help is given very sensitively. Generally, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- 203 There is good proportion of oral work in lessons. As a result most make good progress in understanding difficult religious concepts and the features of major world religions. Some well-focused group work helps pupils to develop and extend their discussion and debating skills, as in a Year 10 lesson on the nature of the family in

Islam. However, the achievements of higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 would benefit from more opportunities for well structured discussion and debate to develop their skills of evaluation. Pupils' literacy skills are well promoted throughout the school. Good opportunities are given to engage in various forms of writing; reports, analysis of text, personal comment, extended personal narratives and interview summaries. Unusually, in some lessons, numeracy aspects are also well promoted as teachers discuss with pupils the best way to present discrete survey information, by bar graphs, scatter graph or pie chart.

- 204 Teaching is always satisfactory and in most lessons is good or very good. More than two thirds of lessons are good, and very good in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 all lessons are at least good, half are very good. Good, confident relationships generate a very productive learning atmosphere in classes. All lessons are carefully planned and well organised with a good sequence of interesting activities. For example, reading, discussion, video analysis and considering religious artefacts were present in a lesson on Hinduism in Year 7. The use of the interactive whiteboard in one room is excellent.
- 205 The head of the subject has developed many materials very relevant to the topics being covered. In a lesson on issues of life and death, the topic of childlessness was being studied. After some quick definitions of non-medical and medical approaches projected on the board with compelling attention, writing plans helped pupils to make organised notes. A short video on fostering was shown which engaged pupils' interest and promoted deep insights. The vivid, rolling, iconic presentation on the white board ensured that pupils were very clear about the complex issues, and so engaged that discussion and comment broke out explosively and naturally. This sort of teaching makes the subject material memorable and up to date. However the department needs to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to use this resource. The subject has 16 laptops and these are used by other classes and at lunchtime mainly for research, including confident use of Internet and intranet facilities. Pupils' horizons are very much widened.
- 206 The two specialists have very good subject knowledge and are able to simplify very effectively without losing the depth of experience. Three other teachers who are non-specialists contribute to the teaching, and in effect there is another full time-table of work for a specialist teacher. At the moment all non-specialists teachers are teaching to a satisfactory level. The one lesson a week for all classes produces pressures on teachers to ensure continuity and keep up with the marking of pupils' work. Each specialist teacher teaches at least 17 classes per week. The homework programme is a very well devised series of activities. It ensures that pupils learn to consolidate, collect opinions through questionnaires and interview others to find out how much people's beliefs affect their lifestyles and commitments. This fund of experience leads on to new learning very effectively without creating unnecessary amounts of written work, and ensures that pupils are taking responsibility for their learning.
- 207 The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Studies of marriage in Christianity and Islam help pupils to understand the societies in which they live and some of their responsibilities as citizens in community. Consideration of the Trimurti in Hinduism helps pupils to realise that concepts of deity are many-faceted, and that paths to faith are very diverse. A study of moral codes shows pupils how all communities seek to regulate the behaviour of individuals in the interest of the common good. In all the topics they study pupils are given the opportunity to make personal responses and build up an informed personal belief system in a climate of respect.

- 208 The subject is very well led and managed. Subject teachers meet regularly to discuss professional matters and make the changes needed to raise standards further. The locally Agreed Syllabus is being revised and the school is helping by developing several units. One member of staff is helping on the working party for the new courses to be implemented from September 2002. A new GCSE course has been established this September, which will make continuity and progression easier and give all pupils a better opportunity to gain a short course qualification at the end of Year 10 and a further full GCSE by the time they leave if appropriate. Since the last inspection the subject has maintained the good standards of attainment, teaching and learning and increased substantially the resources available for teaching.

## VOCATIONAL COURSES

Overall, the quality of provision in vocational courses is very good.

### Strengths

- Standards are above expectation and sometimes very high.
- Very good teaching.
- Use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning.
- Pupil motivation is very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Continue to raise standards in the subjects.

- 209 The school offers the following courses in Years 10 and 11 accredited by the General National Vocational Qualification, (GNVQ): health and social care; manufacturing; business studies, and leisure and tourism. In business studies, individual units are studies as opposed to the full GNVQ. Standards in all the courses are generally above expectation and sometimes very high. In a Year 11 lesson on health and social care pupils were able to use desktop publishing software to produce a high quality pamphlet designed to inform mothers about the dietary needs of young children. In a Year 10 lesson on manufacturing, pupils were able to use a sophisticated design package to plot two-dimensional shapes with specific measurements and to extrude this into a three-dimensional shape. In a Year 11 lesson on business studies, pupils were able to describe and explain about the different types of company ownership and about industrial sectors. They were very clear about the advantages and disadvantages of share ownership and the implications of these for the company concerned. In a Year 11 lesson on leisure and tourism, pupils were able to successfully research a marketing brief and identify the key components of marketing, and based on their research they were able to construct and analyse graphs and base marketing decisions upon them.
- 210 Teaching in GNVQ lessons is always very good. Lessons start briskly with a good pace. Previous work is reviewed and the tasks for the current lesson very effectively introduced. Lessons are well structured and as a consequence pupils are aware of what is expected of them and this encourages them to take a greater responsibility for their own learning. In some lessons pupils could be asked to contribute more to whole class discussion, especially when evaluating their own work. As a result of the good structure and pace and the lively delivery by the teachers, pupils remain well engaged by the work throughout the lesson.
- 211 Teachers have high levels of specialist knowledge which ensures they teach confidently. In a lesson on business studies, the teacher's specialist knowledge was very good and contributed positively to pupils' learning by providing high levels of challenge for all pupils and establishing both high credibility and expectations. In this

same lesson, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the roles played by men and women in contemporary society, and of the equality of opportunity issues which flowed from them. The teacher's circulation around individual pupils during the lesson is very well focused. Questioning is very well matched to the needs of individual pupils and as a consequence all pupils, regardless of their level of prior attainment, make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive very sensitive and encouraging feedback on their work. Individual education plans are readily available to the teacher within the classroom and contain helpful classroom strategies. Where present, the learning support assistants provide well targeted support which ensures that these pupils make very good progress. In lessons without the benefit of such support, the teachers work hard and successfully to ensure that all pupils make very good progress regardless of their ethnicity or individual need. The teachers know their pupils well and as a consequence they can adapt the work very successfully to their individual needs.

- 212 Keywords, relevant to the current work, are on display in the rooms, as is much well-presented pupils' work. Appropriate commercial posters contribute further to creating lively and pleasant learning environments. Some of the high quality work on display shows evidence of the sophisticated use of information and communication technology to present work for specific audiences. Work is well marked with both encouraging comments as well as clear indications of how pupils may improve their work.
- 213 Pupils' behaviour is always very good. Pupils work very well both individually and in small groups. During whole class discussion pupils are very attentive to the teacher and concentrate for protracted periods of time. Pupils are very keen and highly motivated. They maintain high levels of application to their studies regardless of their prior attainment or special educational need, due to the engaging nature of the work set and the very effective support from the teachers. In one Year 10 lesson on manufacturing, the teacher's very skilful use of the interactive whiteboard ensured that the class was attentive throughout the exposition and were subsequently able to make very good progress when using a sophisticated design package on their computers. This was supported very well by an excellent tutorial guide to the software which the teacher had spent considerable time in developing. The level of resources, with pupils commonly able to access the school's computer network and the Internet from an individual workstation, means that they use information and communication technology as a very effective tool for their learning. Technology College status has made a significant and positive impact on pupils' learning.